

The Orthodox Hegel

*Development Further
Developed*

By

Stephen Theron

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PREFACE

The present book recapitulates while developing further and with more systematic focus the material of our four previous studies exploring Hegel's account of "the method" of philosophy, one, principally, of absorbing while transforming, in a genuine *praxis*, which Hegel calls "the whole task of philosophy", religion and its objects, typically mind, cosmos and spirit. These studies, *New Hegelian Essays* (2012), *From Narrative to Necessity* (2012), *Reason's Developing Self-Revelation* (2013) and *Hegel's Philosophy of Universal Reconciliation* (2013), have all been issued by Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Hegel wrote from within this ongoing tradition and movement of the spirit, of *Geist*, become absolute, in his view, in a historical Christianity¹ not abstractly separate from experience as "the real author of *growth* and *advance* in philosophy"². In calling Christianity "the absolute religion" he implies, by his own principles, that it is not a religion merely, since religion, like art as prior to it, is a transient form of that Absolute Spirit self-accomplished or perfected in philosophy. As such it might, alternatively, be called "religion itself" (de Lubac), but included now in philosophy viewed as supreme *Gottesdienst*. The last is first, so to say, or *vice versa*. He shows, that is to say, how philosophy, as final wisdom, absorbs and perfects ("accomplishes") theology and religion as being, he says, its whole object.³ They share, that is, the fate of the Object as such in

¹ Here we must bear in mind that his account of history itself is undeviatingly dialectical, the play of absolute mind setting itself up with its "own result" in view. It is germane, I consider, to view this account as suggested by or even as an interpretative development of the *Letter to the Romans*, 9-11, by Paul of Tarsus. Cf. his Preface to the *Philosophy of History* lectures, regrettably omitted from some translations.

² Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (hereafter "Enc."), "Introduction", paragraph 12. This is the Introduction to the whole tripartite *Encyclopaedia* and not only to the Logic (first part), as the layout of the Wallace translation (OUP) used here might suggest.

³ For systematic exposition of this view see Georges van Riet's "The Problem of God in Hegel", read in Latin at a Thomistic Congress held at Rome half a century ago before appearing in French in the *Révue de métaphysique et morale* (Louvain) and in U.S. English translation in *Philosophy Today*, vol. XI, 1967.

the development of his dialectic (*Enc.* 194-212), absorption, namely, in the Absolute Idea.

It belongs equally to this view, therefore, that history has not merely reached its end, as it has recently been claimed to have done in successful capitalism, which should now go on and on. This inversion of the Marxist view is manifestly magical, a fantasy. Rather, any idea of a temporal process becoming absolute implies, it will be shown, the speculative absorption of history itself, along, as we just said, with the object as such. History is indistinguishable from that dialectical method which is itself the Idea, establishing as it does the “ideality” (*Enc.* 95) of the finite as such. Movement become absolute is the “vanishing of vanishing”, of becoming, like Hegelian being, in its own notion. In general, Hegel claims, “no speculative principle can be correctly expressed by any such prepositional form”, even given that such self-referential refutation must “give rise to reasonable objection” as promoting the unity, in our predication, over the difference of the “inherent unrest” that this unity is.

The contrary view, stressing the *exoteric* primacy of objective religion, as presented in particular in C.S. Lewis’s apologetic writings, is discussed in the Postscript to this present book. It was also discussed in the opening chapter, “No Regress from the Hegelian Wood”⁴, of the first of these five books. An immediate ancestor of the view, with its call for a regress, was Chesterton’s powerfully argued *Orthodoxy* of 1908, mediating that whole abstractly *supernaturalist* account within which religion, contrary to its infinite quality as spirit, gets objectified, the outward at the expense of the inward, as if these were not both the same. In such thought, namely, the rationality or, at least, reasonableness of faith itself, “thinking with assent”⁵, is set *against* any absorption of it into speculative reason. The Outside of history, in a word, is opposed, as it were victoriously, to the Inside of speculation in mind’s own self-consciousness. In this sense religion is the opposite of the mystical, which, nonetheless, it expressly honours as “the way”.

That is to say, here, in Lewis or Chesterton, the exoteric is *abstractly* separated from the esoteric. The truth is, rather, that since “religion is for all men” (Hegel) it is also for philosophers, while it is belongs to religion’s spirit that not only all men collectively but religion in itself should and does aspire to its self-transcendence in the perfection of wisdom and contemplation which is truly wisdom, *sophia*, and should love and honour it (*philo-sophia*) as spirit transcending all literal or written or even vocal

⁴ This recalls Lewis’s title, *The Pilgrim’s Regress: An Allegorical Apology for Christianity, Reason and Romanticism*, of 1933.

⁵ Cf. *From Narrative to Necessity*, Chapter One.

representation since, as Hegel shortly says, in speculative self-contradiction, “all predications are false”.⁶ This is philosophy (*consolatrix*) speaking. That is, in short, Christianity, or perfected philosophy, is “democratic” as calling all men and women to an aristocracy of spirit, an entering on the narrow path, which, in proportion as it is looked for, will be found. The esoteric is made thus an exoteric goal, as the modern and post-Hegelian democratic movements illustrate. Spirit, thus revealing what was ever its nature, is shed abroad, poured out on all flesh. There are no “experts”, as the prophets (Joel, Jeremiah) had foreseen, unless of course we should vote for them. No one, that is, is to be fobbed off with parables against his better judgment. Like time itself, as Hegel says, these are useful for the spirit for only so “long” as spirit needs them though, in a sense, we all need them, as “poetry is necessary for life” or music “the food of love”.

Against this “silver” of objectification we have set and defended the opposite, “golden” task of “understanding spiritual things spiritually” (St. Paul), whereby such spiritual things become the whole matter of (“first”) philosophy and wisdom, making the latter, therefore, holy in the sense of absolute (*sancta sophia*). The task of philosophy, thus viewed, is one of alignment with Absolute Mind seen as one with its self-thought. This is both its form and its matter. Thus in true self-expression as I, as subject, Hegel reasons, we cannot merely mean (*meinen*), as it were in private opinion, saying what is just mine (*meine*) but must “legislate for the universe” or, rather, in sober truth *be* it, since “I” cannot but name the “universal of universals”, where all are one in supra-organic union of spirit.⁷ The word “theology”, *theologia* in Aristotle’s Greek, cannot therefore be naming anything else or other than this task of the spirit, wisdom. The “religious” dilemma of “above” or “below” is here transcended or absorbed, since wisdom is necessarily “according to the whole”, *kat’holon*, catholic. It follows that “religion itself” transcends its religious moment, “brings to nought the things which are”, in a word, as its own mystical tradition ever exemplifies.⁸

In his *Surprised by Joy*, Chapter Fourteen, “Checkmate”, Lewis relates how he progressed, regressed rather (in his own special, affirmative sense of that term) from Hegelian theism (the Absolute) to a belief in God “as a

⁶ Regarding this topic, see our critical remarks on John Finnis’s handling of “contradiction in performance” in the final “Scientific Postscript” to this present book.

⁷ This is most clearly set forth, as interpreting Hegel, in Chapter Two, “Immortality”, of J.M.E. McTaggart’s *Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology* (Cambridge 1901).

⁸ For Hegel on mysticism, cf. *Enc.* 82 and add.

person” with whom one could be in relation. This distinction is prior to and independent of his coming to confess Christ as divine or “Son of God”. On this restrictedly philosophical plane Lewis wants to claim that Hegel’s absolute idealism only adds “mystifications to the simple, workable, theistic idealism of Berkeley”. The verbal coincidence with Marx’s verdict on Hegel (though Marx had no use for Berkeley) as mystifying is striking and, I judge, thus far a bad sign. There is, he says here, “no possibility of being in a personal relation” even with Berkeley’s God, however, as there is with what he mocks himself for having dismissively called “the god of popular religion”.⁹

Hegel’s position, by contrast, is that the God philosophy reveals is the same as this God of popular religion, that it perfects the popular representation of this same absolute Idea, accomplishing it as knowledge and absolute knowledge, as what he calls *the* Concept, which includes everything as its “moments”. This is the same God understood in or according to spirit. “It is the lesson of Christianity that God is spirit”. As to being in a relation to him, we have nothing *else* so fundamentally to relate ourselves to as *this* relation that annihilates both self and relation, in what we call identity¹⁰. Hence we encounter God, the absolute concept, in our neighbour as in ourselves, as both same and other. We love “as” self, as following the “commandment”, what *is* self, viz. the other, and this is the sole foundation for the commandment’s “naturalness”. That is, the normative here is *ipso facto* “factual”, and, still more, *vice versa*, a position at least approached in the adage “Become what you are”.¹¹ As theory is praxis, the highest (Aristotle), so praxis is theory (Marx). That is, I am you. This “second” commandment states or itself shows, rather, if we accept it, that the abstractly individual self is purely phenomenal, as in Hegel’s thought, where there is no absolute inter-subjectivity between finite subjects but Subjectivity itself, the Idea, of which each is a “moment” and finally ideal or self-transcending.¹² So we cannot ourselves constitute one of the terms in such a two-part relation, nor could anything.

⁹ Hegel expressly distinguishes his own “absolute idealism” from the “subjective idealism” of Berkeley, Kant or Fichte, which he calls “abstract, empty idealism”, which “merely takes reason as reason appears at first”, declaring “that everything is its own” (Hegel: *The Phenomenology of Mind*, tr. Baillie, Harper Torch, New York 1966, p.279; cp. *Enc.* 42-46).

¹⁰ Cf. Hegel, *Enc.* 50 (Part I, “The Science of Logic”).

¹¹ Compare “Do what you are doing” (*age quod agis*) or, for short, “Get on with it”. Hegel insists that speculative reason is found at the most common level of human thinking and behaviour, of the child in the “first” instance.

¹² Cf. *Enc.* 95.

For the same reason, God on his side, which is not a side but the whole, has no real relation with us, since it is only “in” him, as one with him indeed, “that we live and move and have our being”. This, Lewis had the means of knowing and surely did know, is the teaching of Thomas Aquinas as rooted in Augustine (“You were with me but I was not with you”), St. Paul and the prophets of Israel. Aquinas compares the situation with that of a man’s relation to an immobile pillar, now to the right of it, now to the left, while the pillar has no such corresponding relation, being rather, if we take the pillar now as God, the man’s *own* end in which, as “finished”, he is absorbed and, it might seem, done away with. This “ruin of the individual”, in Hegel’s vision, however, is merely the transcendence of abstract thinking. “I” is “the universal of universals” and our job, he says, consists simply in realising this, the knowing of God, in Scriptural terms, which “is eternal life”.

What this comes down to, as implying it, is that Lewis’s idea of “mere Christianity” is all too like an abstraction of Christianity from its indwelling spirit of infinite development leading into *all* truth. This is to confound the development in purification of an idea with its germ in its beginnings, as Hegel expresses this error. The ecumenical motive doubtless driving Lewis should rather drive us forward in development, as explored in this book. Ecumenical thinking, formally endorsed also by the Roman leadership at the Second Vatican *Ecumenical* Council (1962-1964), does not indeed “overthrow the nature of an opinion”¹³ It rather transforms it, as all is transformed and idealised in the Absolute Idea, which, Hegel shows, at one with traditional thought here, is the Absolute itself. That a divine idea is one with the divine essence is a thesis of Aquinas, for example.

One might say, indeed, that Lewis refused the task that Hegel both undertook and accomplished. After his apparent humiliation at the hands of Miss Anscombe, as she was then known as, at Oxford’s “Socratic Club” in 1948¹⁴, who here “only did what she thought was her duty”¹⁵, Lewis’s

¹³ The phrase is from Gregory XVI’s condemnation of “liberalism” in *Mirari vos* (c.1831).

¹⁴ Lewis had embraced a distinction of Samuel Alexander’s (*Space, Time and Deity*) corresponding to that of Aquinas between the *id quid* or object of perception and the *id quo* as species or idea, never itself perceived, whereby the former is perceived (*Summa theol.* 1, 85, 2). Will and mind intend the real, as would be impossible by a mere natural process. Thought, like truth, was transcendently “valid”, Lewis wrote in *Miracles*, an expression to which Anscombe objected. Lewis accepted this and rewrote parts of his text accordingly. For Hegel, however, transcending both sides of this dispute, objects neither lose nor gain in reality if

greatness as the “wounded Christian”, doggedly but beautifully expressing his loyalty to “the heavenly vision”, emerges more clearly as an alternative vocation to or version of this task, however:

But four babies playing a game can make a play-world that licks your real world hollow. That’s why I’m going to stand by the play-world. I’m on Aslan’s side even if there isn’t any Aslan to lead it. I’m going to live as like a Narnian as I can even if there isn’t any Narnia...¹⁶

This alternative, *qua* alternative, does not arise in Absolute Idealism. History, again, is dethroned, absorbed as, logically, it must be, in the infinite and absolute, in the Idea, as the very fiction of “Puddleglum”, Lewis’s ability to conceive him, who takes just this stand, well indicates. We are all on the side of Puddleglum, or Aslan (they are the same), inasmuch as we are not abstractly just ourselves in finite subjectivity. Here art maintains and transfigures itself precisely as absorbed into philosophy and the one defeated is equally the victor. Lewis, in fact, was too close to Hegel to see what the latter was saying, to find his way out of that maze or “wood” which he himself was. One should only add that his real target should have been the British Hegelians, minus at least McTaggart, and not Hegel himself, honest and loyal Lutheran as he, by the argument in these

their unity is “transferred to the subject”. The content is no more objective than subjective, and it “does no good to the things merely to say that they have being”. Being, rather, is the absolute, self-knowing Idea against which it is customarily distinguished. No doubt Berkeley was working towards this, which quite obviates that need for a dualism between nature and the supernatural which Lewis had assumed to be necessary. The former rather is absorbed or taken up into the latter, as the free or infinite necessity of which consciousness of miracle is a first intuition. Thus the final or eucharistic miracle is a or the “mystery of faith”, in principle imperceptible, as spiritual interpretation, rather, or the idea that is the thing, the thing the idea.

¹⁵ The late philosopher Peter Geach, Anscombe’s husband, said these words to the author in the late 1970s at Leeds. Geach, understandably, retained a preoccupation with C.S. Lewis up into his last years. He wrote in one of his last letters to me, as his former student, that he had systematically reread his “religious” and philosophical writings, adding that he found many “bad” arguments. On this one might observe that an analogy is not yet an argument, while all the same all argument is from or by analogy with the so-called “argument form”, itself an argument, with which it is “on all fours”. Cf. P.T. Geach: *Reason and Argument* (Oxford 1976) or our own “Argument Forms and Argument from Analogy”, *Acta Philosophica*, Rome, 1997, pp. 303-310.

¹⁶ Puddleglum in *The Silver Chair*, speaking to the witch in that story, as cited in A.N. Wilson’s biography, *C.S. Lewis*, London 1990, pp.226-7.

pages at least, can be seen to have been. Again, it is thought that thinks itself. There can be no further validation. Hence, “the spiritual man judges all things”. In fact, Lewis’s argument aimed at saying just this, in profound if at that time still unconscious agreement with Anscombe on the necessary right of unaided logic. A deep truth lies hidden here, which no writer has come further in unravelling than Hegel. Of course then it affects the terms in which “the existence of God” is discussed.

INTRODUCTION

We first focus here upon a consideration that constantly forces itself upon attention but is not commonly subjected to philosophical treatment, since it is difficult to form conceptions of something itself distinguished against all of which we can form concepts. I mean existence as opposite to or at least different from essence, different especially, therefore, from the essence of existence in particular, from any “existentialism”.

Every word of language, every phrase or linguistic context indifferently, names a concept. “This”, “man” and “this man” are thus three names for concepts, which are yet not thereby themselves three or of any *number* whatever. “Number” itself names a concept and ultimately all words, as naming thought(s), name *the* concept, name thought itself inasmuch as naming, the positing of an arbitrary symbol, is work of thought itself ever naming itself in and as act, *energeia*, “the inward which is quite to the fore”.¹ This is the identity in difference in which all coheres in the coherent Idea knowing only itself, self-conscious spirit or mind. The concepts themselves are acts (of mind). “Substance” names a grammatical concept or finitely logical category. “Essence as grammar”, Wittgenstein rightly suggested. Finally, however, substance, however particularised, is act, the self-conceiving concept. Substance, that is, is verb, *verbum*, as the subject is the predicate. Identity is *in* the difference thus posited in duality and this Hegel calls the falsity of all judgments. This underlies the final or speculative “stage of Positive Reason”, apprehending “the unity of determinations in their opposition”². The verb names and acts act. One act names and absorbs all other conceivable acts and this, again, is *the* Concept, conceiving itself alone, *actus actuum*, what Hegel calls Absolute Knowledge. This knowledge has no other subject, which means that there is, necessarily, no absolute other, as is further developed, logically develops itself, in Hegel’s science of logic, of which he has left two written accounts, *The Science of Logic* (1818) and the first part (1830) of the later tripartite *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, which bears the same name.

¹ Hegel, *Encyclopaedia* (hereafter *Enc.*) 143, addition (hereafter “add.).

² *Ibid.* 82. W. Wallace’s translation amended as dictated to students by J. Kockelmans, autumn 1967.

Also names of individuals are names of concepts, included in the Concept as is proper to “the ideality of the finite”³. The Concept is the Idea’s “principle”⁴. The names themselves are, as occurring, phenomenal only. I bear my name as bestowed, as moving among phenomena while transcending them. Or, it is my or a phenomenal name. The scholastic “second intention” or *suppositio materialis*, a name in self-reference, is continuous with as included in any other intention in self-consciousness. This, ultimately, is why “self-referentiality”⁵ is not a particular logical error but the very mark of speculative logic, thought and discourse. Or we may say that it is *proper* to a name to be used in the mention and mentioned in the use.

The Speculative is the third “stage of positive Reason” (*Vernunft*), succeeding upon “Thought as *Understanding*” (*Verstand*) and Dialectical Scepticism as uniting and absorbing them. Thus the first form of logic “can at will be elicited from” Speculative Reason, from “the reason-world”, as was in fact done by Aristotle, for example.⁶

The German practice of indifferently writing a capital for a common as for a proper noun is purely a convention, just as is the English differentiation. Thus we can refer to Fido either as “Fido” or as “this dog here”. The expression “this individual” supposes previous identification, right or wrong, of an or rather the class of individuals. It is though, after all, not clear that one cannot have, or that there cannot be, a concept of any individual considered. Thus the name “God”, says Aquinas, can be equally viewed as a *nomen naturae*, equivalent to (the) godhead, or as personal or “proper”. “The deity”, like “his worship” (for judges) and so on, hovers uncertainly between the two, and this situation instances concrete universality. Thus a child, say, has leave, logically, to name properly anything whatever, the adult to restrict himself to a phrase such as “this particular instance” or thing. Childishly, no doubt, we may address, with personal pronoun, in love or anger, any concrete (or abstract) object whatever. Upon this facility hinges the whole debate between theism and atheism.

³ *Ibid.* 95.

⁴ *Ibid.* 213. It is in view of this that Hegel in the “addition” here brackets even the third of the three sections of Logic, viz. the Concept, with the first two, being and Essence, as “dialectical” and hence nothing permanent but leading up to as “dynamic elements of the idea”.

⁵ Cf., for the sense of this term, the discussion of a paper by John Finnis in the section “Scientific Postscript”, below, concluding this work.

⁶ G.W.F. Hegel, *Encyclopaedia* (hereafter “*Enc.*”), 82.

*

Nonetheless, judgments of existence are possible. Further, even if all existents are individuals yet not all individuals exist, unless we stipulate that a dead ancestor, or Hamlet, is not an individual. Contrariwise, there certainly seem to be individual acts of thought or conception, unless we go on to deny the real existence of individuals abstracted from their universality in the Idea, as Hegel does. That is to say, he finds existence itself to be a purely momentary or finite category of thought. It may equally be argued that all judgments are judgments of existence. There occurs a formal identification of two suppositis in one concept, of which one says that it *is*. Hegel, however, imports the distinction between “mere” correctness and truth, which we would here abstract from, into logic itself (cf. EL 166-171).

The existence of the subject is all the same a different matter. Thus it is not, strictly, as Hegel points out, something that can be caused, since this would require the subject to exist before or without existing, in order to be said to be caused. The prime instance of this is talk of persons having been born or of persons, “reincarnation” apart, before they were born or, more simply, of “before Abraham was”. This last evangelical utterance is completed, as addressing just this error, with “I am”, in speculative disregard of the grammatical principle of “sequence of tenses”.

This is the objection, concerning caused subjective existence, that Peter Geach tried to meet, at the same time as defining creating as against mere making, when he wrote, concerning the notion of any created entity, that it will be true of it that

There is just one A; and God brought it about that (Ex)(x is an A) and for no x did God bring it about that x is an A; and c is an A.⁷

This may make logically perspicuous what is said when, say, creation (of self or another indifferently) is asserted. Positively, it is the denial of antecedent matter. But if I make myself an object thus, as in Geach’s formula, it is no longer I that is referred to, as it is in “I feel sick” or “I will not let you down”. The first person of the future tense changes the sense, therefore, of that tense. So no one can apply the formula about the object c to himself, without some modification at least. Even if I substitute “I am” for “c is” (an A), wishing to state that God created me, I say no more in kind than if I say I am a chess-player as well as Johnny is a chess-player. We both might be two non-existent, merely lexical dragons. Existential

⁷ P.T. Geach, *God and the Soul*, p.83.

import is thus a myth. Hume was so far right against Descartes. “I” names subjectivity and not the thinking subject in pure individuality. It is, says Hegel, the universal of universals and only for just that reason individual and also particular simultaneously. This consideration, of course, invalidates Geach’s whole formulation inasmuch as it depends upon the, we here see, unwarranted “existential quantifier”. Existence has no essence, true, but neither has essence any existence. Both are, rather, superseded in the Idea. Alternatively, we can reduce ex-istence to its etymological root as meaning a standing out (*ex-sistere*) from the rest. In this case, though, it denotes any abstracted concept and thus, as Hegel says, “Existence adds nothing to the things”.

So, ultimately no one and nothing ever causes anything or anyone, as bringing them about or even bringing “it” about that they are. The whole causal universe is a self-contradictory phenomenon and is nothing other than this false appearance, a falsity that is the essence of the finite. Nothing “lies behind” it, as if “in itself”, to stand beside or limit the absolute. The scholastic *plura entia sed non plus entis*, that the creation posits “more beings but not more being”, does no more than pose the problem of this contradictory presentation of the abstract understanding (*Verstand*) in its own terms. It is, though, a wilful presentation, a self-veiling (so as to unveil, re-veal) from within even, of the Idea itself, so that, or rather *in* that, truth emerges as “its own result”, as self-authenticating, as, in Hegel’s phrase, “the method”. The absolute *is* this method, since it cannot logically tolerate any means to an end not “yet” realised. The Idea, that is, is result of itself, as falsity is the necessary foil of truth. Otherwise the Idea, impossibly, would be contingent, sheer “facticity”, still passive to something *else*. The falsity is presupposed to the true, as evil to the good, Hegel claims, and this is the very opposite of that “logical Manichaeism” of which Geach, with whatever right, accuses Frege. Evil and falsity, for Hegel as for Aquinas, are of themselves in a good and true subject, *semper in subjecto*, are never themselves absolute.

Thus when Hegel says there is evil in God as well as good he means that the former is necessarily presupposed to the latter, as, differently, we have just seen, the latter is to the former. This leads him on to say, “unspiritually” (his own word), that good and evil are “the same”. Just as we, at the phenomenal level, form erroneous beliefs here and there, for which, at the same level, we are even responsible, so, as the ground of their phenomenality, absolute mind “intends objects in an initially

inadequate way via our finite minds” (T.L. Sprigge⁸, citing Royce’s account of what McTaggart calls our systematic misperception). But what are or could be finite minds is our question here?⁹

We begin by wanting to ask: who or what first “gave” us ourselves, as in geometry we speak of “the given”, the axioms, before attempting any proof whatever. If each man is his own self there is no essence of that self as such, since this objectifies the subject, in self-contradiction. Hence abstractly individual subjectivity, represented by a “term”, must be transcended in thought and thus “cancelled” (Hegel’s term) as objectifying abstraction. Subjectivity transcends it in the Idea. The “I who is” is thus no longer I since he has his other within himself and becomes it, is indeed that becoming, ceaselessly, from which alone mind, spirit, the dialectic and its method flow as themselves originating it. This is the original *exitus* and *reditus*, the physical representing the logical rather than set in contrast to it, as the logical is itself the final truth of the physical, the natural (*physis*). Mind in itself, that is, has no “phenomenology”, since its phenomenology is by definition just what is not “had” or, simply, is not. In any “phenomenology of mind” (Hegel’s title), therefore, we ascend out of phenomenology, as Hegel himself demonstrated. So, he will finally state, in dying as our own act we ascend out of life and hence “become universal self-consciousness”.¹⁰ This is what the senses *represent*, as themselves representations of non- or supra-sensual spirit, according to the analysis of sense-consciousness in the initial section of *The Phenomenology of Mind*. The implication is that nothing is lost or left behind, or that what is left behind is nothing, that death, in a word, *is* spiritual resurrection. The “Way of the Cross” as represented in religion (Hegel’s subject here) is not, insofar as it is anything, an abstracted means merely.

So in proposing this approach to the question, just raised, of the self one attempts a new language, but only incidentally. Thus one must counter G.E.M. Anscombe’s assertion that the self is not a proper subject for

⁸ Timothy L. S. Sprigge, “The Absolute”, in *Dictionary of Ontology and Metaphysics* (ed. Burkhardt & Smith), Munich 1991, p.2.

⁹ Compare here Hegel’s account of the Kantian antinomies as showing, not some deficiency of reason, but that “the body of cosmical fact, the specific statements descriptive of which run into contradiction, cannot be a self-subsistent reality, but only an appearance” (*Enc.* 48).

¹⁰ Cf. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind* (tr. Baillie), Harper Torchbooks, New York 1966, pp.780-781: “the pure or non-actual Spirit of bare thought has become actual” in “spiritual resurrection”. It is “the particular existence” that “becomes universal self-consciousness”, sublating our factuality as logic itself declares.

philosophical investigation, not “an important philosophical topic”.¹¹ By contrast, Hegel sees what is termed mysticism as rooted in the same speculative discourse, in “the Reason-world” (EL82 add.). Self is inadequately treated, is not considered, when regarded as mere condition or point of departure for experience. This Kantian view had, however, the merit of showing that self is not just another contingency, as in what we might call the thoughtless attitude. There is however a thought behind such thoughtlessness, namely the intuition that I am not my self exclusively, that such an object cannot be meant, though we “try”, says Hegel, to mean it. I, rather, is (am!) the universal of universals and, as such, not counted among names or even, philosophically, among pronouns. “I” used in a simple future tense, for example, typically affects and thus controls the whole sense of the verb, as do claims about subjective feelings and thoughts. Wittgenstein, too, can seem to have tried to eliminate this truth in his denial of a private language. This, Hegel would have retorted, is a point about the finitude of language and not about thought or subjectivity as such. It does not exclude solipsism, as Wittgenstein himself realised. The solipsist does not understand why everyone else, as he supposes, is not a solipsist too. The only solution open, this shows, is to see that self is absolute, in which all coincide, is itself, we might say, “neither one nor many” or, equivalently, both of these. “I am you”, so you are I. This is the original basis of love, derived by Thomas Aquinas, only reputedly realist, from “the analogy of being”. Each is to his being in a similar, “properly proportional” (Cajetan) way, Hegel’s “identity in difference”. But we are not here dealing with the instantiation of a concept, not even that of analogy, which is itself analogous. It is in this situation, as we have outlined it, that Hegel states that “all judgments are false”, an apparent self-contradiction in performance, which, however, he possesses the means for disarming.

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So on idealist premises, as Hume pointed out, we have no reason to admit a private self that endures through the succession of experiences we call our own, relying on memory. Yet it is indeed our memory, not someone else’s, we rely on, though our assurance here merely begs the question. Where otherwise is the unity of experience or, indeed, anything to talk about, language being constitutionally drawn from the pit (Hegel) of our

¹¹ Elizabeth Anscombe, “Twenty Opinions Common among Modern Anglo-American Philosophers”, in the *Acts of the International Congress of Moral Theology*, Rome, April 1986, *Città Nuova Editrice*, pp.49-51.

memory? Hegel compares this pit to a pyramid. Who lies buried, mummified, within there? Or if, with Augustine, we find God in the memory, then how can it be ours exclusively? Psychologists postulate archetypes, a “collective unconscious”. There is nothing unconscious about it, however. “All nature is akin and the soul has learned everything” (Plato, *Meno*). Do not ask whose soul? Plato is speaking of soul, spirit, mind, of which nature is the product. This is what relates or identifies every part of it to or with every otherwise other part, making it “akin”, all of a piece, as one Word, in the ancient usage. This is the presupposition of “science” too, that nature, inclusive of even whatever relative chaos there is in it, is rational, “akin”, to be connected, in a word, systematic.

Self, however, belongs with consciousness. That is, self is self-knowing, even if, with Aquinas, we say it is only known in its knowing of other things. Every self has to have “its own other”. Hegel’s dialectic purports to show this. An innate idea I never experienced would be chimerical, Locke thought. Yet, writes Hegel, “the principles in question, though innate, need not on that account have the form of ideas or conceptions of something we are aware of” (EL67). At issue, in part here, is what sense Hegel gives to consciousness when he speaks of self-consciousness especially, which is developed and, he insists, mediated, by “development, education, training”. This, once possessed, he says, is impervious even to death, a passage giving the lie, implicitly at least, to those maintaining that Hegel has nothing to say at all about immortality. Knowledge, for him synonymous with self-consciousness, is not essentially felt, though it can be (*Enc.* 159). Hence the nineteenth century purveyors of “ontologism”, as they called their Hegelian precipitate, were true to Hegel, whom they followed, in asserting that the idea, even the knowledge, of God, the absolute universal, is present to Mind as such or even is mind.¹²

The self may suffer from amnesia. Yet this is itself a form of consciousness. Memory is not then a necessary condition for such consciousness, while the self remains also in sleep. Indeed, some spiritual “masters” enjoin an active “dark night of memory”, but so as to

¹² This system, ontologism, was introduced in the Catholic world specifically and is arguably what immediately provoked the Roman authorities to resurrect thirteenth century Thomism (1879) as being “all the philosophy a Catholic needs to know” (Kleutgen), having condemned or set aside Hegelian ontologism as “not safe for teaching” (1860). As a movement specifically, then, such “neo-scholasticism” was “semi-political” (Karl Rahner, d.1984. See our “Neo-Scholasticism” in *Dictionary of Metaphysics and Ontology*, Munich 1991, pp. 610-612).

“remember” only God or, as viewed in philosophy, thought or the thought, the Idea, itself. This is not properly remembered, however, inasmuch as it cannot be “membered” in the first place, having no parts. Yet, as we noted above, it is present to mind as constituting it. It is mind, finally identified by Hegel as freedom or as the Concept, thought, that is ever at home with itself in its other. This, of course, implies just as well that the other, as its other, is at home with mind. It is this alone that enables mind, at a conclusion of the dialectic that is in no sense temporal, to go forth from itself in external procession *as* Nature, from which it returns, in recapitulating Nature, as Spirit.¹³ So there are two processions, two “otherings” of self, just as noted in Aquinas’s account, but now further specified. Yet the second is not so much additional as it is an analogy of the first or, from our phenomenal or “natural” and finite point of view, out of which the whole use and sense of language is built up, the first is only ever spoken of at all by and in analogy with the second.

The procession of Nature then, the “free” going forth¹⁴ of mind, is a representation, a *Vorstellung*, of the internal process. Yet it has its reality as being a genuine moment thereof. The Word that was with God (*Gospel of John*), the “internal word” of the or any concept (Aquinas), “was made flesh... among us” and is thus flesh, “not by a conversion of the godhead into flesh” but by a “taking of the manhood into God” (“Athanasian” Creed), corresponding in truth to the Concept’s own initiative or act (*energeia*). In first treating this Word as Son or as the eternal procession within God, after establishing that there are and must be “processions in God”, St. Thomas confronts the objection that, as he has himself demonstrated, God, the Infinite, precisely as infinite, must be absolutely simple. His answer is that an or the word, definite in its indefiniteness or infinity (the Latin language abetting), which is self-expression, must, when it is a perfect act, act as such here, be identical with or in no way less than the one uttering it. It, word, *verbum*, is itself active, is indeed act, as verb or “action word”. Since, also, infinity is, as all, one, a unity, the only conclusion to draw is that Word and Father, Father and Son in theology, must be identical though distinct in this perfect and not merely abstract simplicity, reasoning that will be extended and completed in the consideration of Spirit, “holy” in theology but actually Reason itself, identical with its one unchanging act of self-knowing, in which all is held. The real and the mental, that is, as abstract “modes” of being, are ultimately identical, neither being a reduction to the other.

¹³ Compare Plato, “All nature is akin and the soul has learned everything” (*Meno*).

¹⁴ Cf. *Enc.* 158: “This truth of necessity, therefore, is *Freedom*...”, together with the addition.

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So if memory is not a necessary condition for the continuity of self in what may its continuity consist? The mere fact of sleep, which may last for years, does not destroy this continuity, such that the one who sleeps awakes, but rather shows that the continuity does not consist in any form of consciousness as we normally use the term, though this is not how Hegel speaks of “self-consciousness”. “I live yet not I”, wrote the Apostle Paul, “but Christ lives in me”, here substituting for consciousness a principle of unfeelt faith, as it was and may still be called. There is only an “analogy” of faith with feeling or consciousness, or it may even be seen as their opposite, as a principle of non-feeling, close to hope in this, hence a virtue, a power or habit of the mind. It has a closer analogy, however, even an identity as form of it, with knowing, with intellectual process or thinking, where nothing is felt. Yet both Descartes and Hegel treat thought and feeling under the one head of consciousness, as being knowledge knowing itself, as it must in order to be knowledge in its concept. The apparent infinite regress in knowing that one knows that one knows and so on clearly has significance, either as an objection to the thesis or as something that can be turned to its account. For McTaggart it is a property of persons alone, as showing that only they can sustain their concrete individuality within the perfect unity of all persons in identity which he calls “heaven” or the true state of things or, rather, not of things but of just and only such persons, making appeal to Hegel’s statement that universality is the principle of personality, as I, again (and not the mere monolingual “I”, “*ich*”, etc.) is the “universal of universals”. The derivation of this from formal logic is worked out in the section of the *Encyclopaedia* dealing with “The Subjective Notion”.

Here universality, particularity and individual flow into or, more truly, are identified with one another. The question as to the continuity of the individual, abstractly considered, thus dissolves. This consequence of Hegelian thought has been misused, whether in Bolshevism, where licence was taken to consider today’s friend as tomorrow’s enemy, out of a pseudo-practical teleology, no account being taken of a need to show any connection between such “rationality” and elementary justice, say, or, in Nazism, where this same aim (*telos*) is simply to break down any sense of individual worth at all, in final acknowledgement of the denial of *praxis* as the good, since this denial, of will by will, becomes itself the good or

aim.¹⁵ Thus, in Vonnegut's novelistic account (*Slaughterhouse 5*), though probably a true memory, the American prisoner who gets two teeth knocked out by the brainwashed guard and asks "Why me?" receives the contemptuous answer, "Why you? Why anybody?" The freedom afforded by these movements turns out to be a freedom to go nowhere. One is "free among the dead" (*Psalms* 87), adrift in an infinitely empty space. This is essentially the psychopathic condition, which, Maritain has noted, can grip whole nations¹⁶ as well as it can an individual. This is in itself confirmatory of Hegelian logic, though Maritain did not perhaps notice this.

In exercising justice or kindness toward an individual rather, as religion teaches, we are exercising it upon all or, rather, upon Christ, as eventually "all in all". Thus, anyhow, has been and is interpreted the need to concretise any or the universal. "Go you and do likewise". It is in this sense that Hegel understands his "principle of kind" and not, context shows, in the sense of an abstract universality. Here we have the roots of an infinite substitutability or "coinherence", among "the companions of the coinherence" (Charles Williams), which Hegel, however, identifies with Mind itself, in which individuals cohere and more than cohere, even more than *coinhere*, with "in" as metaphor for identity. "I am you" (Schrödinger, Kolak).

The cult of "the present moment" thus falls short of the Hegelian vision, as itself depending upon the abstractly conscious individual. What's the time? This question applies neither when you are asleep nor on the sun (where it is never five o'clock). This simple fact already shows the inseparability of time and space or, rather, place. This, also, is why memory, its concept, is not reducible to the time series. I can acknowledge memory now without acknowledging time. "I remembered my God and I groaned".

What is it then that anyone thinks when he thinks "I"? We might say it is not so very different from the divine or absolute answer in *Exodus*, "I

¹⁵ This is the conclusion of Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951). The constitutive place this work, at first sight oddly, gives to "anti-Semitism" (oddly, because this has been represented as a uniquely "Nazi" phenomenon), seen as persecution of the Jewish people specifically, links it with Hegel's speculatively self-contradictory thesis of "absolute religion" (particularised in Christianity in destructive absorption of Judaism), thus making of totalitarianism, judged mistakenly by Arendt to be a unique or "absolute evil", a necessary "moment", since it occurred, in the dialectical interpretation of history as essentially phenomenal. The work thus reflects and recalls the section "Absolute Freedom and Terror" in Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Mind*, or as well say it recalls the French Revolution as in truth a phase of mind.

¹⁶ J. Maritain, *Christianity and Democracy*, Geoffrey Bles, London 1944.

am he who is”, the gender-reference apart, or, a variant, “I will be what I will be”, illustrating the irrelevance of tense. From the universal viewpoint, however, treating this, as no doubt Israel understood it, as an abstractly individual utterance, of “God alone”, we might, with Catherine of Siena, represent ourselves as hearing this identification of subject and object, of God and being. “I am he who is, you are she who is not”. “He” would not have done as well, if the gender-opposition is recognised as necessary to thought’s own dialectic, as at *Enc.* 220, the “Affinity of the Sexes”.

So the use of this abstractly individual form, of “I”, leaves us with the Hegelian identification of Being and Non-Being at the start of logic, from which its further development will distance us, in greater intimacy with it, in the progression of dialectical concepts towards the Idea of perfect unity.

Everyone refers to himself or herself as “I”, not however as he might refer to, or rather describe himself as, say, “man” or even “this silly creature” (Margery Kempe). No two men can give “I” the same reference. It has rather to be discovered, revealed, that two is one and hence that self’s other is self, as that repulsion is attraction and difference is identity. What you do to others you do to me, and I to you. When I am seen to be you the second and third persons are no longer taken as objects, about which one can make “objectual” statements, any more than one can for the first person future. Hence, in Hegel’s account of logic, as within cognition itself, will is first set over knowledge (in being treated after it), Good over Being, as immediate ante-room to the Idea in a unilinear Advance. The thesis-antithesis-synthesis model of earlier sections has been left behind. Here philosophy has become, is revealed to be, pure theology, whether we dub that theology theistic or atheistic. It follows upon physics, philosophy of nature, as *meta physica*, the philosophy of mind or spirit. Here what is put as “after” philosophy of nature is also “first” philosophy or philosophy of logic, *logica docens*. Similarly this succeeds upon as found to be first underlying *logica utens* or “formal” logic. Thus the scholastic world had already identified the polarities held in balance in Hegel’s system..

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In this self-reference I do not make of myself an object, since then I am no longer myself, but refer rather to a man I happen to be, who might, for example, be mad. Thus Hamlet refers to himself in his apology, his disclaimer of responsibility, for Ophelia’s death before her brother Laertes. This discloses the wisdom of the blanket directive not to judge, upon which Hegel comments that “all judgments are false”, entitled by this stage to treat theory (the “highest praxis”) and praxis as one. “The fool

sees not the same tree as a wise man sees” (Blake), just as, says Hegel, the experience of a Goethe is not that of any Tom or Dick. “I am the captain of my soul” is the air breathed here. Yet governments have nothing to fear, for in this utter difference all are made one, each has left his shadow-self, his ego, behind, in the pit of the non-existent and this, Hegel says, is freedom of the spirit, every man having his own white stone which is yet, in common with all, white. Individual and universal become, are, each other. Hence the possibility of syllogism in all its figures, based upon the distinction of “every” from a mere “all” or of a universal from a merely “general” will (of the greatest number), giving the possibility of the triumph of each man over “the world”, precisely what democracy, its spirit, would protect and enable.

What is it to be this I that is a thinking thing or is conscious? Descartes scarcely raised this question, once having attained to the fact in his exultant Second Meditation. This I, he seems to mean, is always or essentially thinking, *cogitans*. This is the opposite of Aquinas when in realist mood: *anima mea non est ego*. My soul is not I. In fact, though, it is and so “I live and yet not I”. This is the spiritual meaning of resurrection, of standing up from the dust. Dust is not. We “know not what we shall be”, whatever the sense in which “we know what we are”, a text (from *I John*) that McTaggart greatly admired. This is the difficulty about immortality and the future life, as religion often presents it. It is present actuality revealed, rather, in the subversion of temporality and its vanity, which would yet be retained if one were to say that the resurrection had already occurred, yesterday perhaps. The third day, rather, leaves behind both the day and its other, the emptiness of Holy Saturday, rising out of the passing, the procession, of days, “this petty pace”. Macbeth sought freedom from it, from finitude, in death and Hegel in fact affirms that the truth of death is entry into spirit. Hence he affirms the need to die truly and completely, not as a slave. This is confidence, this is philosophy itself raised up, thus redeeming or “accomplishing” religion, where “a veil” still hangs over things, just as “when Moses is read”. Philosophy, however, remains esoteric, not “for all”, as “religion” is exoteric, “for all men”, Hegel cautions. Yet religion is set towards that spiritualisation of all, that “God shall be all in all”, that philosophy finally or in itself is, the procession namely of spirit, which the printed page (or spoken voice) only elicits, words leading to Word or *self*-revelation.

Why am I numbered, why do I find myself, among actual consciousnesses?

O cursed spite,
that ever I was born
to set it right.

The fictional character here “stands for” each and every possible consciousness, in a universal *self*-consciousness that cannot possibly be “born”. So mothers may indeed *as well* tell their children they found them under a cabbage-leaf, a leaf wide enough to shelter them as well, which they never “leave”. The moment of the “process of kind”, that is, like the sexes themselves, “runs away”, sublated in the final, ever realised Idea and End, which each one is as being “neither one nor many”, prefigured earlier in the *Logic*, in logic, as self-repulsion in universal attraction. Hence, in wondering about myself I and philosophy begin as one to be and my abstract particularity is sublated, a vanishing shadow in a vanishing of this vanishing, as Hegel himself puts it. “*Since* Being and Nothing vanish in Becoming... the latter must vanish also”.¹⁷ How is it that the world has become, quite recently, a world for me? Why am just I that child born of my parents at that time and place? Can I intelligibly say that there just happens to have come to be a consciousness in such and such an ambience such that I am aware of it and it is mine? The “I”, with all its difficulties, has then been just shunted into a subordinate clause.

It is not possible that this unity of knowledge, freedom 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, freedom and choice are essentially eternal and unchangeable and numerically one in all men, nay in all sensitive beings... you... are all in all... not merely a piece of the entire existence.¹⁸

I am to myself something which is, but which is not an object of experience. In fact the word “something” goes too far, as Hume showed. I, like the world, am made an object, while we may, in fact, treat the world in the same way as we are treating ourselves, as subject (though what is a fact?). Then, though, it is not the world seen in that photograph taken by astronauts of our globe from somewhere beside or on the moon, a beautiful, blue, heavy-looking object. It is required, rather, that there be no such thing, no “thing” at all, save for that moment it, *thing*, its category, exercises in the dialectic.

Certainly my mind is of the same nature, as we say, as all other human minds at some point. Indeed it is individuated in just the way that they are and that is its universality. Yet we still want to say, do we not, that all this could have been so without *my* being there at all. The world need not

¹⁷ *Enc. 89, Zus.* (stress added).

¹⁸ E. Schrödinger, as quoted in Daniel Kolak, *I am You*, Springer, New York, 2002, Preface.

include my awareness of it, this is to say, which is the condition merely for true knowledge by anyone anywhere, “surely”, as we want to add under our breath. But then this would be true equally of the collectivity and then we would have a world without reason’s thinking, we suppose. But what is the world without the reason, as Gottlob Frege once rhetorically asked? Yet we can’t just generalise thus, but must universalise individuality itself, as we have been urging all along. By this, one man counts for as much or as little as a hundred billion men, and only by this, whereby man is no longer man in any recognisable biological or life-sense. Ideas of an infinite multitude, in antinomy, are thus shown up as a mere representation of the individual, of mind. Numbers are finally not considered *in divinis* (Aquinas), i.e. absolutely. Indeed, “it is useless to count” (Hegel). This is precisely what the counting child learns by his attempt to count “to the end”. The “spurious” infinite, in what Hegel calls its badness, is (finite) representation or figure of the reality rather than sheer error, except in the general sense that all our immediate perception, even of life itself, is “misperception” (McTaggart).

What is clear is that one cannot be given to oneself, as it were prior to one’s actual being. Or rather, one can indeed, but not temporally or as receiving *before* one is there to receive. One’s receiving is the creative act itself, the actual union that the growth of self-consciousness is realising. Self-consciousness, again, is sheer apprehension, in its plenitude, merely represented as the life-process. In other words what results is the result’s own result, *ad infinitum*. This is the meaning of *causa sui*, the sublation of cause, namely, as of result. If end is as such realised then end is beginning, as being, with which science begins, is science’s end, the Idea. In the Idea one finds full reason for existence, one’s own or another’s indifferently. Yet inasmuch as being is, rather, the Idea being is not being or, rather, is itself non-being. This is the ground-posit of (Hegel’s) logic.

All I have been calling my own is then common, universal. One or the many indifferently, this unity itself, is “as having nothing yet having all things”. What religion represents as the most difficult and glorious of achievements is in actuality just this, actuality. Only being can give rise to, as only being can limit, being. Infinite and hence pure act is the ground of this. To know it, however, one has to forget oneself entirely or, more truly, deny one’s self, in deed as in thought. All is thought, as or since thought is all. “The soul is all things” (Aristotle), which is to say it is no thing, knows itself only *in* the knowing of its other (Aquinas) or in self-alienation *ipso facto* returning to self (Hegel).

CHAPTER ONE

HEGEL “THE NEW THEOLOGIAN”

This book is written in the conviction that it is Hegel rather than St. Simeon of old who should rather now be titled “the new theologian”. For this reason, for the newness as illustrated below, it is he who more than any other can fittingly be taken as the successor to the torch-bearing Thomas Aquinas, himself succeeding to the whole wisdom of past ages, as Hegel too has absorbed the best of the period in between him and “the dumb ox of Sicily”, explicitly or implicitly. Both therefore are pre-conceived in Aristotle, by the Idea, as well as are the two great apostolic theologians, Paul and John. Thus Hegel is indeed “the new Aristotle”, left like him to long or less long periods of forgetfulness and incomprehension. For, as Plato said, again, “All nature is akin and the soul has learned everything” (*Meno*). This applies also to the nature of a thought as itself nature and a nature, insofar as it too *appears*, such that it is within this appearance that pagan and Christian are categorised. So, all thoughts are akin, are thought. Thought appears as manifested, as express Word, as nature. Add to this though the intrinsic finitude of time, *as also*, however, of the categories of potency and act, of possibility and of actuality as falling short of the absolute actuality of the Idea, as a supposed actuality that is not actual, not Realised End: Here the last is the true first.

Without more ado then I proceed to make good once more this for many no doubt still astonishing and undesirable claim, in the conviction that the newest is the oldest, as “Inward and Outward are identified” (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*, §138).

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It is important, first, to notice that Hegel writes that the Absolute Idea holds all determination (*alle Bestimmtheit*) within it and not merely all

determinations (this would be *Bestimmtheiten*)¹, though this will then be true too. As not abstractly individual but just in its individuality the universal of universals, since it is of necessity infinite, the Idea knows and actively thinks all possibility and every possibility, the first of which is possibility itself. It can be no slave to prior modalities.

It was probably the import of Possibility which induced Kant to regard it along with necessity and actuality as Modalities, “since these categories do not in the least increase the notion as object, but only express its relation to the faculty of knowledge”. For Possibility... was formerly called the Inward, only that it is now taken to mean the external inward, lifted out of reality... and is thus, sure enough, supposed only as a bare modality, an abstraction which comes short and, in more concrete terms, belongs only to subjective thought. ... The rule for it merely is that a thing must not be self-contradictory. Thus everything is possible... Everything however is as impossible as it is possible...²

It is indeed this impossibility alone that pushes the dialectic on to the Idea. Impossibility and possibility are thus equally contained in the Idea as its method, which it itself is. It is thus meaningless to speak of them, since everything is conceivable and therefore possible, even or especially the impossible. Contradiction, however, as contained in the Idea is not contradiction as the understanding abstractly grasps it but the mark of a false because finite reality.³ Since it is itself Idea this act, self-consciousness itself, foundational to all activity, includes its own positing. Therefore it is that there are other self-determinations also. They are of infinite character, within or as constituting the Idea itself, as, therefore, “its own other”, identical in their difference with it as they are, therefore, with one another.⁴ These possibilities are, just as such, strictly necessary. Yet this, however, is true also of all the finite possibilities, as it is also true that they necessarily are not, while the greatest necessity lies in the Idea’s choice as necessarily absolute choice. That is, freedom is the ultimate necessity. Hence we ourselves, as finite subjects, are never freer than when we reason to necessary conclusions, whether these be theoretical or themselves free actions, these actions themselves conclusions to, intrinsic results of, practical syllogisms. In either case, since it is really one case,

¹ G.W.F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik* (here, WL or the “Greater Logic”), final chapter, “Die absolute Idee”. Suhrkamp, Werke, vol. 6, Frankfurt 1969 (1972), p.549.

² *Enc.* 143.

³ See Note 4 above.

⁴ Cp. Daniel Kolak, *op. cit.*

the conclusions are absolutely necessary, determined in the free and executive knowledge, which is love, in and of the Absolute, exercised by and in a manner specifying the active Idea, hereby knowing itself only. Thus within love its negation too is foreknown, non-being in being, as first showing of this “being *qua* being”, *nous*, as method or dialectic, Word, just that whereby the last is first and conversely.

So, Hegel says, the Idea determines itself to differing formations, to Nature and Spirit namely, and this is necessarily a *figure*, as is self-limitation or emptying (*kenosis*). One may wish to speak here of Hegel’s Trinitarian philosophy, not, however, in the sense of following a dogmatic declaration as extrinsic guide to thinking. Rather, the process of thought reflects back upon the dogma and clarifies or even “purges” it in the light of its own intrinsic triadicity. In this sense the philosophy of religion is itself theology, as Aristotle for example understood the latter. Philosophy, that is, reflects back upon any dogmas capable of catching its light. This means that such dogmas cannot be conceived as exceeding this light, which is infinite in being, truth and goodness. Ultimately the Idea is itself being. Truth and goodness, therefore, are but moments of it, of being, arising and retiring within the dialectic. Thus for Aquinas being is the only genuine transcendental predicate. Truth and goodness are but moments of this that is being and such as we may call or name being on occasion. They are, that is, *entia rationis*, beings of reason, as are, for example, nothing, or one, or the future, or dreams. They belong with language as a phenomenon that being, even as named “absolute knowledge” (*itself therefore a being of reason*, since mind is what being *is* or what mind thinks indifferently). absorbs into itself.⁵ For both Aquinas and Hegel, therefore, reason itself is ultimate being. Contrariwise, reason is the ultimate or specific difference, determining the whole of being, whether as such, since nothing is being except as or in the Idea, or in the particular case of the unicity of the determining form⁶. Thus soul or mind determine the whole man as otherwise a pure potentiality (*materia*) or nothing. This means that the final being is just this “being of reason”, is reason itself or thought thinking itself in act. From this standpoint, however, being itself becomes a being of reason, the first last, alpha omega.

Being, that is, is thought and not merely being thought. It is the Absolute Idea as, we have just said, the Idea is itself being. This Aristotelian and therefore post-Aristotelian position in fact, therefore, gives the *ratio* of “creation out of nothing”. Being, namely, is “not a whit

⁵ Cf. Aquinas, *QD de potentia*, Question VII, on the transcendental predicates generally.

⁶ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VII, all though as developing Book IV on contradiction.

better than” nothing, whether in itself or “as a definition of God” (*Enc.* 87). Elsewhere, accordingly, Hegel criticises the phrase *ex nihilo nihil fit* as atheistic denial of creation, but here he gives the sense in which it describes or defines precisely the “moment” of creation. The nothing in both cases is itself being, the goodness which “diffuses itself”. This whole passus may be regarded as the overcoming or *Aufhebung* of the category of *ens rationis* as a qualified type of being, necessary to any “realist” epistemology, by the logic of Absolute Idealism, indeed by logic as itself disclosing the latter in its claim to mirror or be absolute mind or spirit. “In God we live and move and have our being”, nowhere else, namely. That God is nothing, transcends being, is often asserted in Christian as in Neo-Platonic mysticism, anyhow only abstractly distinguished, one might claim. The final container, Christianity, is and, as final, must be itself uncontained and therefore in a sense nothing or infinite. Thomas Aquinas, who followed closely Pseudo-Dionysus, confirms this under the rubric of “the analogy of being”, which is “said in many ways” (Aristotle). One of these ways is this very identification with nothing, which is yet, or therefore, the Absolute Idea, as in the final section of Hegelian Logic in both its presentations. The Idea is or has “personality”, he says there, returning as life in transcendence of life’s first immediacy, as itself alone “being or imperishable life”. *Alles übrige ist Irrtum*, all else is error. This Idea though, we may be sure, includes all that is set forth in this *Science of Logic* as it progresses to its end, not destroying but fulfilling the intermediate positions or moments, just as is reflected in the history of philosophy itself. So Aquinas: “In God that which is known and the act of knowing are the same. Therefore whatever is in God as known is his actual living or his life... it follows that in him all things are the divine life itself”. Nothing (else) corresponds to this that abstractly remains just itself.⁷

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Theology as we have it today embodies a finite development within the Church, *ekklesia* or “called out” Christian community as finitely posited in time. This very figure, thus posited, is itself theology, as accounting pictorially for the being, the appearance, of separations, as Moses saw only one burning bush among many bushes, this *aesthesis*, of what he “turned aside” to *see*, representing the foundation of absolute spirit in art or in representation, *Vorstellung*, itself. This figure, of fire, or of Beatrice, in

⁷ Cf. Aquinas, *Summa theologica* Ia 18, 4.

whose eyes, in the *Purgatorio* of Dante’s poem, the very Word itself is reflected as a figure, itself necessarily figures figure itself, essentially. So theology is a figure using figurative language, Hegel says, to convey what such language figures. Thus it arose at a particular time or “after” the beginning, which cannot itself be in or even, therefore, of time. The beginning does not begin, movement does not move.⁸ Theology differs from the Scripture it expounds, even though Scripture may itself contain theological reasoning. This itself already establishes the infinite circularity, in return, of hermeneutics. Paul’s or John’s thought may fairly be classed, therefore, as philosophy, defined as thought thinking itself as being all “that which is known”. We may note, though, that Scripture might also be classed as a finite development, as not actual at the beginning of the religious movement or moment concerned, whether Christian (before the Gospels) or Abrahamic (before the Mosaic texts). But then the Incarnation might also be classed as finite unless we understand it as representing an or the infinite truth, an understanding, however, which must affect the representation as incarnation, man-becoming (*Menschenwerdung*) itself, what is infinite transcending all becoming or movement consequent upon imperfection. God, that is, can only be his own development (method). This is already theology, even as meta-theology, where everything and every particular is infinite, “the individual the universal” (Hegel’s “Doctrine of the Concept”).

The same may be said of Augustine’s thought. It is philosophical, even if he introduces or makes use of the notion of *regula fidei*, the “rule of faith”, of believing. For this concept is open to philosophical treatment or foundation like any other. It may be referred, for example, either to the existential situation of the thinking subject or to beliefs he is required to confess. The typical Jewish ideas may thus fairly be called philosophical, as Porphyry saw. He called the Jews “a nation of philosophers”. So the Pauline category of wisdom “from on high” is a philosophical category, in the same sense as we speak of African Philosophy, making a qualification namely. Philosophy, as thought, will finally be classed by Hegel as “within” the subject, though strictly this is still spatial metaphor or picture, as and because all is “within” or presupposed to the Idea. This “within” is figure for an identity of being ultimately transcending language. Language

⁸ Cp. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1071b, “movement can neither come into being, nor cease to be; nor can time come into being, or cease to be.” This act of potential being *qua* potential corresponds to Becoming in the dialectic, finite imperfection and contradiction itself, a necessary or logical category, superseded, in, for example, Realised End. Being, by contrast, is the “beginning” of science, in the sense of its abiding foundation and end, in and as the Idea.

stops at the paradox, “This also is thou, neither is this thou”, said of anything whatever, even of a given Trinitarian person. It is not, and yet is, the other one(s) as to “nature” or that universality which anyhow is “the principle of personality” (Hegel). For example, in Hegel’s thought, God the Father is only or first “realised” in his Son or in Nature, his other. Theologically one speaks of the ideas of all things as “contained” in the Word. That is, and it is classical, the Father is personally just this *relation* of divine fatherhood, of eternal generation of its, his, “own other”, in the sense that “I and my father”, two namely, “are one”.

The philosophy so redounds upon the theology that the category of revelation is freed from its taint of legalistic or extrinsic, but hence legislative, finitude. Trinity, again, is freed from suggestion of a positivistic and finite adhesion to a particular numeral, three. Rather, this threeness is referred to a necessary logical triadicity as condition for passing to new knowledge, or for newness or process as such. The mathematical analogue of this is that two things equal to a third thing are equal to one another. Hence, Hegel declares, “Everything is a syllogism”.

Not only, however, is the *trinitas* or threeness of Trinity thus saved. It is emphasised that the threeness is of a type able to pass on to any amount of numerical ideas whatever, this being used to show that the first threeness is not quantitative since, as we know, whether by our belief or from previous speculation, there are not three gods but one, the Idea, as is logically necessary. *Numeri non ponuntur in divinis* (Aquinas) and Hegel concurs, saying “It is useless to count” and accordingly going on without hindrance to postulate Satan as a fourth “Trinitarian” person, as Jung had postulated the Virgin Mary, recalling Goethe’s “eternal feminine”, though Jung did not preserve triadicity, which he regarded as “bad”. A fifth person proposed turns out to be some angel or other. In fact Hegel assimilates the angelic “host” to the divine persons, in true Biblical fashion. In the Bible, namely, “the angel of the Lord”, or in one case three angels (visiting Abraham), are very often, or always in tendency, assimilable to God himself, who in truth need send no messengers (*angeli*) who are not themselves the message or Word, himself. The perfect word, Aquinas says, would not be less or other than its utterer, thus upholding the divine simplicity in trinity. This move, we may now see, was no mere ingenious trick of the understanding (*Verstand*), any more than is the Trinity itself or its reflection in triadicity.

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Hegel points out that Satan is or was “Son of the Morning”, firstborn, Lucifer or light-bearer, before becoming, in story, the principle of evil, though we must of course distinguish being born as “created” from what is only-begotten (*unigenitum*) in eternally constitutive self-emptying or going forth, rather, the Son as such or Word. The logical possibility is there, this is to say, independent of our belief. Yet Lucifer’s “birth” as good, however taken, of itself means that good is the principle of evil. It is thus implied that evil could have no other origin. This is the height of consistency as of religious or pious insight and Hegel has nothing but praise for Boehme’s tortured attempts to represent this relation of good, that is of God, to evil, rather than representing the infinite as finitely beleaguered by evil or even in parity with it. The very notion of it, rather, is abstracted from good by way of pure negation. Yet there is no good without evil as there is no man without woman or woman without man and, no doubt, “hereby hangs a tale”. More importantly, there is no evil without good, no *culpa* that is not *felix*. When Augustine made this remark (*o felix culpa*) he imagined a contrast with a *culpa infelix* and thus found an evil good, in true feminist spirit as we might say. For the deeper truth is that *culpa* is as such *felix* as being part of the scheme of things or a constituent of the Idea and thus far, logic finds, one with it. Scripture reflects this in Job’s rhetorically questioning exclamation, “Have we received good at the Lord’s hand and shall we not receive evil?”

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A particular instance of heteronomy is the witness of miracle. Hegel concurs in the Humean rejection of miracle, as Hume defines it, as a possibility. Whatever occurs has an explanation, is rational, and is therefore not a miracle, is natural. Alternatively, Spirit as superseding and “putting by” nature in returning to original unrestricted being or nothing, in freedom, is itself that after which all miracle is named, itself the *magnalia Dei* of Pentecost, its fifty days, seven time seven plus one, as archaic liturgical figure for eternity or blessedness indifferently, as against the forty, evanescent day of the Lent of this life, one with the time, forty days, of the self-obliterative flood or the fruitless wandering, now forty years rather, in “the desert” or “wilderness”. The miracle of mind is simply the reintegration of nature with the non-alienated opposite of itself. The most natural thing, therefore, is the most miraculous.

The posited rationality of finite miracle depends upon the false or, again, impossible view, as merging finite with infinite, of the Idea, of the infinite God, as an abstractly external power, a *Deus ex machina*. The

latter was always, and properly, finite, thus failing to give authority to any miracle worked thereby. Miracle is rather figure for sign, for meaning, whereby glory, absoluteness, is manifested, as in language, speech, called human. So, if we continue to speak of miracle, in deference to the tradition, we are bound to concede, as does Gilson, that everything is a miracle as finally to be found in the Idea or, in his categories, having the transcendent God as first cause, i.e. a cause outside of Nature. Nature itself is a miracle. So the most conservative Christians tend to be ready to allow the wonders of *Exodus* to be explicable by natural causes while still being validly named *magnalia Dei*. Still, water cannot become wine nor wine blood nor, as in *Exodus*, water blood, nor can what is dead become alive. If wine becomes blood then the blood is already the wine. “This also is thou...”

Hence the resurrection is the giving of new meaning, or discovery of the true meaning, of just death, that gift of the gods to men. The miracles narrated are therefore inseparable from their function in just those narrations in their particular cultural context, which it is our business to appreciate. The abstention from such labour as “esoteric” (Hegel, speaking of philosophy) resolves itself therefore into a deferment of the educative task called evangelisation, which all perform in undergoing it. What was once “not given” to all must, in its integral entirety, eventually be made plain or shouted from the rooftops, where, then, not only the Apostle, or the original inner circle, shall then “know as I am known”.

It might however seem that the above does not exclude that the Idea might still work not only what seem, at some time and place, to us to be such but what in fact are miracles or that we ourselves as particularisations of the Idea might do so, transcending the self-representation of nature in its representation, or nature itself doing this. We might move a mountain, understanding however that such a miracle is more than an anticipated technology, is more like a man’s being alive who has truly died and “seen corruption”, as, say, Christ did not. Such a miracle, however, belongs entirely to a future that, from the idealist perspective, is rather the supra-temporal reality we now enjoy, though, as religion puts it, “by faith”.

Can we say the same about the Ascension into glory or the presumed Assumption of Mary or of Elijah or Enoch, noting that the possible and the actual or necessary are not to be separated here? It would be pointless to re-describe such postulated events as natural. Edward Schillebeeckx OP, in his study *Jesus*, suggests that at least one of the early Christian groups, the Marcan, frowned upon or wished to avoid stress upon or even assertions about a miraculous physical or “phenomenal” resurrection, as if hostile to the general spirituality of their faith, while St. Paul says that

Christ, the “last man” or “second Adam”, “became a living spirit”, as it were entirely, this being the mark of spirit and not some “absence” of the material, since this never was present anyway, as it is the office of philosophy to show. This would explain the too hastily presumed “lost ending” of Mark’s Gospel.

The miracle would then lie in “the empty tomb”, though this is plainly not a miracle but compatible, rather, with ancient hypotheses as to the “stealing away” of the body by the disciples or Christ’s not having in fact died on the Cross, both of which, if accepted, demand immediate translation of Christian or associated religion into philosophical categories, by which one might mean no more than a more drastic degree of distance from phenomena than specifically “sacred” theology generally attempts. For example, today, but not yesterday, it is quite acceptable to faith and its guardians to give a “spiritual” account of the Ascension. Christ did not “ascend” into the sky, blessing the privileged onlookers with his hands as he went up. Their being thus privileged, rather, points to the spiritual nature of what they could later do no more than thus represent. There seems no logical obstacle, in all consistency therefore, to postulate the same spiritual quality for Resurrection initially represented as of a corpse or, equivalently, of some dusty bones or transplanted molecules, coming together and rising up out of the earth or down from the air if, say, the body had once been destroyed, as to its form merely, by fire or acids.

All of which does not prevent that miracles may be themselves represented, this being all that is needed for our being asked or, better, invited to believe in them. This means though, in the poet’s words, that right vision will see Christ walking on the water “not of Genesareth, but Thames” or our local river. “Lo”, says the poet, as if to say that this is the meaning, the spiritual and only significance, of the prior representation. As for the latter one, as it would still be, the meaning is that it would be our consciousness, in philosophical category, seeing through the immediate to the inverted essence, coterminous or co-incident with the Concept, this being philosophy’s grasp of the Idea, namely that the world or anything other than the Idea, apart from its own Other, is nothing, annulled, this being the meaning of the image, the representation of a man walking upon water anywhere and everywhere.

This in fact is what is urged in much modern theology, but frequently misunderstood by either the more conservative or the less philosophical, two distinct categories which are not thereby of necessity separable. It is urged as what is not open to empirical falsification or verification. For the intention is not to reduce significance but rather to elevate it. As Hegel remarks somewhere, anyone who sees the truths of religion as dependent

upon verifiable or in some sense contingent historical events is not religious, does not instance a form of absolute spirit, we might say. It would appear, then, that the naïve or immediate belief in miracles as a category, their possibility logically, is an obstacle to right understanding or belief. Such a belief was and is “natural” in certain cultures. Such a particular belief, just therefore, cannot be made essential to the particular Christian truths without destroying their universality. We are claiming, yet more fundamentally, that it also pre-empts or prohibits the philosophical consciousness, which is the true or infinite form of Absolute Spirit.

In this sense the mystical is “the way” for all Christians, as the “gifts of the Spirit” are “for” them, as God himself is called “for us” or as God employs, it is said, the “things that are not” to “bring to nought the things that are” (St. Paul). So the opposition of esoteric philosophy to exoteric religion (Hegel) is a mere moment of “god’s willing all men to be saved” or, as Hegel says, we must distinguish becoming as little children from remaining oneself or keeping others childish. Religion, Hegel insists, has its rights against a philosophy abstractly disclaiming it. Philosophy has only to recall that it is itself the ultimate *Gottesdienst*.

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Accepting this logical insight concerning miracles, we focus further on Christian origins, as Hegel does in the penultimate chapter of *The Phenomenology of Mind*, beginning with the essential concept of Revelation, as governing the whole. Newman, we might first recall, declared that the essential dogma of Catholicism, its substantial or actualising form, was “the infallibility of the Church”. This note of infallibility, applied also to the Scriptures, is the enabling or defining mark of what is accordingly called revelation. Rather than question this infallibility we have to enquire whether infallibility requires an extrinsic or heteronomous instance, as immediate religious consciousness assumes without question, a fact which has never been a bar to “understanding spiritual things spiritually” or theologically. It was just this process of spirit whereby the early philosophers destroyed the credibility of Greek religion as then practiced, thereby preparing the way for a Jewish and eventually Christian outlook. Regarding what I say here, we may note that Hegel, in general scholarly opinion, later revised his earlier opinion that Jewish religion and general outlook was inferior to the Greek or classical.

The Idea, says Hegel, is, as infinite, essentially revealed and cannot be otherwise. This, I suggest, corresponds to “glory” in religion. This glory is there to be seen, stands revealed, but the initiative lies, necessarily, with

the Idea regarding to whom it is to be shown, since the Idea is, as such or “definitionally”, finite objectivity transcended and so it is just by this that God has to be “a hidden God”, as pure act. The Scriptural image for this is the “still small voice” that Elijah was *privileged* to hear. The Hegelian contention, all the same, is that it is shown to anyone living, which means ultimately thinking, according to reason, since reason itself is revelation, just as it is freedom and conversely, the knowledge that alone knows itself. For reason all stands unveiled, *re-velatum*, seen, by those seeing, therefore, on the surface of Nature. “Taste and see, that the Lord is God”. Here tasting is a first or immediate form of seeing, rather than an extrinsic condition for it. What is outward is inward; that is, it is not outward, or, which is the same, it is the inward that is outward⁹. We see Christ walking upon Genesareth, he is revealed, wings beating at our “clay-shuttered doors”, our dullness. The figure waits to be transfigured, to be seen upon Thames, for example, Jerusalem to be “builided here” (or anywhere), to cite two English poets, as metaphysical both as any of their predecessors. So we “touch the intangible”, though Hegel does not add, with the paradoxical poet, “know the unknowable”. In itself the Idea is supremely knowable, to the point of absolute self-knowledge. All of which is to say that God is not “envious and jealous” (Plato), this being but the expression of the above truths in religious *figure*. One may with equal validity use the opposite figure, that of the “jealous God”. For the Idea, in its diffusive goodness, endures no rivals, claims them all as its own. The Outward and Inward correlation dialectically succeeds upon the relations of Whole and the Parts, Force and its Expression,

The relation of Outward and Inward ... sets in abeyance mere relativity and phenomenality in general... As for nature, it certainly is in the gross external... even on its own part. But to call it external “in the gross” is not to imply an abstract externality – for there is no such thing. It means rather that the Idea which forms the common content of nature and mind, is found in nature as outward only, and for that very reason only inward.... It is the lesson of religion that nature, no less than the spiritual world, is a revelation of God... All that God is, He imparts and reveals; and He does so, at first, in and through nature.¹⁰

History, nature’s counterpart, is thus a process of this systematic self-revelation, which is the Idea’s self-clarification or constitutive *unveiling*.

⁹ Enc. 138.

¹⁰ Enc. 140, add. Cp. Wordsworth’s “thoughts of one mind”, Plato’s “All nature is akin” (Meno).

As concrete this must be thought as occurring in one concrete individual, so as to be truly universal, as the universal itself is truly individual, there being no such thing as *that* individual, as if abstracting individuality from itself (the error of “existentialism”). The coming of such an individual, which is thus the same as the coming of individuality, was foretold and hoped for by the Jews. “When the Messiah comes he will teach us all things.” So, “in the fullness of time” that movement of revelation occurred, centred around one whom Hegel calls a “presumed” (*gemeinten*) “individual historical figure and its past”. Here we should recall Hegel’s general view concerning *meinen* and its impossibility, expressed early on in the Logic. “I cannot say what I merely *mean*”.¹¹ This may be regarded as identifying the *caesura* of history, placed by others, such as Jaspers, elsewhere.

This taking the fullness of time as if it were itself but a moment *in* or of time is but “soulless recollection”, of the past “figure”. There was not a “moment of time”, a “once upon a time” that in any way *counts*. The fullness of time, in other words, refers to time’s self-suspension. The attempt to “get at the notion” only succeeds where time is “seen through” and not by “reversion to the primitive”. This “confuses the origin, ...the immediate existence of the first historical person, with the simplicity of the notion”.¹² We are very close here to the analysis of sensation made earlier in *The Phenomenology of Mind*.

The revelation as temporarily embodied (the requirement of individuality, unthinkable without the “parts outside parts” of time), “relinquishes itself”. It exists at once in its spatio-temporal (Hegel writes “spatial” only) “extension” as well as “in the self”, in its “depth”.¹³ In this way the incarnation, taken as the birth of Christ, is a mystery or truth of faith, a faith requiring history’s self-transcendence in and as “the Day of the Lord”. This faith is perfected and not “put by” (*aufgehoben*) in philosophy. “The just shall live by faith”. This refers to the virtue rather than to content.

Again, transcendence of miracle clarifies this. There is a kind of consensus among theologians that the perpetual virginity of the Mother of God (thus incarnated or “mothered”) is not a necessary condition for that God’s incarnation, as if limiting the divine power. This removes that

¹¹ EL20, cp. EL24, add.(1): “it is man who first makes himself double” etc.

¹² See Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, tr. Baillie, Harper Torchbooks, New York 1966, p.764.

¹³ This is Hegel’s contribution, if oblique, to the age-old puzzling over the text, “The Kingdom of Heaven is within you” and whether “within” should not rather mean, or does not speculatively include, rather, “among”.

intended and adored individual, at a stroke, from any possible abstractly physical or objective identification (e.g. as the only one born of a virgin) in Hegel’s restricted or abstract sense of “objective”. The objective is the subjective, the inward act of faith, on a par with knowing as certainty. His, the individual’s, knowing himself as the One sent, but also the sender, is a matter of the quality of consciousness, nothing else.

The eye with which God sees me, is the eye with which I see Him, my eye and His eye are one. In the meting out of justice I am weighed in God and He in me. If God were not, I should not be, and if I were not, he too would not be.¹⁴

There is no objective distinguishing quality that “counts”, again, such as having no human father. Religion here anticipates, but in figure merely, philosophy’s transcendence of the “grass” (Isaiah) that is flesh. Figure, however, hallowed though it may be, is indifferent to instantiation. Thus in itself, as just noted, there is no necessity for this consciousness’s being achieved, or admitted, by *just one* individual. So St. Thomas, contemplating this alternative, only says that postulating any alternative or plural incarnations is unfitting, *inconveniens*, surely only an “immediate” judgment. Thus he does not add a reason for it. Universal incarnation would become one or individual over again, as unity is a mark of the Church or “body of Christ”, as “all one person”, writes the Apostle, the addition “in Jesus Christ” not belittling or disempowering the first phrase. Thus the Christian movement itself straightaway multiplied the instances of Christ as many in one and in that way all are “immaculately conceived”¹⁵. Baptism is the sign or saying of this more than it is any

¹⁴ Eckhart as cited by Hegel with approval at LPR I, p.228. These words, it is not always noted, duplicate utterances of the Gospel’s main speaker later taken as Trinitarian, just as they might recall Al Hallaj and others sharing this Eckhartian consciousness, abstracting now from any dilemma as to natural or “supernatural”, itself perhaps the greatest abstraction of all.

¹⁵ The Marian dogmas and doctrines this phrase recalls may come to be or already are regarded as first steps in this direction of universalising the individuality, regarding it as universal, as Hegelian logic requires. So the doctrines do not say they are to be applied *only* to Mary. The idea of an application of Christ’s “merits” as foreseen or ideally known can be applied left, right and centre and even backwards, as here, not merely in time but in an interlocking redemptive mutuality of all with all, entirely in each case, not abstractly losing the individuality. The notion of merit with God, anyhow, is, taken literally, archaic and, at least as objectifying or abstractly particularising, idolatrous, as might seem the Thomistic notion of Christ’s sacred humanity as a or the “efficient cause” of “grace”. See

effecting of it, therefore. You who are many are one body; now you are the body of Christ, or, as it says in one Gospel, “they in me and I in them”. Take away the miraculous birth and there is a flow of one concept, one person, “into” another as yet itself, or in identity rather, for which “in” is figure.

The legal concept of *sin* has functioned in a way similar to this of a unique virgin birth, that of a short way to an exclusive or abstract identification, namely, of the “one without sin”. Once assume a virtue-ethic and this concept does not hold up, even though Aquinas liked, or felt obliged, to append a “command”, in his *Summa theologica*, as corresponding counterpart, to each and every virtue itself identified but, be it noted, identified as within the overall thesis of the (flowing) “unity of all the virtues”.¹⁶

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The above could well be viewed as Hegel’s version of the multiple senses of Scripture. By this criterion he does not go as far as the majority of Church Fathers, who cheerfully see a presentation of an event in Christ’s life, as in the life of Noah, as a coded way of uttering or highlighting some eternal truth, as was also the method of Jesus himself, the Gospel’s chief protagonist. All this one may note quite apart from the special case of the parables, often explicitly “interpreted” in the text. So, for example, the seamless robe worn at the end by Christ will mean the unity of the Church, the rending of the Temple veil the end of the Old Covenant, the feeding of the five thousand with just enough for each one a figure of the Eucharist to come, the turning of water into good wine, “kept until now”, a figure of Christ’s own action and teaching, and so on.

Philip L. Reynolds, “Philosophy as the Handmaid of Theology: Aquinas on Christ’s Causality”, in *Contemplating Aquinas*, ed. Fergus Kerr OP, UND Press 2003, reviewed by me in *Index Thomisticorum*, Pamplona. In a sense the idea of all being “born in sin” elicits the idea of one, and hence several ones, born free of it, in the dialectical self-annulment of all finitude. Ritual uncleanness, the lowest of phenomena, thus bequeathed this divine incarnation to humanity, of one and hence of all, just as “if one died for all then all died”, for whom, all, the bell tolls. Thus we are born to enter, by death, into life or, more shortly, “No birth no death”.

¹⁶ This thesis, attacked by Peter Geach as “monstrous”, in his *The Virtues* (Stanton Lectures, CUP1976), is defended (retrieved) in my *Natural Law Reconsidered*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt, 2002. See our *Reason’s Developing Self-Revelation*, Cambridge Scholars, Newcastle-on-Tyne 2013, ch. 3, “Beyond the Sin-Paradigm”.

Here we have the Idea, God, as revelation, Spirit proceeding from the Son, since "he that has seen me has seen the father", something though that Philip, the disciple thus answered, could, at least eventually, have said as well as Jesus since, in St. Paul's words, we, beholding the glory, are "turned from glory into glory". If the above saying is true, all the same, then the Father (God) is nothing apart from the Son (Word) and his action, as the Son can do nothing without him. "I and my father are one". Just on this ground, of the oneness, he speaks here of "my father". It is the very stance of Absolute Idealism, mistaken for the abstract uniqueness of one far ahead of his time, as we say. This abstract uniqueness is not what we confess in the creeds, understood spiritually. What is thus unique is rather, and exclusively, "the fullness of time", since time itself is progressively revealed to be abstract immediacy as self-consciousness, in Hegel's sense, develops. "The conditions 'past' and 'distance' are, however, merely the imperfect form in which the immediateness gets mediated or made universal". "The mediating process is still incomplete". "Hence spirit necessarily appears in time so long as it does not grasp its pure notion, i.e. so long as it does not annul time"¹⁷ or become present, no longer past or imperfect. Time then is the Concept, true being, as mediating it. Hence there has to be a fullness of time, which just is this Concept appearing or revealed. Knowledge, thinking, is self-perfection, necessarily, and this is the rational or, which is the same, infinite, leaving no further room for hope. Hope is needed *in via*, on the journey, the advance, "from shadows to reality", to "realised end", realised however in its own apprehension though not in some future, since the future is a mere *ens rationis*. Equally, then, this fullness of time is not a moment *within* time. That is the reason, again, why we should not confuse the origin, the immediate existence of the first historical person in his abstract originality, with the "simplicity of the notion". It is as "lifted up from the earth" that the one mediating draws all to himself, becomes the Idea or "living spirit", which, however, he, we and all instances of subjectivity always was, were and are.

This is why we must steer clear of soulless religious positivism. We must in fact "annul time". This is the grasping of the pure notion just mentioned. Time is its own process of self-annulment, consuming its own children as myth has it. It makes manifest or is itself revelation and the Idea, but in imperfect act, as Aristotle, defining movement, would say. Time is of itself unfinished, imperfect. Christ's last word upon Golgotha, "It is finished", claimed to have accomplished or perfected time or, in the first instance, the speaker himself. But it is the same, whether to say one

¹⁷ *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p.763, 800.

thing or the other. We are, namely, “members one of another”. That is, we are not alien to one another but are each other’s own other. This death, it is claimed, showed the essence of death and thus mediated resurrection or entry into life in the spirit. Given the premises, this means that death itself does that, as is now declared. *Tetelestai*, it has been achieved (Christ’s last “word”, we read). The end, *telos*, has actualised, ended, its own self. Death was always a “gift to men”, as the strongly orthodox J.R.R. Tolkien often repeats in his writings. We are thus, again, unable to instantiate or explain the supposed efficient causality of Christ’s humanity that Aquinas, quasi-magically, was wont in faith to invoke.¹⁸ The faith, as he might have agreed, lies finally deeper, entailing an affirmation of all by all, to be discovered as constitutively acting rather than contingently achieved. Or is this necessity itself the efficient causality, with which that of the divine humanity, one with the absolute, is identical? It was said that blasphemy against the Son of Man is pardonable but not blasphemy against that spirit he expresses or “pours out”, as itself proceeding. There is aliveness here to the priority of the formal or mystical over the material sense of discourse, of which the Johannine notice of the high priest Caiaphas’s unconscious prophecy, “It is expedient that one man should die for the people”, is but an extreme example, as, *mutates mutandis*, is punning in general.

Yet, or thus, the death that is a gift to men is not more itself than a representation of the intrinsic finitude of immediate life, itself representing the Idea, to which life yields in what we picture as death. It is life’s final acknowledgement of its own nullity, this itself being the act of spirit, spirit itself in act. “Oh death I will be thy death.” Now this I, here clearly spirit, is “the universal of universals”, Hegel says. Regarding this our speculative style of writing, every judgment we make, even this one now, is necessarily “one-sided” and thus far false. The question must arise here, then, as to whether Hegel’s whole system is not offered as at least incidentally inclusive of a rationale for silent contemplative prayer as intellect’s highest or most comprehensive act.

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A fourth Christian or religious abstraction, after Trinity, miracle and revelation, might be *sin* and, behind that, evil. Hegel claims that evil is an abstract and therefore ultimately invalid conception. He will, however, say exactly the same about good. Nor is this parity affected by his finding evil to be a “sham being”, non-being as placed against that being which is

¹⁸ Cf. Reynolds, *loc. cit.*

good. It “has no real persistence, and is, in fact, only the absolute sham-existence of negativity itself” (*Enc.* 35, add.). This surprising identity merely follows through upon his initial identification of being and non-being, which are themselves *abstractions from one another*, not as quasi-material constituents of the Concept, which is the Idea, though he uses this term in a transferred sense to delineate precisely differentiated identity (cf. *Enc.* 160: “constituent functions”) though not as “ex-isting” at all, as might “good” or “evil” taken on their own. Good likewise, then, would be the “sham-existence” of positivity itself, taken as a sheer force on its own or abstractly, again. We have to know “both good and evil”, as does the Idea or the plural divinity of *Genesis* 3.22, “Adam is become like one of us, knowing good and evil”. This is the emergence of Spirit from a state of innocence itself neither good nor evil, although “the very notion of spirit is enough to show that man is evil by nature” (*Enc.* 24, add.). There is an hour of “inward breach” when man, as spirit (his specific difference and substantial form in one, as Aristotle finds at *Metaphysics* VII), emerges as distinct from nature, i.e. in his idea, precisely what he would not do according to an evolutionary or biological theory made abstractly absolute. Conceived apart from achieving this breach man, pursuing finite “ends of his own... to the uttermost” or with entire knowledge and will “is evil; and his evil is to be subjective”. Only absolute subjectivity, in and of the Idea itself and not of man, overcomes this, as it is said that “The last man became a living spirit”, Adam, as fallen into finite humanity, into subjectivity, in this *picture* of things, being the “first” man. This is the mirror-opposite of solipsism, being unity in spirit, of which a phenomenal harmony of parts is but a distant reflection. Hegel’s claim is that this historical trajectory is itself a conceptual development, contingency necessity, or perfected freedom, not *determinatam ad unum*, as is alienated nature, but determined to the Concept and by the Concept, to the freedom of at-homeness in the other, as he names thinking in general early in his *Logic*.

These reflections bear upon the difficult account of evil in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, VIIC. To understand them aright we must not abstract from or forget the placing of the section “The Idea of the Good” *after* and as *advance* upon that of the True as final development in *The Science of Logic* of the first initial idea of being and hence as the category that immediately yields “The Absolute Idea”. It is also significant, and not retrocession from this, when in the later or “little” *Logic* he names this Idea, the Good, volition simply (*Enc.* 233f.), the Aristotelian equivalence, namely that “Good is what all desire” and pursue, being implied. Yet the *truth* of the good itself is “realised end” (*Enc.* 210). By this “the objective

world is in itself and for itself the Idea” (*Enc.* 235) and as such is life but no longer as “the idea immediate” in finitude merely (EL216). These statements find development with, as always, inner deviation in later thought of time as eternal return of itself, in simple denial of the *chronos* motive of cannibalism (Nietzsche), or of time become simply being not as partner of being but as harbinger thereof (the later Heidegger, *mutatis mutandis*), in Hegel “expressly stated to be absorbed” (*Enc.* 95).

So Satan self-constitutively declares, “Evil be thou my good” (Milton). When Blake declares Milton “was of the devil’s party without knowing it” (in “The Marriage of Heaven and Hell”, which C.S. Lewis, in writing *The Great Divorce* in contrast, did not condemn), he does not mean to condemn Milton. He was of this party, namely, says Blake, “because he was a true Poet”. In this his long “poem”, incidentally, where we breathe the air of Goethe’s *Faust*, so important to Hegel, Blake mentions “the writings of Paracelsus or Jacob Behmen” (i.e. Boehme), from which “any man of mechanical talents” can produce “ten thousands of volumes of equal value with Swedenborg’s”, as he can, he adds, produce an infinite number from the writings of Dante or Shakespeare. In doing so he “only holds a candle in sunshine”, an image witnessing to a deep piety. Hegel would surely agree, adding however that this is because the manifestation of Absolute Spirit referred to gets its final due not from poetry about poetry but from philosophy, absolute spirit’s absolute form or “sunshine” indeed though it may also in the evening twilight, congenial to its flight, appear as “grey upon grey”, thus, it is implied, needing in its own turn poetry. Yet we should remember that Hegel also distinguishes this final “form” of Absolute Spirit from spirit itself, which “blows where it will” and is, necessarily, abstracted from nothing that is anything or that bears spirit as buried within it. To thus distinguish this final “form”, however, is the same as to identify it with spirit itself. Philosophy itself in its own being is thus revealed again as true or “mystical” life, as we found Hegel saying above, esoteric not as being the preserve of elderly salaried professors or even, an earlier paradigm, of professed monks and nuns but rather as that “narrow way” that “few” find, least of all those who may think they have found it. Yet it is offered to all, thus far making the esoteric the exoteric. As applied to mysticism and the “gifts of the spirit” this applies also to philosophy. Though practiced, it may be, by few it is not itself the vocation of a few only.

Belief, anyhow, evokes unbelief, the devil returning with seven more, in a dialectic which must awake that reconciliation of all things which yet remains the perennial task of philosophy, of thought as thinking itself and not as us thinking. In that way we all must “lose our life to find it”, since

whatever we *say* it is will not be it. Not even Wittgenstein escaped this dilemma, ever returning from Norwegian silence to bombard us with his words. For there is but one Word and that word in becoming flesh is no object itself at all, not even an object of study.

In seeming contradiction to this, sin, with which we began this section, in religion or in traditional philosophy, which merely explicates the immediacy of the religious consciousness on this point, is put as an infinite evil, as in total opposition to infinite good, or to the will of the infinite. This equivalence, that it is infinitely evil to oppose the infinitely good, might well hold without our being able to give an instance of it. This is in a measure confirmed by the Biblical “sin against the Spirit”, which is the only unforgivable or, we may safely translate, infinitely evil act, of thought or deed indifferently. No one, however, can say with certainty in what it consists or give an instance of it. In context it might seem clearly directed against a or the Jewish religious party, though in several concrete and hence individual instances forgiveness is seen to operate here too, to the point where the leading apostle states that he knows this group “acted in ignorance”. Yet this circumstance, both traditionally and in reason, is what both makes a sin forgivable and saves it from infinite gravity.

The idea of an infinite offence, however, can be fairly argued to have roots in a ritual, even magical consciousness, being seen as the thing you must not do, on pain of destroying the world. As making you unclean or defiled forever this puts you forever outside the community. Hence it is compared at one point to not having the right clothes on, in this case a wedding-garment, and no doubt there is continuity in this as in all conceptual developments. Above, for example, we mentioned thought or deed as indifferent theatres of action, but the traditional division is threefold, thought, word and deed, Analysis has shown here, however, that word, language in act, is deed, practical. Thus in C.S. Lewis’s story, *The Magician’s Nephew*, there is mention of “the deplorable word” which destroyed a world, “Charn”. In the 1950s, when Lewis wrote, this word would have meant to his readers, for the most part, the lurking, ever-present threat of mutual nuclear destruction of the world, by “pressing a button” (word). This has been largely replaced in the public mind with visions of a universal flood of melted ice as a known consequence of human actions. In both cases people find themselves able to invoke the notion of an unintended consequence, while at the same time conceding that a wrong proportion of foreseeable results, between positive and negative, good and evil, itself renders the act unjust or, in their vocabulary, sinful.

Lewis however wrote of the deplorable *word*, thus himself invoking, in storied word, the magical or ritual outlook, as in our stories we may need or want to do. But now a story is itself name or figure for the phenomenal or immediately understood as such, but in paradigm. Emerging from the fairy-story or ritual mentality the paradigm itself is thus philosophically or truly converted into its opposite. The real fairy story, however, is life immediate in the immediate world itself, from which Absolute Idealism delivers us. The story of salvation, therefore, is not a story or a romance, in the reductive or immediate sense at all. We are in very truth figures in a divine or infinite mind or narration, become, abstractly put, dialectical method, romance of romances, so to say. I am not myself. This is self-consciousness, proper to the Absolute alone, “in whom we live and move and have our being”, the “in” here, a mere displaced figure for identity in difference, signifying the religious mode of Absolute Spirit, of *sophia*.

There are a variety of more or less deplorable words, from commands to press the nuclear button to invitations to “fuck off”, Scandinavian invocations of the Devil or, in some gentler populations, idle references to deplorable weather merely, *Donnerwetter*. But they are all assimilable to exclamations, as actions themselves are words, “speak louder than words”. Loudness is deplorability, but on a scale of more or less, not absolutely. Hannah Arendt was thus, analogously, wrong to see in the deeds or inventions of the ephemeral Nazis and associates a uniquely absolute evil and she later corrected this to banality, enraging the victims after having piqued the philosophers, it might seem. Her earlier view, however, remains a covert return to the ritual mentality, with the corresponding absolute prohibitions. Kant struggled to overcome this, though his “kingdom of ends”. The end is what is finally sacred and yet, as contradicting the sacred or enclosed, not sacred, not set apart. It continues to instance the sacred, even the ritual, since we identify the deplorable violation of this end of ends, exploiting the other, with that same sin against the Spirit or with a limitation upon love, ours or whoever’s. It is in line with this that Aquinas, perhaps the greatest artist of the obvious, declares God and not the particularities of virtue (honourable good) to be the Good as such, absolute. An immediate consequence is that virtue is draw into or absorbed in God, in the infinite, as is the finite as such, transcending any idea of “partnership”. That God loves us, again, adds nothing to God, to the Idea.

Love is, again traditionally, defined as regarding the other as self, this self in other and other in self being already regarded as true self in the absolute other or otherness called God. In our phenomenal or immediate life, this is what defines it, we all fail to love beyond a certain point. This

contradiction of love, of itself infinite or, indeed, infinity, is none other than finitude itself. There is no infinite or absolute evil other than that, than this not being the absolute. Yet the infinite presupposes finitude as, in Hegel, resulting from it, resulting, however, “its own result”, a formulation denying the proposition in saying it. Even the Satan that Hegel envisages is not absolutely evil, evil being understood as sham-goodness or perversion of what is already found. Evil is always, i.e. essentially, in a (good) subject, *semper in subjecto* (Aquinas), whether this is understood as substance (a bad angel or apple) or as subjectivity proper. So Satan *has* to say, “Evil be thou my good”, i.e. be your opposite. This contradiction, in fact, underlies Hegel’s “unspiritual” discussion, as he doubtless ironically dubs it, of good and evil and their relation in *The Phenomenology of Mind*.

For philosophy, then, matters come down to the Augustinian “Love and do what you like”, a dialectical crucible in which sin is destroyed in its notion, as Augustine was able on non-pastoral occasions to acknowledge. Mention of the pastoral, however, the questions it may raise, does not belong to first philosophy and so we leave it aside for now. We observe, though, that the questions thus raised and their treatment belong with that long education of the mind to which Hegel frequently refers as the Christian or generally religious fundament of the achieved form of absolute spirit, philosophy, having as its major focus, he at times stresses, the perfecting or accomplishment of this same religion. When he calls Christianity “the absolute religion” he is making a deliberately speculative utterance, only comparable with Eckhart’s “The eye with which I see God is the eye with which God sees me”, cited above. For Hegel, insofar as Christianity absorbs all pluralism in religion as such or is the truth, it loses religion’s necessarily finite character as expressed in the plurality of religions. The point is analytical. De Lubac approaches close to this when he says, in his book, *The Drama of Atheistic Humanism*, “Christianity is not a religion; it is religion itself”. But he might better have said, as his qualification, “it is truth itself”, a judgment more strongly inviting dissent, even granted that plenty of voices can be raised just against religion in any form. One can also argue, however, that this is an aspect of just Christianity, atheism’s forerunner and true or spiritual face. “You know not of what spirit you are”, each party says to the other meanwhile.

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Man has for some while contemplated, in vain self-admiration, this possibility of self-inflicted destruction of just man. This is the sign,

negative, of the emergence from religious to philosophical consciousness, which nonetheless includes the former as absorbed. If man can destroy man, in his immediate life merely, the whole “species”, then man is not what spirit, this consciousness, with which subjectivity in its necessity is identified, is. This idea, a moment of the Idea itself, is not new, however, nor was it for Dostoyevsky’s character Kirilov, in *The Possessed*, who had promised to kill himself if or when “the movement” required it. A voluntary laying down of one’s life is in fact the very basis of Christianity, though this is put as in order to “take it up again”. This would clearly be futile unless it be understood that what is taken up is “changed”, as “the last man”, again, “became a living spirit”. Man, that is, is the denial, or reconstruction in deconstruction, of man himself. “Let him deny himself”. That was and is philosophy or Spirit Absolute, in reversed version, not merely revised, that is to say. Jesus, as presented to us in the movement of proclamation that has followed upon his death, is and was no mere reformer. Was Luther though, was anyone? He is rather the pure personalisation of Spirit, Israel herself, the chosen or “fore-ordained”, concretised in one individual person thus become universal. Thus, anyhow, he is represented to us in certain narratives contingently preserved or, before that, in the communal preaching of yesterday and today. “Behold the man”, *ho anthropos*, with the article in the original, become *ecce homo* (without article) in the Vulgate. Behold man simply. In German too, for example, *der Mensch* here would mean just man, generically, as does also “the man” in English unless in thought we add some qualification, like “See the man whom you accuse”. We need not.

Now the Hegelian or philosophical claim is that what is enacted here as a “supernatural” event or action by an ontologically distinguished person is in fact man universalised, as he is though in every individual case. In the relevant Scripture he was put as Israel universalised by this very individualisation, this particularisation of Israel herself (*Romans* 9 to 11). Here is surely a main root of Hegel’s logic, the claim that “Everything is a syllogism”, or that the real universal is concrete, as any identity is of two different.

Here, then, in just this enactment, the axis of history is reversed, “revoluted”, in this moment (of the Idea), “the fullness of time”, a phrase taken from the Pauline *Letter to the Galatians* where we read, “In the fullness of time God sent forth his Son”. It is from this “son”¹⁹, *qua* son as

¹⁹ God cannot have a son, Moslems rightly claim. They abstract, however, from the method of Scripture as of Christian iconography following upon it, whereby everyone takes for granted the “son”, as a representation, is to be understood spiritually. This displacement, natural to the religious community, is what

uttered, “outered”, that Spirit proceeds. Hegel’s earlier editors, shocked by this apparent nonconformity with canonised formulations, postulated textual error.²⁰ Faith, however, is not here contradicted. What Absolute Idealism shows, rather, is that an appearance in time of the Idea is not an impossible making finite of the Idea that thus appears or, in religious language, “condescends” to appear. So Hegel can say that it is in man that God, or, for that matter, reason, *nous*, Spirit, is “first” concretised as, again, as his or its “own result”. The Spirit that thus proceeds immediately from the Son, from the Father’s eternally fathered “word”, the speaking (revelation) being one with what is spoken, itself absorbs, supersedes or puts by (*aufhebt*) the temporality of this eternal and pure Act. Time, it is said, is the moving image of eternity, which means, however, that time itself does not move. It supersedes or “refutes” (as in McTaggart) itself, here, though, precisely in the event (*Ereignis*).

In general, Hegel teaches in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, the Trinitarian processions are not to be conceived, either philosophically or even theologically, as they are first represented in religion.²¹ This is surely common property today. The “dogmatic consciousness” is a “specific form”, a representation, albeit “genuine”, “of the absolute as it appears for speculation”. This, surely, is the deeper reason why the Pope of the time²² wanted no dogmatic definitions from the new General Council (1962-1964), if we should suppose, with him, a spiritual guidance of the Church, of humanity, ever new as viewed in the Idea. “Behold I

philosophy is called upon to transcend, thus becoming, in now conscious “spiritualisation”, Absolute Spirit under its own form, esoteric in the same sense as Christian mysticism is esoteric while at the same time being the normal or predestined fruit of the gifts of the Spirit, that is to say exoteric. This dilemma, this opposition too, is thus overcome in religious praxis and development. Hegel refers to it at the end of the *Encyclopaedia*, where however the dilemma remains. The intention, however, of religion specifically, is that all “shall know the Lord”. The community has thus no option but to welcome philosophy with a respect imaging the veneration with which philosophy here treats religion.

²⁰ Cp. Catherine Malabou, *The Future of Hegel*, for discussion of this suggestion.

²¹ It is surely something of a disgrace for theology that its foremost representative, in the eyes of many, a short while ago, Karl Rahner SJ, ignores Hegel’s contribution completely in his article on the Trinity in *Sacramentum Mundi*, which came out in English in the 1960s, pretending that Trinitarian theology came to a halt in the fourteenth century. The anti-modernist pathology had (has) long tentacles, as does clerical prejudice against those they have pleased themselves to call “the laity”, made priests, kings and prophets, *populus Dei*, all the same, if we believe the Apostle (*I Peter*, 2, 9-10).

²² St. John XXIII (Roncalli), as he is now, since 2013, titled.

make all things new". This cannot refer to some phenomenal moment in time merely. Once proposed, rather, it is assented to philosophically as necessary to that Infinity already accepted and understood. "It is natural to consider the moments of the Idea as numbered", Hegel goes on, *drei gleich eins*. Yet, he adds, it is inwardness itself that is here externally conceived, by the Understanding (*Verstand*), to which number belongs.²³ The task of Reason, Hegel says, is to "recover the Trinitarian representation in the very imperfection of its conception" where it "grasps the movement of spirit as an event in history", thereby superseding and not merely "ending" the latter.²⁴ History, that is, is overcome by religion's thus condescending to it. "This is the victory that overcomes the world, even your faith". Hegel's words interpret just this declaration, implicitly or more than so.

We have noted a scepticism concerning the efficient causality of Christ's humanity taken literally or, so to say, magically. What could be meant, rather, by such causality, as asserted in orthodox writings, though mainly beyond the individual intentions of such authors in their cultural time and place, is an efficient causality in history, not forgetting, however, that for the dialectic such causality, and history itself as a concept, is but a moment in dialectical development towards the Idea, which is in fact the Idea's "essence" as "the Concept". The laws of logic thus belong to the divine mind, as Lukasiewicz once stated²⁵, as identical with it. As such, though, they are one law, however particularised. Recognition of this would have saved Descartes from presenting them as an invention of "absolute power", though this is not wrong either, freedom being *itself* the highest necessity and no mere arbitrariness but Mind, rather.

Taken thus, however, we are moved away from instrumentality, of the humanity, to moral or ontological example, veering over into exemplarism proper, when searching for a philosophical or final understanding of what, if rightly called the atonement, must be a necessary or, it is the same, eternal truth. Christ, say some, came to teach us how to die (C.S. Lewis), since this is the one thing we must do that God cannot in essence do. But why must we, though, unless because life is "merely the idea immediate" in the falsity of finitude, all truth being mediated, rather? It is, then, just such finitude that *elicits* absolute and hence self-constituting act and *so* is

²³ Above we found Aquinas, when writing on the Trinity, in full agreement with this. *Numeri non ponuntur in divinis*.

²⁴ See our *New Hegelian Essays*, Cambridge Scholars, Newcastle-on-Tyne 2012, pp. 147-148.

²⁵ Cf., from Leeds University, Coope, Geach, Potts, White, *A Wittgenstein Workbook*, Oxford 1971, p.7.

necessarily determined by it to do so. So we have not a *concursum* of causes merely but reciprocity in causality’s very concept. The effect causes the cause, not merely to be a cause but to *act*, to be act.

Here, then, again, at least, example is appealed to as decisive, but as if giving up the attempt to understand what is still believed as if seen as lying “beyond understanding”. Maybe it does so lie, says, Hegel, but not therefore beyond Reason. We have to go further than Lewis. This was in a sense done in Johannine and Pauline theology, from which philosophy too has inevitably learned or, at least, received stimulus. For philosophy, however, one man could be any man inasmuch as he or she, as reasonable, carries and even begets all within her or him. “Before Abraham was, I am”. “He that has seen me has seen the Father”, I and he “are one”.

Aquinas too, before Hegel, overcomes the theology of an efficiently causal sacrificial satisfaction for “sin” as redeeming humanity *in esse et posse*. He does this though by relying upon Christ’s unique or pre-eminent divinity as religion represents it. Here we are ourselves divinised but by being in Christ, not, emphatically, by nature, however, but by a process comparable to adoption. St. Paul had already used this figure to represent how the gentiles get grafted into (he here varies the metaphor) the new Israel, which, it is said elsewhere, whether or not by the same writer, is in fact the “body of Christ”, by which is meant a unity more perfect than that of an organic living body, since each is in all and all in each, this being just what “organs” exclude. So the Pauline distinction of functions in this body is in a measure a still abstract or “religious” representation. No one is totally identical with his particularised function, as teacher, prophet, social worker and so on. Hence in reading that very text properly we each identify with or become the whole, to the point, ultimately, of not needing any text, like St. Francis in his last moments.

So, by this, one small drop of Christ’s blood, Aquinas says, would have sufficed to redeem this or any world. His irony, in saying this, transcending a normal, *finitely* orthodox posture, shines through here as he “sends up”, in the light of eternity, the whole theology of sacrifice, which, however, even the *Epistle to the Hebrews* carries beyond its decidedly finite self. In fact nothing else can at-one humanity than the unity in harmony of a particular personality, repeating itself one by one down the ages so that it is just one and yet the one of ones, which are many without ceasing to be one. Each one though must be seen as then equally repeating or multiplying itself through space and time, in what just as repulsion is a drawing to self in mind’s infinity. Each branch is the vine. Greater things than I shall you do, even though without me you can do nothing. That the alpha is the omega is also the last truth of personality, its inherent

necessity in every case. Hamlet's cursing of the "spite" we mentioned earlier is disguised recognition of this unbounded dignity. This is Spirit, proceeding however from and yet returning simultaneously to just that one at the apex of history, "the fullness of time". No one could convict him of sin, he said, but here again, in an ethics of virtue, such as Aquinas tried to make normative for Christendom, there is no final identification of what actions are virtuous, what not, a point made famous in our time by G.E.M. Anscombe, *malgré lui* perhaps. Actions, she made plain, are variously describable, that is, it must be added, they describe themselves variously. So no, Jesus is one with us, and virginal birth is no more necessary to his being in spirit and truth than non-virginal conception is necessary to us. No birth no death. Man transcends himself to spirit, in natural dialectical process, which is the foundation and fruit in one of all grace, its "own result".

To sum up, there would and could be no atonement, for example in history, if all were not already and in essence atoned, at-one, in, we might say, "the idea of nature" reposing in and ex-plicating or revealing the Word, as Bonaventura, *mutatis mutandis*, liked to emphasise. Thus the fourth evangelist represents Jesus as saying "Now is my joy fulfilled", *before* the sacrifice, while the Transfiguration story brings the same message. It is the eternal process of *kenosis*, emptying, the mind we should have "in us", which was also, Paul writes, in that one given "the name above all names" or above naming as such, being absolute universal *in concreto*. But now inasmuch as Christ is or becomes, indifferently, above naming he is not abstractly just himself merely²⁶ and it is thus that we have learned that no one is, as follows immediately from logic, Hegel would make clear. The "obedience unto death, even the death of the Cross" has the more fundamental "I do nothing of myself" as its spiritual form, not reducible to those bloody details in its "bringing to nought the things which are", unless we could say that violent annihilation is simply the

²⁶ Paul, or whoever, here at Philippians 9-11, cites Isaiah 45: 23: "all beings should bend the knee" at the name of Jesus. "acclaim Jesus Christ as Lord". This proclamation, says the Jerusalem Bible commentator, "is the essence of the Christian creed". The question, again, is how are we to understand this, in terms of Hegel's or any other logic, for example. "Greater things than I have done shall you do", Jesus is on record as saying, adding that "without me you can do nothing". This can well include that tissue of reciprocity we have been uncovering and this does look like an efficient causality of a sort, ever operative but first revealed in time's fullness. "If God were not then I would not be, and if I were not then God would not be", said Eckhart. "They in me and I in them" is a text that might come to mind.

form the ruin of abstract individuality necessarily takes, inasmuch as death just is a physical dismantling. Yet we speak of mystical death, death in the spirit, and intuitions may vary here. The act "in this wild weather of his outer provinces" (G. Macdonald) is yet representation of the Idea eternal, absolute truth's own self-abnegation, of which "real" suffering willed and accepted *is itself a figure*. If we forget this we make the same error as those hearers who might go and pluck out or sever the offending eye or limb after hearing that admonition, or as the preacher in the novel who argued from the letter of the text that one should not forgive the offender a four hundred and ninety first time. We must, though, look at the love through the blood, "precious" though this may be, and the same applies to death anywhere:

His dying crimson like a robe
 Spreads o'er his body on the tree.
 Then am I dead to all the world
 And all the world is dead to me (T. Wyatt).

Here we find *represented* the annulment of the world by the upward leap of the mind spoken of in Hegel's writing (*Enc.* 50). The two accounts are not in competition, but ordered to one another. Only thus is the veneration of this blood as "precious" not idolatrous, nor is this something of which one can take pleasure in having to make oneself, "warts and all", a spokesman. There is thus an agony, be it ever so tranquil, in philosophy. In writing thus, all the same, one takes up the cudgels against all who speak of two gods, of religion and philosophy respectively.

The way for theology itself to go therefore, if it is to be retained in distinction from philosophy at all, is well represented in the following text:

From the standpoint of the eternal Son His identification with the person of Jesus has the form of incarnation. We must not see this, however, as an accidental happening that is external to His eternal essence. It is logically related to His trinitarian self-distinction from the Father. As the free self-distinction of the Son from the Father is the basis of the possibility of all creaturely reality that is distinct from God, it is also the origin of the incarnation of the Son in Jesus of Nazareth. This is the sense in which we are to understand the self-emptying and self-humbling of the eternal Son of God in the event of his incarnation (*Philippians* 2:7f). If we see here a partial or total renunciation of His divine nature, we not only dissolve the eternal self-identity of God but destroy the concept of incarnation, which is to the effect that the eternal God Himself has taken the living form of a mortal man. The self-emptying and self-humbling that we find when we compare the eternal deity of the Son to His incarnation must not be seen as a limitation but as an expression of the eternal deity. But this is possible only if we

understand it in relation to the eternal self-distinction of the Son as the basis of the possibility and reality of creaturely existence in general. The eternal self-distinction of the Father contains already the element of self-emptying. It is precisely thus that the Son became the origin of the difference of creaturely existence that is distinct from god. In the sheer difference of creatures from God, however, the self-distinction of the Son finds expression only in a one-sided form, that of difference, not as a medium of fellowship with God. Only a creature which like us humans knows that it is related to God in the distinction can the self-emptying that goes with the Son's self-distinction from the Father come fully to expression in the form of creaturely existence. In this sense we must view the emptying and humbling of the eternal Son that go with the incarnation as an element in the free self-fulfillment of the Son in self-distinction from the Father. By this self-fulfillment of filial being the destiny of the creature for true independence in fellowship with God is also realized.²⁷

Philosophy would only want to add here some comment on the “scandal of particularity” axiomatic to “dogmatic” theology as such. In the Hegelian system particularly, however, we indeed find materials for further contemplation of the fancied equivocation of the Latin *Ecce homo* attributed to Pontius Pilate as between “man” and “the man” as we also find reasons for not taking this system itself as abstractly particular.

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From here, anyhow, we must go on to say something about “the sacramental system” and associated matters in relation to our present or actual situation, always in the light of philosophy as “accomplishing” religion.²⁸ This sevenfold system, first of all, is quite obviously not a New Testament feature in its developed, somewhat particularised form. What we have in the New Testament is, first of all, baptism. This is something taken over, it is plain, from its function as a ritual washing within the movement of renewal initiated by John, called later “the Baptist”. His washing of water, he is reported as saying, will be replaced, by the one coming, with a baptism of fire, one, that is, that would truly burn away impurity and not just symbolise or represent the will to this. In this is clearly encapsulated a first notion of *grace*, of an action going beyond one's own or natural efforts. It was understood, this means, as the way that

²⁷ W. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, p.319f. Mr. John Bardis, a member of the Internet Yahoo Hegel group, drew my attention to this text.

²⁸ Cf. Georges van Riet (Louvain), “The Problem of God in Hegel”, parts II and III, *Philosophy Today* (Ohio), summer 1967 (from the French original).

the fruits or “merits” of Christ’s passion, otherwise extrinsic to the one believing, were applied to him or her, - again, however, by external divine ordination. Thus Thomas Aquinas at one point brackets grace with law as two external helps to salvation, contrasted with internal inspirations. Yet any Old Testament worthy would naturally say, “The spirit of the Lord is upon me”. Eventually Hegel will clarify, outside is inside and *vice versa*, as Beethoven declared Schubert *truly had* the divine fire. It was not added. So the baptism itself must be a clear figure. Being baptised and being born are the same. Are they even the same figure! No birth no death, this would mean.

We know what use was made of this ritual action by the time the Pauline letters were written, explaining Christian spiritual life as being buried or, hence, dead with Christ in and by the watery grave of baptism and so on. The reverse side of this externalisation, however, was that it seemed to entail denial, often explicit, of salvation, and hence threatened all thought of happiness, for those not baptised, including those never even having heard of the need for it. Against this, naturally, has been developed, not without appeal to, again, external Scriptural support, a doctrine of a “baptism of desire”, at first under the so to say moral compulsion to accord salvation to those who gave their lives in witness to the faith of this community before or without being baptised, this being also called, again, a “baptism of fire”. Ineluctably, the idea comes to be applied to all who “mean well”. But who does not do that? It, baptism and the need for it, so to say, can seem to evaporate. Thus the Swedish Church, officially Lutheran, for example, does not require baptism for church membership, nor is need for it to the fore today in Catholic proclamation. It is in harmony with this that a conditional “re-baptism” is no longer so extensively required from or even granted to converts from other denominations.

One may thus interpret: inasmuch as baptism becomes identified with membership of the Church, the “comm-unity” of the new humanity, it ceases to be necessary for that purpose, the accomplished rebirth of faith in the accomplishment of this newness, making of these our days the “last days” in which all walk as if at rest. The difference between saviour and saved is abolished in them, just as Christ was *trans-figured* in glory *before* his ascension to the same. This quality of ultimacy appears, as foretold, as Anti-Christ, with “the crucified” as its signature, the one denying being shown, even in art, as the one denied and “made sin for (read “in place of”) us”, from Grünewald’s bloody horror to the adversary himself hanging on the Cross, in an obscene drawing by Lucien Rops. This identification, however, with the “own other”, cancelling all mere

substitution, was there from the beginning, as just a *serpent* was “lifted up” to save the people elect from serpents, that had first been sent among them to destroy. Just so does an instrument of death with torture, the Cross itself, become a flowering tree of “beauty, of light” (Venantius Fortunatus), death bearing and being life as Hegel says, for whom the essence of anything is opposite to its immediacy in apparent being. So baptism is in essence the proclamation dispensing from any need for it, if seen as abstractly apart from the confession of faith itself. So it is the community itself that decides, as thus empowered and self-empowering, whether to retain it as enjoined.

One can well interpret this development of Christian mentality, all that is outward become simply mentality, in the light of Hegel’s philosophy, as an absorption, again, of specifically religious consciousness into Absolute Spirit in its unrestricted form, philosophy, the “life of the spirit”, a philosophy, however, as speculative, common to high and low, not the abstracted “philosophical science” of the schools. It is one, rather, with the relatively or entirely unschooled mysticism of some styled “doctors of the Church”, not all of them even literate. The faithful, however, are more and more ready to learn from and hence to be assimilated to this body of “mystics”, also those outside, unbaptised gurus of Zen, of Buddhism or of no religion in particular. Thus Gustav Mahler, asked about his religion, replied “I am a musician” and it would have some point to place alongside that the roughly contemporary, tragic-comical reply of Oscar Wilde to his accusers, “I have no religion, I am an Irish Protestant”. He knew what he was talking about, and we see here again, even in desperate fun or gallows humour, that Christianity is more, even other, than religion. What is heresy or forbidden by Church authorities, in or to one generation is often taken up with approval or more tolerance, at least, when adhered to by those of a later generation. When Newman or Ratzinger flatly state this, however, without any apparent sense of a dubious opportunism, even appealing rather to the opportune or inopportune²⁹, as the case may be, one sees at once that religious proclamation, to be legitimate, must involve in itself a challenge, a call rather, to progress always further than previously in one’s thought, as the most excellent form, this perpetual advance, of being “not hearers only” but “doers” of the Word, only relatively a new sense of

²⁹ Thus in 1860 the “Catholic” form of Hegelianism, ontologism, was declared simply “not safe for teaching”, a holding mechanism evoking the dialectic but not able to be applied, as philosophy, to the dialectic itself, the Absolute’s own movement that does not itself move, as religion itself, its leaders, would here abstractly imitate. What anyhow is teaching or, as Aquinas once sceptically asked, can one man teach or heal another. Teacher and pupil become one another.

“doing”, in which “contemplation is the highest praxis” (Aristotle), alone “desirable for itself” (Augustine). The “religious party” (Hegel) have reacted against this classical view, as in von Balthasar’s study of Thérèse Martin “of Lisieux” (died 1897) and her doctrine of “pure love”, but it is here almost rhetorically obscured that apophatic contemplation, the “cloud of unknowing”, is precisely a pure love transcending knowledge towards its own absoluteness in love or will as cognition (as in Hegel’s Logic).

It is, however, in today’s world, no longer possible to handle this state of affairs by appeal to *arcane* truths and interpretations, kept for the few, something the first adherents of the Oxford Movement (1833) tried unsuccessfully to revive. Everyone now gets to hear everything and has learned that he has a right to it, even if we have the proverb that “a little knowledge is a dangerous thing”. In philosophy we are not and cannot be concerned with danger, real or fancied. Caesar-like, we “defy auguries”. Hence, adherents of the “absolute religion”, it was told right from the beginning, have been made kings, priests and prophets, as was indeed prophesied (Jeremiah, Joel), spirit being poured out upon all flesh, not in story and development, as religion represents it, but as constitutive of spiritual self-consciousness. Nor can the modern democratic revolution (1688, 1776, 1789, 1832, 1929 and votes for women) be conceived apart from this, where the last become first as they “shall be”.

So anyhow, what is presented as the “work of our redemption” is at the same time, or more profoundly, revelation itself, inseparable from its own apprehension and promulgation, in word or “external” nature as itself inward, as the essence of reality or, in a word, “what God is”, spirit absolute, absolute self-knowledge. The oracular “know thyself” then, was never a restriction, rather a call to such universal self-consciousness.

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The other so-called Gospel sacrament is the Eucharist, at least in so far as it is seen as “the sacrament of Christ’s body and blood” as it need not be, as it is not always and has not always been so seen, among Christians. For, firstly, it is not clear at all what is meant by this “body and blood”, meant in their very first utterance, it seems necessary to say, as a figure of some kind, perhaps though of some unique kind, annulling, for example, the independent or abstract actuality of the figures thus mentioned, in this case a now dead man’s body and blood. We have after all already conceived or postulated here the life beyond life of this and other persons become “living spirits”, *figured* as re-surrection from earth, fire or graves. How can such a man “give us his flesh to eat”?

At once, however, given that we have once heard of it, the notion of making a “spiritual communion”, supposed to give all the benefits of the sacramental form of it, comes to mind. This cannot, moreover, be a side-aspect of the whole (an impression often given when it is taught), but is rather perceived at once as identifying its very essence. The sacramental system is dispensable, were it not for a supposed positive “divine institution”, and this is no less than the position of Thomas Aquinas himself, as stated in *Summa theologica* III, 61, that this is the case, namely, and so he virtually says he can’t help it if this imposed system seems to constrain (*arctare*) Christian freedom. Thus whereas Aquinas sees the new, sacramental law as medium between (the old) law and “the state of glory” Hegel rather holds that *veniente veritate, debet cessare figura* (when the truth comes the figure should cease), the objection Aquinas sets himself to answer.³⁰ Everything, though, then depends upon this “seems” (to constrain). Does it or doesn’t it constrain? If an official teaching and/or praxis is eventually shown to be reasonably surpassed it has to be somehow abandoned or, better, modified in presentation so as to bring out its true or spiritual intent. Thus, if one now reads the latest Roman Catechism or, perhaps, questions bishops then it becomes clear that today’s Church has no wish or intention to insist upon that miraculous change of “the elements” occurring at the moment of utterance of the words of consecration by an ordained priest exclusively, this being a quasi-magical interpretation of the confessed reality of “transubstantiation”, clumsily (not mistakenly, if we would avoid imputing error) confused with the thing itself. Now, today, one wants to say it is the whole eucharistic action, even the mere fact of “coming together” finally, such as a meal represents always and everywhere, that spiritualises the elements thus, and not that moment of those spoken words and this, therefore, thus far at least, is what was always meant, allowing too, however, in this development, for the “moment” of opposition or protest.³¹ Both that

³⁰ Cf. Aquinas, *op. cit.*, q.61, article 4, first objection and its reply.

³¹ The Catechism in question, dating from John Paul II’s later years, omits mention of these “effective” words, as in the popular belief they are or were, but without stating as alternative that the whole liturgy there enacted effects or occasions this “transubstantiation”, as the good bishop explained to me. This omission is fruit of a perhaps sound pastoral instinct. Things move rather too fast for most people these days. The “new” theory, all the same, actually a deeper or more “spiritual” penetration of this *mysterium fidei* (a phrase spoken immediately after the “This is my body” etc., in at least one form of the ancient Roman “canon of the Mass”), with its associated theology, is at least reconcilable with Hegel’s own account of this sacrament and its effects, I would risk suggesting.

moment, lasting almost as long as Protestantism, its contrasting moment, now, and the “moment” of consecration are not moments in the abstract sense. They have duration and sentential or other composition (e.g. the four words, the syllables, of consecration), within which there cannot in reason be a timeless or pure point such as is often imagined. One may compare the discussions of Aristotelian hylomorphic change, substantial or accidental. It is always insisted, supremely in the development of the foetus, that at some timeless point, an instant, its “form” changes, one replacing the other. Clearly this reflects the alternative of either self or other against which Hegel’s whole system is directed, Aristotelian though he may be.

So, in truth, whether we take this sentence or the whole “service” or action as the active transformation is not, as we say, in itself “of great moment”, again. Moreover “transformation” or *Verwandlung* seem better words than that “transubstantiation” used in the earlier Tridentine definition, when all seemed to repose in the laziness of naïve realism and substance as such was not called in question, as it is in the Hegelian logic, giving way, rather, to Subject and, finally, the Idea. They are the interpretation of that earlier interpretation of Christ’s words, or of Church power and praxis, going back at least to Carolingian times with their own interpretation of previous notions, named, then or later, “transubstantiation”. What falls away, however, is precisely the power or “sacramental power”. Or, better, this lies within the worshipping Christian body or faith-community which, however, Hegel stresses, does not fully understand itself unless and until it progresses from faith to knowledge, unless faith becomes or knows itself as at root knowledge, as St. Paul equated it, for example, with “sitting with Christ in the heavenly places”, though, again, there are, can be, no such “places” but, rather, life in the spirit or, in short, thinking, which Hegel equates with subjecthood or “I”, with feeling, love, blessedness (*Encyclopaedia* 159), categories more congenial to many than thinking, though he says here they are the same. That is, thought and consciousness, though distinct and not abstractly the same, are yet related. Consciousness so to say represents thought, though this is not to suggest that Hegel himself always uses the former term in an exclusively representational sense. He does not thus reduce it, recalling rather “the peace of God which passeth all understanding” or, as well say, the speculative in general, the cloud of unknowing, as respecting what only and alone knows itself and to which we, insofar as knowing or able to

know it, must be assimilated, thus annihilating this abstract “we” in the process.³²

Mere “going to church”, however, is widely questioned and questionable now as the true or substantive expression of Christian faith, as it certainly is not of philosophy. Hegel referred to the latter as itself *Gottesdienst* and the true such. There has always in fact been a certain progression towards this in Christian spirituality, coupled with a sense of tension with the assembly principle. God’s assembly is the most ancient name for Church, the *qahal* (Hebrew) of those “called out” (*ekklesia*). This “coming out” however, of the “aristos”, gets extended (or contracted) into the Carthusian or eremitic principle. This was socialised into a special vocation historically, e.g. the Benedictine, but is yet a true and determinative component of spirituality as such as it develops³³, just as, or rather as, God is seen more and more as that of which one cannot with propriety speak too much, or at all (cf. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 7). E.M. Forster wrote of “talkative little Christianity”. Thus do theologians become philosophers (of religion, principally: this, after all, is what Hegel at times declares philosophy as such to be), while churchgoing gets more and more to be seen as the badge or representation of an inward principle with which it is or would be confused only to the latter’s detriment. It is or was our immediate version of election, of coming out from among the profane. Mediated it becomes that principle of seeking the personal, the truly or concretely universal, of entering one at a time or “by the narrow gate”. “The principle of personality is the universal” (Hegel).

The Church is not destroyed by this her self-transcendence. She only lives by this, as do the living by movement, by digestion and metabolism. As it is a progressive development it is further on today than it was yesterday. The perceived or misperceived problem of “the barbarians” entering upon it, or upon Western civilisation, without first absorbing the earlier and foundational sacrality or ethic (A. Glucksmann), is yet, by virtue of the continuity of development, not unique but has its analogue in yesterday’s barbarians having to learn ancient classical culture at the same

³² The materialists, Marxist or Bolshevik, come uncannily close to the heart of Hegel’s thought here, but as if seen in Hans Andersen’s distorting mirror. No justification for unrestricted “liquidation” of the inconvenient is implied in Hegel’s text or, still less, thought and consciousness.

³³ It developed, for example, into Newman’s “devotional” thesis that there are, he says, in *Meditations and Devotions*, “but two beings”, “myself and God”. This is not incompatible, we will find, with Hegel’s assertion that there is but one. “I am he who is, you are she who is not” (Catherine of Siena). But “it is useless to count” (Hegel).

time, which has given us scholastic mental culture and thought. Today they learn computers and mobile telephones, along with new arts of war and peace, all products of reason. Some of them even learn philosophy. They also apply such science and reason to their different religions, if they have them. Resistance produces terrorism. “I bring not peace but a sword”. This sword is the word of God, of philosophy, highest separation of soul and spirit, exposing the nothingness of all visible phenomena militating against what are at present often called human rights, “while in his temple all are saying glory”, admiring perhaps (*Psalms* 28) this very tempest itself, which is dialectical, set up by the Idea in its self-realisation since, again, what is at length realised, e.g. the “incarnation”, is what it always was, as the concrete universal is individual. This is the answer, really, to those who would refute Marxism on the ground that only the final generation can enjoy the fruits of final revolution. This fact itself, as merely correct phenomenal analysis, requires both Marxism and common or day to day capitalism to go further, to evaluate philosophically or “spiritually” the significance of that after all not more than posited end-generation, that “end of history” as meeting-point of beginning and end, alpha and omega, first and last, such as always was, is now and ever shall be, age of the ages, in which, namely, each participates. The Idea does not become anything, inasmuch as it is itself Becoming, the eternally renovating. *Ecce omnia nova facio*. The end of history is in its beginning, a “wheel of fire”. There is no privileged generation, the desire to see being one with the seeing, just as Christ’s saying to his hearers that they are happy who see what those before desired to see and did not see can be appropriated to any and every generation as it comes, or even as, in another sense, used by the same speaker, every generation is “accursed” with its own specific finitude. One has to break out of this circle of immediate life only and become the circle itself in person, as one might say, form thus becoming as being content.

CHAPTER TWO

ACCOMPLISHING RELIGION

The heart of religion, it might be said, is the Mass, liturgy, service (Gk. *leitourgia*), *Gottesdienst*. The Mass is not to be reduced to “going to Mass”, the custom or habit. Nonetheless it can only be, in the normal course of things, through the habit of doing this that this action of participation becomes internalised, the action as it were replacing one’s being, or becoming one’s to-be.

So the people of God are not essentially the people who go to or, still more mundanely, “attend” Mass, but the Body of Christ, in and from whom Spirit dwells and proceeds. We may say though, corporately or organically, that it is the people who celebrate(s) Mass. This people (*populus*, a noun in the singular) celebrates it, celebrates divine or absolute service, in all that it does, in just one act of being. Only so is it a spiritual community, a community of spirits, of the Spirit (*Geist*, mind).

This celebration consists in the affirmation of, which is to say the thinking (of), the Concept, thinking thought itself in other words. Thinking the Concept means knowing each in all and all in each, “that all may be one, I in them and they in me, as you, Father, are one in us.”

Dispute exists as to whether the Mass is to be viewed as primarily a sacrifice or as a communal meal. Integrating these two sides, we find it is a sacrificial meal. Whether or not a historical mediator inaugurated this celebration or not is of no religious importance. It has survived these two thousand years by its own power, as corresponding to the truth of Spirit as just enunciated. Each affirms all and each of the others in the same act as each of these affirm him or her. This is done, action corresponding to thought, by the common reception of consecrated bread, taken as being the one who, we read, said: “I am the bread of life”.

This I, now, as always, subjectivity, is common to all and each, as “universal of universals” (Hegel). So Thomas Aquinas could write, *Sumit unus sumunt mille*, “where one receives a thousand receive”, this being of course the ultimate justification for so-called “private masses”, viz. that they too are universal. They are only to be avoided insofar as the mere appearance of privacy (one man alone) might obscure these vistas. The

private mass must surely be a deeply contemplative exercise, with the whole world for “congregation”.

Nor is it merely a corollary of this, but rather the same thought, that where one receives one gives, a thousand give, “for it is in giving that we receive” (Prayer of St. Francis). Here too the notion of sacrifice as making something holy (*sacrum facere*) or, that is, set apart (to the Absolute) is realised and so transcended in and as the Absolute Idea. We set ourselves apart as thought of thought, self in other, correctly identified by Hegel as self in other without limit, identity of universal and particular in mutual saving (salvation) of each or in health (*Heil*).

Sacrifice, the urge to sacrifice, is the response of self-finitude. Thus Thomas Aquinas offers the inclination to it, surprisingly perhaps, as best example and proof of the universality of (the natural) law, *lex naturalis*. Seen thus it clearly transcends the notion of an offering for sins and so the angels, spiritual beings “confirmed in grace”, are identified with a continual offering of “the sacrifice of praise”. Praise of what if not of that self-affirmation of Absolute Subjectivity that is Reason, the universal ever and only concretised as particular, never merely abstract? This is the unity of persons, of relation, where, Aquinas and Hegel thus far agree, numbers have no place, *non ponuntur in divinis*. “It is useless to count” (Hegel), even despite the *de facto* triadicty of Hegel’s thought, representing the continuous going beyond, to a third, in conception. And so in fact this very continuousness supersedes itself, supersedes such a specificity (of triadicty) more and more as the Logic advances, becomes more and more a pure advance, one category simply giving way to another.

So again, as regards offerings for sin specifically, Aquinas remarks that a mere drop of the Redeemer’s blood would have sufficed. This undercuts or condemns the ancient figure of a ransom, paid, it is interesting to note, to the devil or God indifferently. Thereby, however, sin is either eliminated or to be identified with finitude as such. “Have we received good at God’s hands and shall we not receive evil also?” Job rhetorically affirms. Universal forgiveness is thus called for, entailed even, Nietzsche’s “rainbow after long storms”, recalling God’s covenantal word to Noah. That this figure of forgiveness, the rainbow, is indeed discoverable to the senses is one of Nature’s idealities, as Hegel refers to light as “Nature’s first ideality”. For Nature is in fact the Idea (*Enc.*140 add.), though in self-alienation characterising immediacy or appearance as such, from which, as its “beginning”, thought progresses to the contradiction of appearance in and by Essence (the truth of things) and the realisation of the latter abstraction in the Idea or, logically, the Concept.

Sacrifice then, transcending payment for sin, which it nonetheless annihilates, is the reconciliation of all with all or, rather, of nothing with All, the all in all which God shall be because he is that, absolute. Reconciliation is, finally, final realisation that nothing is ever apart, that substance is absorbed in subject and that such subjectivity, any subjectivity, is itself absolute, not possibly contingent, albeit freely conceived, since such freedom is “without shadow or turning”, in ultimate unconstrained and unconstraining necessity. It is only in a figure that the charity of Christ “constraineth” us. Love, in fact, is the exact reconciliation of freedom and necessity just inasmuch, whether as cause or effect indifferently in virtue of the same identity, as it is the reconciliation of all with all in all, taken together and distributively in one conception.

So the sacrificial meal, the Mass, is the mutual affirmation of one another. As such it completes the practices of any number of religions. Religions are necessarily plural just inasmuch as religion as such remains finite, a preliminary form of Absolute Spirit, Hegel teaches, the latter being realised in or as philosophy or even as *sophia* itself. Among these religions he all the same classes Christianity as absolute. The contradiction is only overcome by viewing Christianity as itself a movement out of religion into absolute mind or spirit, into thought’s self-revelation, the manifestation of itself to itself that thought itself is. Thus Hegel explains “revelation”, as a *philosophical* concept inasmuch as he explains it philosophically. This position is distinct from that of Jacobi’s, which Hegel attacks.

Firstly, the Christian faith comprises in it an authority of the Church: but the faith of Jacobi’s philosophy has no other authority than that of a personal revelation. And, secondly, the Christian faith is a copious body of objective truth, a system of *knowledge* and doctrine: while the scope of the philosophic faith is so utterly indefinite... Faith itself, taken in this professedly philosophical sense, is nothing but the sapless abstract of immediate knowledge – a purely formal category applicable to very different facts; and it ought never to be confused or identified with... the Christian faith, whether we look at that faith in the heart of the believer and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, or in the system of theological doctrine.¹

Note that here faith distinguishes the Spirit’s indwelling from the doctrinal system as two different *aspects* only of the same faith, corresponding to what we have repeatedly identified as his account of “understanding spiritual things spiritually”. The picture-element in *all* language has to be

¹ *Enc.* 63.

strenuously fought against. This is the “doctrine of the Concept” that “all judgments are false” and it is as Wittgensteinian as Aristotle’s was Hegelian.

“Everything is a syllogism”, Hegel finally says, “the one syllogism of the absolute self-mediation of spirit” (*Enc.* 571). This system, dealing with the *relations* between Logic, Nature and Mind or Spirit, is the final result of the logical system, specifically, “as a spiritual principle”. The “first appearance” of the Idea, “self-thinking”, “the truth aware of itself”, #is formed by the syllogism” as “based on the Logical system”, whether or not later logical forms (Fregean, etc.) are thus based. The Quinean notion that syllogistic would form a *part*, and that a modest one, of a later more inclusive phenomenal appearance of such external logical forms, is here implicitly rejected. Every appearance of Spirit is itself an appearance precisely of Spirit, undivided and indivisible, each earlier form *standing for* not merely a later appearance but for the Idea each and any such *represent*.

Philosophy, science, “is the unity of Art and Religion” (*Enc.*572). These two were thus far abstract representations of speculative truth, whether by “vision-method” or mediated “mental picture”. This unity is “intelligible” or even intelligibility itself, therefore, cognising the necessity of both itself and the first two forms of Spirit from which it itself results as Spirit in its own form. The necessity is that of the “content of the absolute picture-idea”. This is itself necessity and not a mere instance thereof, revealed as freedom, that is to say self-consciousness as “thought thinking itself”. Faith’s “identification with the presupposed object” is the individual’s absorption in and supersession by absolute mind, the Idea. At the close philosophy “seizes its own notion”.

This process, the very one of Spirit, is therefore without conceivable prejudice to true and spiritual religion, quite misrepresented by Jacobi’s “reactionary” system of immediate knowledge. Religion’s witness to the truth, the common content, first takes form in the immediate categories of everyday realist thinking and habitual consciousness, though it is bound to change them and all things. It thus becomes “liable to the terms and conditions of finitude”, Hegel notes. There is a relation of this to its own doctrine of incarnation, misrepresented as a change in God himself, “conversion into flesh”, rather than in man as “taken into God”, *aufgehoben* being Hegel’s term.² Even in employing “sensuous ideas and finite categories”, however, religion retains its speculative content, as is the witness of the theology dependent upon these. It is this very

² Compare here the “Athanasian Creed” (*Quicumque vult...*).

inconsistency that “corrects their defects”, Scripture offering the prime example of this. It is the opposite of Jacobi’s “principle of formal identity”, for Hegel the chief error of “Rationalism” (his own term here at *Enc.* 573) or of “finite reflection”, “which has usurped the title of reason and philosophy”, for the moment at least. Religion is “completely in the right in guarding herself against such reason and philosophy and treating them as enemies”. Yet religion should not “set itself against comprehending reason, and against philosophy in general”. It then becomes “the religious party” merely, rejecting philosophical *form* as such.

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It is from this perspective, of the Concept, of End Realised in that inception or historic beginning intrinsically sublated in conception, that we should approach Hegel’s thought on Incarnation, as the corresponding Christian dogma is called. Otherwise we can seem to find there (in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*) a retreat from the position implicit in the Logic and explicit in the two final chapters of *The Phenomenology of Mind*.

In those *Lectures* Hegel stays a lot of the time within the limits of a treatise on the *vita Christi*, details of this life being culled almost exclusively from the four canonical Gospels. This paradigm for procedure is found also in Thomas Aquinas and earlier Christian writings. Against it we can recall the Pauline remark, “If we have known Christ after the flesh yet we know him so no more”, very likely directed against (or towards) Paul’s apostolic *confrères*. Yet we also find Hegel’s own reminder in this text that the first Christian generations lived without these written Gospels upon which such speculations as to Christ’s life “on earth” are built. Of course oral traditions were circulating, of actions, sufferings and sayings.

It is necessary to ask how far we can distinguish the aims of this paradigmatic treatise, the *vita Christi*, including the paradigm that there should be such a treatise, from the less than philosophical limits entailed by the Schweizerian “quest of the historical Jesus” of modern times. The salient point is that the Life of Christ as treated by Hegel is not a historical exercise. He is very much on Paul’s line there. Thus in *The Phenomenology of Mind* he warns explicitly against stunting instead of accomplishing religion philosophically by giving a privileged position to the imperfect understandings of the first generation or so of believers. Now you cannot say that without *a fortiori* intending to warn also against the generation(s) immediately prior to our own. This is the answer to those who object that Hegel offers a “heterodox” version of Christianity.

The thought, however, introduces in advance the kernel of what I want to say here. Hegel insists repeatedly that the historical approach is “unspiritual”, has nothing to do with religious truth, since religion is a form of Absolute Spirit and hence of philosophy. Under this heading he also refers to miracles. Endless debates as to whether the miracles really were miracles, or as to what a miracle might or might not be, have nothing to do with spiritual truth. Christ himself deprecated miracles, as the rich man is pained when chiefly or only valued because of his money. So, “understanding spiritual things spiritually”, it is not necessary to place even the resurrection, as the new life is called, under the heading of miracle in the vulgar sense.³ Thorough treatment of this issue requires immersion in Hegel’s logic of Essence in relation to Appearance and indeed in the Logic in its entirety. Part of our claim here is that this logic is developed in full consciousness of religious truth, recalling Hegel’s claim that Christianity just is the truth of religion as such, its concept.

This criterion, in fact, is the key to our central puzzle here. “Christ after the flesh”, namely, is a representation falling short of the Concept, just as is the empirical “ex-istence” of anything whatever. People at that time and place, in the immediacy of their finite consciousnesses, asked “Art thou he that should come?” They were referred to the good works, the fruits, of Christ’s ongoing life, once again. Now just as these good works, all of the end-period of this life we are told about, reflected back upon the previous years, to establish that he was and is always and essentially the one that should come, so the final End establishes, in a Roman soldier’s words, that “Truly this was the Son of God” (or, it may be, a son of God, however we interpret the phrase).

That is to say, the End is, eternally and, precisely as the End, realised. In this sense Hegel declares that “the factual is normative”, adding that this is the basis of all “natural law”. Realisation is the meaning of End. So there is no simple ambiguity upon *finis* such as Geach and Anscombe pretended to detect, as if between mere finish and purpose. This thesis, rather, entails the dialecticity of history itself, according to which the End is “its own result”. Thus the first “norm” of natural law, in Hobbes as in Aquinas, to survive (preserve one’s own being), has, as unswervingly followed, ensured factual survival of anything at all. We should note here, as well, that however validly Hegel establishes this thesis such dialecticity first appears in the notion of *sacred* history specifically, the history of Biblical revelation occurring alongside or, rather, making use of “profane” history as an infallible working out of the divine purposes eternally

³ Thus it should be understood that I intend no departure from orthodoxy here.

realised in their original free and hence necessary adoption. There is no place, that is to say, for a seriously intended theology of the divine intentions in abstraction from divine deeds. These deeds themselves, *pace* Aquinas, are no different from divine thoughts generally.⁴

So the representations in which history, too, consists as being the finite march of our minds and of experience to the Concept or “omega point” including and “accomplishing” all that has gone before, as finally not being “before” at all, whatever their priority in discursive thought, in which even such speculation as annuls discursive thought must consist if it is spoken at all, these operate here as everywhere else and Hegel interprets them everywhere in the same way, in terms of his ultimate System. Christ is and only is what he was to be (Aristotle’s definition of essence as such, as *quod erat esse*). In his death, his “end”, our own essence is first accomplished and declared. The accomplishment is the declaration and *vice versa*. That is to say, accomplishing itself belongs to representational thinking and discourse only.

Hegel states clearly in these lectures and elsewhere that here “death dies”, that God, as having assumed all finite weakness, both destroys death and shows its true face as the other of itself, what it too was to be. The death of God he speaks of, that is to say, is misunderstood head-on if taken to mean the supersession of any such notion as that of God. If God dies, rather, then it is death and not God that is superseded, transformed. Contrary to the habit of religious representation, however, it is transformed into what it always had been or necessarily is, rather, the “entry into the life of the spirit”, as Hegel expresses it. “Oh death I will be your death”.

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⁴ Aquinas, namely, distinguishes divine thoughts that God chooses not to realise. Hegelian logic seems to exclude this notion as being inherently finite. “My thoughts are not your thoughts”, the Prophet declares. Here the whole metaphysics of being and non-being is engaged, the sense in which “nature” is necessarily the Idea realised, “as outward only, and for that very reason only inward” (EL140 add.), “no less than the spiritual world... a revelation of God”. “All that God is he imparts and reveals; and He does so, at first, in and through nature” (my stress). The myriad galaxies, like Hegel’s inverted or “topsy-turvy” world, work to confirm this, the being of non-being that we confuse, even after its discovery, with an endless penumbra merely, fixated imaginatively upon Newtonian spatial representation. The later talk of actual possible worlds will find natural resolution in (philosophical) idealism,

The point is crucial. At one place Hegel refers to baptism as manifesting, i.e. manifesting and *not* effecting, the child's essential insertion into life according to or as having the quality of Spirit. Life otherwise, we know from the logic, precisely inasmuch as it is the Idea immediate, is opposed to the Spiritual, to which death, viewed however in this spiritual way and not as a purely negative "termination", as what is rather "working in us" to give life in the Spirit, at all and any moment, gives the key or entrance.

Hegel, however, qualifies this negation (of effectivity) by making clear he is referring to children born into or living in a spiritual milieu, a milieu suffused by the spirituality of this "new life". In just this milieu sacramental baptism is "presented", made present, as properly re-presenting this more than biological and indeed eternal "birth" into what does not grow old or wear out since not coming in bits or as the abstracted parts of a larger whole. "No birth no death", or rather birth and death newly discovered as affirmations in identity of one another.

Rather than view this position as entirely negative, or as a denial of any effective sacramental theology in particular, we may note that Aquinas speaks of the efficient causality of salvation exercised by Christ's humanity as supremely instanced by his dying and by the sublime manner of it, while at the same time he gives no indication whatever as to how this appearing or how this reality might be able to be such a cause as he, in line with religion, asserts.⁵ For, as Hegel says, religion represents fundamental states of affairs as freely elected events within a larger human-divine history, the creation, the fall of man, the atonement.

Hegel therefore recognises that the Life of Christ, as a human and historical phenomenon, is bound to at least equal the lives of great men of the spirit such as Socrates or one of the prophets, many of whom died martyrs to what they stood for. But he says that such a viewpoint, and this might be seen as a critical placing, at least, of the medieval devotion to Christ's humanity in its "abstract" separation from the essential "work of redemption", as Hegel and indeed the tradition presents it, is not religious, is not religion. He uses this term where we might expect "spiritual" rather. He wants to show that Christianity is indeed still the absolute religion specifically, in accordance with the title of these lectures.

He goes on to describe how the death of what those who knew Christ had come to regard as the most precious of all gifts, namely this Lord, Master and Friend, became, for them and hence in itself, though not before they had experienced it in all its bitterness, not a but *the* "reversal of

⁵ Cf. Philip L. Reynolds, "Philosophy as the Handmaid of Theology: Aquinas on Christ's Causality", in Fergus Kerr, ed., *Contemplating Aquinas*, UND Press, Indiana, pp.217-247.

consciousness". In other words it became the resurrection or became, we might say, resurrection simply. This is of course a figurative term, inasmuch as, just to begin with, Christ never "went down" into a grave from which he "rose up", though he is represented as "descending into Hell".

Now this reversal is just what characterises the life of thought, as essence against appearance and finally the Concept, that being of the Other, which does not thereby merely cease to be but even thus incarnates or realises itself. Nonetheless it here, Hegel seems to claim, first and definitively gets its special or uniquely revealed edge. The reason is, as he states at length, that it is here not merely represented, apparently, but truly experienced as a visible and sensible particular, such as alone gives the certainty characterising faith, in which "victory overcoming the world" consists.

This introduces a second "crucial point", not merely over and above his stressing that religion does not create a new world so much as newly introduce us into the ever-abiding truth, but as itself mediating this first point to us. For this second point is itself just the point about mediation itself which we would expect just Hegel to have the mastery of, namely that mediation itself, as concrete reality and no mere abstraction of the Understanding, must ultimately be a mediator or actively mediating agent or person, and that uniquely. This unique one is called in religion the Christ or anointed one, as reflecting sacred consecration to office in a sacral society, and hence it was asked, rhetorically, in the first proclamations (*kerygma*), "Was it not necessary that Christ, the Christ, should suffer these things" or, more shortly, death? The particular turns out to be the "universal of universals", as Hegel says of I, the first person, or, as St. Paul will make precise, "You are all one person in Jesus Christ". It is in fact, we are at least implicitly urging, at the completion of the process, ultimately of thought, as the mediation referred to, that the preliminary steps are first shown in their fulfilment, are first indeed "accomplished". This is the sense in which history is dialectical.

We can best understand this twofold point about religious mediation, namely that it is religious and that it is concretely mediated, by referring it to the ancient figure of a progress from shadows to reality. Orpheus wanted to lead his beloved wife back from shadows to reality. He necessarily failed, and with supreme pathos. Yet in the "passion" of Christ more than pathos is involved, just in that it did not fail. It was a philosophical transition and thus, or as such, beyond all possibility of representation, the death of death. Hegel quotes the Lutheran hymn, "God died", is dead. As he says here, this means, in immediate inference, that

death, in the old negative conception of it, is dead. The negation is negated.

So he presents this progress from shadows to reality as the “supreme ingratitude” of Spirit. Spirit cannot, must not, acknowledge the steps, the ladder, whereby it came to where it is, since in fact it had never been anywhere else from where it might come to where it finds itself wholly. “Oh life that is no life at all”, Teresa exclaims. “I live yet not I”, says the Apostle, while we are urged to “hate” our “life in this world”, to “use the world as though we used it not”. These sayings are all misunderstood except in this context of the reversal of consciousness by the “death of the mediator”. Here in the *Lectures* Hegel brings out the richness, the specifically religious or transcendental significance of what he but touched on in *The Phenomenology of Mind*.

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So we are led on to consider this requirement of uniqueness, traditionally satisfied by the representation of the mediator’s being “born of a virgin”. This latter claim forms no essential part, however, or condition for the uniqueness claim, as even the theologians agree, and so it is not part of our subject here. Attachment to it, however, may be thought to have hindered the opening of the perspectives disclosed by the mediation of Hegelian logic, such as that the particular man is also or just thereby the most universal, *ecce homo*, who was to “taste death for every man”. It also historically conditions the development of a particular *sin-theology* that has itself obscured or even displaced the central consciousness-reversing proclamation.

Hegel, identifying this, emphasises how the movement in its inception was characterised by disregard, even contempt, for humanity’s normal ethical certainties, decencies and relationships. As Gilson expresses it, the Christians turned Greek ethics on its head, replacing the supremacy of virtue with the attainment of happiness, blessedness, as “highest development of morality”, *höchste Entfaltung der Sittlichkeit*.⁶

Insofar as this can be regarded as in continuation with attitudes promoted during Christ’s life on earth we refer to the prominence given to forgiveness, as having most aroused resentment in the existing religious teachers and as singled out in Hegel’s phenomenological account,

⁶ M. Grabmann, *Thomas von Aquin*, Munich 1959, p.159. See our “The *bonum honestum* and the Lack of Moral Motive in Aquinas’s Ethical Theory”, *The Downside Review*, April 2000, pp. 111-136.

“Conscience, the ‘beautiful soul’, evil and the forgiveness of it”.⁷ Who is this man, again, that he can forgive sins or claim to do so? Only God can forgive sins, they said, and the point of view lives on, even though Christians, in their chief prayer, act out a forgiving of one another (“as we forgive”) as eliciting such forgiveness. What is the point of my forgiving my neighbour if I am not saying to him that his sins are forgiven? What more does he want? We hear it said, God may forgive you but I can’t, in what is no more than a contradiction in performance and even a would-be denial of God, for whom I too am necessary. “If I did not exist, he would not exist”, Eckhart teaches, along with the less startling converse. Hegel develops this thesis.

But now this means, has to mean, that when or inasmuch as we forgive anyone we become this man, i.e. either Christ or the man or woman we forgive. This, the final truth (of the Concept), is the final perspective in which we should view, receive, the insistence, of Hegel and others, upon the necessary particularity of “the Mediator” and of mediation, so that it will be a religion, a cult, at the same time as it is absolute. Cult, after all, is not necessarily distinguished from philosophy, as the examples of Pythagoreanism or some forms of Neo-Platonism show, while, again, Hegel characterises philosophy as the supreme and eternal *Gottesdienst*.

This final perspective is instanced throughout the New Testament, beginning with the clear Synoptic teaching that whatever we do to one of Christ’s brethren, i.e. to anyone, we do to him so that, conversely, everyone is “my neighbour” (Good Samaritan parable). So St. Paul teaches that all, you all, are “members one of another”, i.e. are not members of some larger whole at all, but each rather instances and embodies all. Whole-and-parts Hegel explicitly makes a momentary category in conceptual thinking, in the Concept’s thinking. The Johannine account of Christ’s “high-priestly” or final prayer is yet more explicit. All shall be and hence are one, in one another (and hence not “in” at all), “as I Father am in you and you in me”. Just so “may they be one in us”. In the annual “Week of Prayer for Christian Unity” this prayer is often wistfully cited as being counter-factual, though this assertion is a simple case of unbelief as described in Dostoyevsky’s “Grand Inquisitor” chapter in *The Brothers Karamazov*. The whole point of its proclamation at this high point of the Fourth Gospel is that this is how things are and are here revealed. In Daniel Kolac’s titular words, “I am you”.⁸ The truth is practically embodied and accomplished (not merely expressed) in forgiveness as its

⁷ Cf. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, ch. VI.

⁸ See Note 2 above.

supreme mediation. This is the context of C.S. Lewis's account of his meeting with a Swiss pastor who, in turn, had met Hitler. "How did he look?" "Like Christ." The answer was unhesitating. So Nietzsche, wishing to be the Antichrist, signs off as "The Crucified". In art Lucien Rops represented just this as the Devil writhing on a (the?) cross, while Christ is "made sin", a curse, "for us". "Oh death I will be thy death". This is "the reversal of consciousness", again, where those who knew Christ "after the flesh" enter into a new relationship with him, that of the outpouring of Spirit in resurrection, a figure for the supreme reversal. For religion it is a figure of thought or a phenomenon indifferently, because of the very nature of phenomena, which "both are and are not" (Plato). In leaving attachment to the figure behind we come closer to "knowing spiritual things spiritually". Insofar as we ourselves do not live the life we live now ("I live yet not I") immortal resurrection is posited, as neither beginning nor ending but rather revealed as that "revelation itself" (not of this or that) which Spirit is⁹. To this Hegelian conclusion there corresponds glory in religion, freed of its obscurity as the mere figure of light.

This indeed is the condition for the further assertion that what religion reveals in dramatic form is in truth the Beginning accomplished in the End as such. This will apply also to the drama of the "life of Christ" as indeed to history as a whole, finding its self-understanding in what is literally this "drama to end all dramas". In art the Wagnerian enthronement of drama thus appears as a falling away from the synthetic knowledge, even "absolute knowledge", which symphonic form recalls and achieves. Alternatively, Wagner's operas may be regarded as symphonies, on the pattern of the first "choral symphony", in aspiration at least. But then the listening ear must sublimate the literally dramatic, the libretto¹⁰, as poetry, Schillerian or not, sublimes the particularities constituting it. The Gospel expresses this in the saying, "My joy is fulfilled", i.e. a joy eternally possessed or "before the world was".

So when Christ says "Greater things shall you do than I have done" he adds "because I will be in you" and we in him, as we have seen. This is made clear for all to see in Hegel's philosophy of the self, as negation of Hume's first negation of the self. "I ascend to my father and yours". The community of forgiveness stands as realising these identifications, embodying the absoluteness of any possible subjectivity, while its

⁹ Note that this transcends the position, reprobated by St. Paul, that the resurrection has already occurred. It is not such as to "occur" at all.

¹⁰ "Why did they burn the woman?" Bruckner asked, after attending the third "Ring" opera with doubtless the highest musical appreciation. My thoughts, again, are not your thoughts. So speaks the speechless Concept, "in one word" only.

cohesion, co-inherence rather, lays bare, reveals (Latin *revelat*, unveils), the essentially phenomenal character of “the finite spirit”. As the Indians say, “I am that”, eternally or “as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be”. In this sense what we *see*, with or without eyes, is “invisible”, and this was always the true ecclesiology rather than the either/or of controversy.

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One might fear this chapter is flattening out into an exercise in banality, Hegel’s “empty edification”. Yet Hegel himself identifies the speculative with our ordinary manner of speech and even with the conceptions and utterances of the typical child¹¹. But we have still to develop the thesis of “the fullness of time”, of history’s having to have an essential and unique *caesura*. Essentially indeed it will be more than a *caesura*, as being the point where history knows itself as superseded, and so does not know itself. History too, like nature, sinks beneath the horizon like darkness at daybreak, only more so, since the night concerned was the night of non-being, of shadows cast by what seemed to the shadows themselves as the not-yet, not able (yet) to see that this not-yet makes of themselves the never-ever. In this sense “I will not remember their sins any more” is the viewpoint, in religious representation, of this absolute subjectivity Hegel propounds. In such forgetting of particulars the unity of the particular with the Concept, the Idea, in the infinity of both, is affirmed, as is firstly true of nature as such, “akin” (Plato) as “blossoms on one tree” (Wordsworth), constituting “one mind”; “the Idea which forms the common content of nature and mind, is found in nature as outward only, and for that very reason only inward” (*Enc.* 140 add.).

When Aeneas visits the Underworld the shade of his “old flame” Dido passes him without signalling recognition. It is really “spooky”. The meaning is that he never knew her. The realm of their passion was one of shadows even up above and under the sun, appropriately enough. If there was or is a real Dido then she is not there, in Hades or “under the sun” indifferently. Eternally there is neither sun nor temple, Scripture’s final document affirms. Her non-being, rather, is there. This is the truth about Euridyce too. Rather, “you sit with Christ in the heavenly places”, by faith indeed, but this only shows the greatness, the cognitive power, of faith. “If we have known Christ after the flesh we know him so no more.”

¹¹ Cf. *Enc.* 82 (add.) on “the true reason-world”.

Christ, in fact, and here we come to it, is not finally Jesus, inasmuch merely as the individual is the universal, but rather is himself “the fullness of time”, in which we all participate in differentiated identity, actually a “relation” transcending participation, a pure “relation of reason” or non-relation, in fact. Relation posits two separate substances. That is why, says Aristotle, it is “the weakest of accidents”. It is, then, time itself that has or is the point, of omega indeed, though this is also alpha, the beginning in the (realised) end, again. So what is at this point or any point, which time is, is equally the whole circle, of which the centre is everywhere, in the sense of wherever there is consciousness, full of eyes. Time then is eternity’s aboriginal figure and representation, the drawing or design in and whereby eternity asserts or knows itself. Now this, eternity, is knowledge itself. Knowledge then is without opacity, which is unintelligibility or matter, but is itself self-knowing, the self-knowing, thought as “thought-ing” or thinking as thinking itself and just in that way “being” itself, but as purely act. So, in supreme illustration, Hegel is Aristotle and *vice versa*, I am you. Calling him “the Aristotle of our times” is speculative, not merely figurative, and so Hegel finds the speculative, again, in our or children’s or most unreflected speech-forms of echoed thought, reflecting rather the highest mysticism (*Enc.* 82 and add.). Just therein am I “universal of universals”. In reasoning, in thinking, we are changed into what we think, the Concept, as absolute self-consciousness, or, rather, we see that we were never anything else. Consciousness is reversed. Of the in-between stage, like this of talking about it, of language, we say: “Touch me not, for I have not yet ascended to my father”, surely inspired insight on the writer’s part. Has the Magdalen really seen him or not? Far more, her consciousness begins to reverse, in Hegel’s phrase mentioned above. Sight is not denied but transcended, “sublated”, and forever.

So we return to the individual, no longer seeing, in not seeing, abstractly, but as understanding why the “Name of Jesus” is spoken of as, celebrated as (on January the Second historically), “holy”. There is conscious parallel with the more ancient giving of a name to God, to the Absolute, as Moses had demanded. But the name given was a name that is “above all names”. It named a sheer unlimited existence in freedom (“I will be what I will be”), and hence was not a name as is any name among names. This name, of *kyrios*, “Lord”, a title also signifying transcendence of all names as such, was “in the fullness of time” passed on again by God to his Other (*Philippians* 2, 9), thus illustrating and grounding the main thesis of Hegel’s Logic, that being becomes what it is not and *vice versa*, that the last is first, the first last. This is achieved and understood, *these*

are the same, exclusively by death, which is thus itself resurrection¹² or a rising from the immediate to the mediated Idea, to, in Hegel's system, Absolute Knowledge, which he characterises as thinking as much as it is love and as love and blessedness inasmuch as it is thinking (EL159). So there is no abstract "gnosticism" at work here.

"When the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son" (*Galatians* 4, 4). Hegel comments, "This means: the Spirit is at hand, the need for the Spirit that points the way to reconciliation." This says, we may observe, that the Spirit is the need for itself, for Spirit, as eliciting it. Both are "at hand". In this sense "the subject is the infinite power of unity: it can bear contradiction" (my stress). Spirit is subject, while ultimately therefore subject is Spirit. Another way of saying this is that Time brings forth its own fullness, of course "in the fullness of time". In this sense the author of *Galatians* comments on such histories as that of Abraham and Hagar, for example. He writes, "Now these things happened in a figure". I quote an inspired, as it were Hegelian translation of *quae sunt per allegoriam dicta* (Greek: *allegoroumena*). There are two "testaments", of servitude and of promise, or is one mere figure of the other, which yet "happened"? This very point is crucial, incidentally, for the self-constituting Mohammedan interpretation, where Hagar's son Ishmael, as ancestor of the Arabs, and not Isaac, is the child of promise. Yet here first the real, which is the ideal, is disclosed. The ideal, conversely, is disclosed as real and history is thereby transcended, sublated, ended in a first beginning or, again, reversal (of consciousness of such things, of self). The very notion of happening is here figurised (and not merely figured), drama as such finds its fulfilment in its sublation, "heard all at once" as Mozart said of his individualised musical pieces. Hence "not one jot or one tittle" is taken away as each, like you or me, is bearing the whole in all and every "part" or "piece", which is therefore really neither part nor piece (*Enc.* 135).

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"It is certainly possible to indulge in a vast amount of senseless declamation about the Idea absolute", Professor Hegel warns himself (*Enc.* 237 add.), while in the story even the rival Palestinian or Canaanite king's prophet's donkey could not keep quiet, until his master declaims of the bearers of this Idea, as they wished to be and therefore were, "Oh Israel,

¹² To characterise this "mystical" view as exclusively Lutheran is simple misrepresentation. Cp. F. Inciarte, "El bucle melancólico en perspectiva", in *Nueva revista de política, cultura y arte* (Madrid), October 2000, as unfortunately exemplifying this tendency.

how lovely are thy tents” etc.¹³ We today have learned to say this of the tents of displaced persons and homeless in general as putting the last first, which is the metaphysical secret behind that imagined degenerate patronisation of the weak and sickly, which Nietzsche so despised.

Hegel states that the “exigency of reconciliation is infinite unity”. It “resides in the subject as this”. So “the substantiality of the unity of divine and human nature comes to consciousness for humanity in such a way that a human being appears to consciousness as God, and God appears to it as a human being. This is the necessity and need for such an appearance.” The divine-human unity, Hegel here adds, “becomes a certainty through appearing in the world in flesh (John 1, 14).” That is to say, the reality, the “unity of divine and human nature”, is anterior to this phenomenon. It is to say also, in terms of Hegel’s general philosophy and system, that certainty is itself appearance, is precisely, if taken abstractly only and for itself, uncertain. For we “have that within which passeth seeming”. Yet we need the appearance to come to it, as religion, he says, must come before philosophy, the philosophy which it itself both elicits and foreshadows. It elicits indeed, on this account, the whole of science.¹⁴

It follows that humanity “in itself” is the universal, is “the thought of” humanity, and here too thought can and must “bear” its other, in existence, even granted that “in itself” equals “the thought of”, as he says here. Ultimately existence is just one more thought or “category” (in “The Doctrine of Essence” merely). But this “thought” from now on “intuits and senses” the substantial unity of God and humanity, Hegel declares, adding that it lies beyond immediate consciousness or “ordinary” knowledge.

Hegel, we should note, is sensitive to a difference between the situation of the first believers and that of those later surrendered to Church doctrine. This is a reflection of the more consciously Christian world that he, like Aquinas before him, though differently, personally inhabited in comparison with our wider or more promiscuous perspective today. The initial victory was won, slavery had disappeared (his example), history was, for him too, in some sense ended and ended as, as it was now (or in principle since eighteen hundred years) revealed, never having begun. So he says the teaching of Christ, based on poetic representations, during his life “after the flesh” and the lessons of dogma are two very different things. He affirms this difference and sees no reproach in it, Dostoyevsky notwithstanding. To the question “What if Christ should come again?” (as this is pictured in Dostoyevsky’s legend), he would reply that Christ *has*

¹³ *Numbers* 22-24.

¹⁴ Cf. *The Phenomenology of Mind*, chapter VII, “Revealed Religion”.

come (again) in his community or Church, as Spirit or, beyond that, in the eternally constitutive self-knowledge of and by “absolute knowledge”. The whole position, therefore, might seem to rest upon that only seeming, from our temporal viewpoint, normality or canonicity of the factual. This is only a source for scandal when our understanding has not gone to the ground of it. The factual will be what it is (was to be) necessarily, yet, inasmuch as spirit is spirit, in supreme freedom. So “Jesus shall reign where’er the sun, Doth his successive journeys run”, as a hymn, sung by English schoolboys, proclaims. Under this circumstance it may have seemed at one time a coded celebration of the Empire on which the sun never set, though that in turn was but one of the many figures for the eternal community, the Idea absolute. This may help to explain that enormous, quasi-Roman complacency and “aloofness” at which observers have marvelled. Finite consciousness can suffer not only from demonisation but even from angelisation and this distortion is the main reproach often made to religion as such, since the English (*Angli*) in truth were “not angels but Anglicans”, Pope Gregory’s eschatological dream notwithstanding.

So if Jesus had been committed to the lunatic asylum after gaining just one elderly female follower, like the madman played by Fernandel in a corresponding film, he would not have been Son of God, the position (on the normativeness of the factual) seems to urge, and indeed some still see the Cross as just such a failure. They lack Hegel’s Christian and/or speculative perspective, which, he insists, is the ordinary knowledge of faith, which should not therefore be contrasted against knowledge, of which it is itself an eminent form. For Hegel only what is its own self in independence is what “was to be” (Aristotle’s definition of essence, again). “The spirit of the Lord has filled the whole world.” The medieval consciousness knew that this was not presently true just as certainly as we do, with all our increase in geographical knowledge. Yet they still sang it with conviction, as speculative portrayal of what was to be and hence of what eternally is.

The question remains, can philosophy as philosophy say, or work towards saying, “Jesus is Lord”? Well, firstly, the Hegelian philosophy of itself as it were deconstructs that saying, but positively rather than by reduction. The Lordship, namely, absorbs the finitude of “Jesus”, preserving it in the full amplitude it was not, prior to the mediator’s death, able to signify unless in trans-figuration. What is asserted is that from Jesus, as Son, Spirit has proceeded. We live, therefore, in “the age of reason” as of spirit. So a philosophy of history, of phenomenal or “everyday” history, is involved as well as or along with the philosophical sublation of history into dialectic. It is a matter of where to place the

undoubted *caesura*, such as some, for example, would now place at the emergence of *homo sapiens* as a biological species, or as Jaspers would place it in the sixth century before Christ. Yet he got this habit, of placing *caesuras*, from the Christians.

*

The humanity of God has to appear because humanity, inclusive of humanity's certainties, is an appearance, is appearance generically, such that, for example, the whole of nature depends upon it, as finite spirit. This seems to be the upshot of Hegel's position here, while for him such an appearing is in itself "the fullness of time", time itself being appearance as conditioning this appearance *a priori*. It is thus that time itself appears to the finite spirit (*Phenomenology of Mind*, p.800) inasmuch as not (yet!) freed from time. The contradiction here observed reminds that composite discourse itself, as falling short of the Concept, is itself time-conditioned, its act-descriptions tensed.

This reflection applies also to certainties entertained by the finite spirit. Absolute certainty can only be the self-knowing certainty of absolute knowledge, the Concept, itself. It is in this that faith participates or with which, rather, it is, *qua* faith, to be identified, thus, as it was said, "overcoming the world" (*sc.* of appearance). Thus it is that, in discussing or presenting this, Hegel speaks explicitly of humanity's needs. As knowledge begins in sense-experience, the concrete particular without which there is no experience, so, as certainty, it is founded upon this. This doctrine is one with that of Aristotle and Aquinas, otherwise left in a measure unexplained, that the *phantasmata* of sense must accompany, even in the sense of grounding it, any knowing or thought whatever, at least inasmuch as it is the senses that "deliver" to thought its materials. This Hegel explains "transcendentally" in terms of the particular, which is the sensible individual *noemon* or thing to be known, as related essentially to individual and universal in syllogistic (the subjective Concept) such that there, in proto-syllogism, the three are identified with one another in mutual derivation. The world of sensible particulars is realised in the beginning, i.e. eternally or as end, as being a requirement of knowledge as such, that of the Other alienated from Self in which self knows self as other than self and is only hence infinite. Aquinas touches this from afar, so to say, when he states that sensation is *quaedam cognitio*, a certain cognition or knowledge, and is hence also "spiritual", intentional of form and not mechanical merely, as sense and intellect therefore are not causally but formally related. This is the meaning of saying that the senses

do not understand what they, in virtue of their formality, “deliver” to intellect.

According to this format, then, there has always to be a particular experience behind true knowledge or certainty. The principle of incarnation merely instances this, and hence Hegel boldly states, in an early text, that in a very real sense Spirit proceeds, proximately or in the last analysis, from the Son alone. We might even call this the “romantic” principle, thus giving an unexpected pedigree to that movement of yesterday against which we tend to define ourselves, but which rather, in this its own self-contradicting, lives on and develops. Hegel is thus a romantic philosopher in the sense that Goethe is a romantic poet, Beethoven a romantic composer. The viewpoint, that is, is not exclusively romantic, as limited to the outlook of “the beautiful soul”, but it does not lose sight of its own discovery, that of the whole present in all parts, which thus have no life or being apart from it, however the Understanding may feel bound to anatomise them. It is present, further, in the form of identity. This is what marks the Concept as such in Hegel’s account (*Enc.* 160, 161) and finds its expression in the poet’s claim to “see the world in a grain of sand” (William Blake). Without this insight, as Shelley remarks, “Life, like a many-coloured dome, stains the white radiance of eternity”, i.e. it merely stains. His lines find meaning against or in this background of revolution, an overcoming of the abstraction of absolute class-divisions in liberty, equality and fraternity. But politics itself, meanwhile, is transcended, sublated rather, without being given up, as finite civic friendship gives place to love and its consequent joy, filling the world. *Spiritus Domini replevit terram*. But for Spirit to fill the earth is to recapture thus far the position of Parmenides, that Being has no parts and that, consequently, all is in each inasmuch as each only find themselves, as other than themselves, they too, in Absolute Being, this All that is “all of a piece”, transcending all composition, called Love as consequent upon and coming after incarnation, though thus revealing what it is eternally. “God is love”. Revolutionary ferment includes, in its often alarmingly unjust manifestations, renewed recognition of and contact with this evangelical truth. Everything finite is contradictory or, again, “the letter”, i.e. the finite here in its turmoil, kills the finest inspirations.

This is what, in Goethe’s poem, the servant Wagner declares to Faust: that the very act of Understanding (though not of Reason), in its own abstractive act of understanding the synthetic or composite, “ruptures the spiritual bond”. The link and consequence here, we observed earlier, is mutual and universal forgiveness, Nietzsche’s “rainbow after long storms” returning us to the very first figure of a pledge, as was shown to Noah,

between man and the Absolute, a figure, that is, of reason's own divinity, such as Cicero makes to be the foundation of any possible law.

This pattern of incarnation is continually repeated or reaffirmed in action and spiritual experience, of Dante for example. A particular girl-child reveals, just by her being, and confers upon him, absolute blessedness and good will. Later he sees, in poetic vision, the incarnate Christ reflected in the pupils of her eyes alone, at the summit of the Mountain of Purgatory. C.S. Lewis identifies this with "joy", able to come through, to strike as it were, through anything or everything without warning (*The Problem of Pain*, final chapter). One is, it is claimed, "Surprised by joy, impatient as the wind", as Wordsworth describes his own experience of nature and the consequent "intimation of immortality". This intimation is not had without the experience and to it corresponds, I claim, what Hegel calls certainty such as is needed for final or absolute knowledge, his version, after all, of "salvation". In this sense it is "better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all". Without it, without experience, the key to experience is simply not known, antennae as required for the perception are lacking. The truth of it is not less universal for that, however, inasmuch as such "grace" alone perfects and fulfils nature, humanly or more generally, which otherwise "groans and travails"¹⁵. The presentation, as it yet remains inasmuch as in material linguistic format, of this, of the Concept, is remarkably coherent.

The incarnation seems to remain, however, as proto-instance and even a type of cause, at least formal, of this anatomy of our perception. The Concept, however, is of itself self-conceiving and instances itself just as all other things instance it. To them that have shall be given, and thus the incarnation lay as it were enfolded in the natural development of Israelite religion, as it may be found in other religions, even though only Christianity has achieved, in this one man, its full or proper actualisation, a man as it were "without qualities" (Musil), being just man and the Son of Man, *ecce homo*, in a sense extraordinarily simple, as Nietzsche describes the requirements for such a universal yet particular figure. That is, Nietzsche could not, seemingly, attain to the further identification his own text would elicit, of the universal *in* or as particular.

So we can say that every experience of something thus conceived is experience of the Concept, as Aquinas teaches that man's final purpose, self-realised end in Hegel's terms, is *necessarily* intended in every movement of desire or will.¹⁶ Again, this is not a confusion of "scope"

¹⁵ *Romans* 8. On St. Paul, cp. Nietzsche's discerning if unsympathetic account, "The First Christian", in *Daybreak* 1881, 1886 (2nd ed.), section 68.

¹⁶ Cf. Aquinas: *Summa theol.* 1a-2ae, Q1, art. 6-8.

(Anscombe, Geach), but a further deduction. The centre is everywhere, even though the centre itself thus requires some particularising or defining characteristic.

CHAPTER THREE

LEAP OF MIND

Mind's leap to God is its self-apprehending act. It apprehends self in apprehending its own other, closer than itself to itself. God is a name for this other and for all otherness as what is most intimate to non-other. The Science of Logic has given us the language to express this, to objectify it and so, overcoming this objectivity, to know it absolutely. This power of manifestation of (our) essential being is constituted by, as one with, the very first or only Word, as this is itself the power of speech, itself omnipotent to be, to make and to do. It is the Concept.

As perfectly one, as self-reference itself, mind is infinitely, that is to say perfectly, many. Self-reference is therefore self-cancelling. To ask "Why me?" is to cancel this question. I am not I but, rather, perfect unity is many, "legion". I cast(s) out self, is or am all or infinite in its very self-bounding. I takes all for its "portion". "I shall not die but live" because I has been told, or sees (it is the same), that life is "only the idea immediate". Knowing this, I, all or any I, is already (or simply) dead and so has "passed from death to life". Mediatly I am self here and now, inexplicably. Why not another? Why anyone?¹ Mediatly, I am being's own necessity revealed *and nothing else*, since everything in this nothing. The taste of self is non-self. In this sense Christ lives in me as I live in Christ, mediating the mediator as universal individual, either one of us being the unity.

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¹ Why anyone? This question was the totalitarian guard's reply to being asked the former question (Why me?) by one of the innocents he had been ordered to shoot. One needs to be able to explain why this is a corruption of Hegelianism, to explain, that is, the role of *Sittlichkeit* in the finite world of phenomena. God, meanwhile, sends his rain on the just and the unjust. But the question at first means how can I, in my self-consciousness, be possible. As such, it contains the denial of this possibility, is objectively rhetorical. Since this is a contradiction, the interesting question becomes one as to how anyone can ask this.

From *Enc.* 40 to 60 Hegel discusses, critically, Kant's "critical philosophy", as applied, from *Enc.* 47, to three "unconditioned entities", Soul, World, God (49). God can be considered either as Mind (identity with all things) or as Being. "And their union is the Ideal of Reason." Logic, that is, is continuous development of the Ontological Argument, of Mind's (Being's) leap from the imperfect or finite. So this, following on Hegel's words here, is God's union or closing with his self, the Science of Logic in the sense of absolute knowing, which is thus infinite act, only objectified as "happening", or being finally mediated as the immediate absolute, mediated from or to no one since it itself is the other of itself within itself, this being act and the act of acts (*actus actuum*). In self-alienation, which is the unity of infinity's own self-multiplication, it returns to itself in free self-constitution founding all necessity.

Here at and in the final ever realised universe or universal, and so in the name of society, the foundation was laid for a non-reductive because self-defining self-transcendence, i.e. for a transcendence, which, as unitary or monist, mirrors the speculative mirroring of all ages. So it cannot be shattered, as was almost immediately and repeatedly attempted. In that sense alone did it provoke these various attempts to wipe out the "People of God". Antichrist, however, and Christ or philosophy were and are at one, in their day, in this their wish to fulfil or draw aside the veil of earlier speculation, while at least one *Christ*, in the German sense of Christian, actually called himself both Antichrist, whether setting or set "at nought", and "the crucified". So, as caring, we have to be care-full, dialectically. Logic is vital.

*

Philosophy has a "right of rising from and out of the empirical view of the world." It is its own unequivocal, self-constituting "leap into the super-sensible", such as is not made by the *a posteriori* arguments from the finite to the infinite, itself cancelling mediation in the act of mediating. This is the course, the very meaning, of "thought thinking the data of the senses", or just of thought thinking (*Enc.* 50). In this passage you cannot look back to what is already snapped asunder, "the chain of sense".

The "merely syllogistic thinker" fails to see that this leap annuls the solidity of the starting-point (this is why one can start from anywhere, as the finite as looking beyond itself). We are not "reasoning from one thing which is and continues to be to another thing which in like manner is." This is "great error", he implies. "To think the phenomenal world is rather

to recast its form, and transmute it into a universal". Thought "has a negative effect upon its basis". See also *Enc.*13 and 23.

This implied exaltation or leap from the world to God is missed in the "metaphysical proofs", he thinks, which are thus "defective interpretations and descriptions of the process", though they are that. The world as leaped from, in the proper act of Mind, is found "in *esse* and *posse* null" in this "upward spring of the mind" or leap. "Every trace of transition and means is absorbed" since "the world... is explained to be a nullity". This is just what Kant and the others resist, "the *point d'appui* for the exaltation is lost" unless "the being of the world is nullified" and "the process of derivation is cancelled by the very act by which it proceeds." The infinite cannot, *qua* infinite, be "dependent and derivative". He praises Jacobi for seeing this. "The mediation is cancelled in the very act of mediating". This Jacobi did not see, however, that a leap must occur, otherwise Mind is not there. The "negative factor in thought" is neglected. Hence Spinozism is not pantheism but acosmism. "Ordinary men" think it impossible to believe there is no world. They lack the philosopher's grace, so to say. A denial of God is to them "more intelligible".

God, he adds (second remark at *Enc.*50), is best arrived at from the nature of spirit or mind alone, and not from instances of "animated nature". God, as Spirit, is more than life (which is the "Idea immediate" merely). So he comes (51) to "the Ontological proof". A barely disguised contempt for the vulgar pseudo-plausibility of Kant's criticism of it is apparent. As Understanding (Kant) had forbidden the leap from individual to universal, and here Hegel refers to "the trick of adopting a preliminary popular conception of God and criticising a result by this assumed standard", again showing contempt for Kant's procedure, so here it would deny that the universal involves "the specialisation" of Being. "Being cannot be deduced from the notion by any analysis."

Hegel dismisses Kant's example of the hundred sovereigns as "barbaric", his calling them a "notion" here. God is different, unlike any one particular "notion or representation". Discrepancy from its notion is just the mark of the finite alone. God has to be what can only be "thought as existing".

So far this is only to characterise the notion, God. It is plain that it involves being (as in his "With What Must Science Begin?"), for this is the notion's reference (back) to itself, he says, as "the poorest category of all". Even poorer, however, is "any external and sensible existence", as "the paper lying before me". So, concerning the leap,

The petty stricture of the *Kritik*... can at most molest the path of the human mind from the thought of God to the certainty that he is: it cannot take it away.

This, moreover, is what the Logic is about, God, the Absolute, as known with certainty, whether we wish to call it God, in our unguarded moments at least, or not.

For Kant reason remains “out and out abstract thinking... supplies nothing beyond the formal unity required to simplify and systematise experience; it is a *canon*, not an *organon* of truth” (52), as even Aristotle’s logic, the warp and woof of the world, was an *organon*. But here, for Kant, there is no “ontology of logical forms”². Such a purely regulative Reason can only give a criticism of knowledge, not a doctrine of the infinite, or of the Concept in Hegel’s case.

Later Hegel will refer to the real fault in Anselm’s argumentation (the original “ontological argument”, as it is generally assumed to be), as against these “petty strictures of the *Kritik*” (*Enc.* 193). Anselm “sets”, posits, the finite “in antagonism to the infinite” *qua* conception (realism), not seeing the finite’s incongruity with its own notion (absolute idealism, *Enc.* 95). One has to show the finite to be untrue, the separation of categories to be identity, and in one and the same apprehension one leaps from it to *Deus meus et omnia*, philosophy’s own *Gottesdienst* which, as third “side” or “stage” of Positive Reason, the Speculative, “apprehends the unity of determinations in their opposition”³, as here *meus* and *omnia*. “Speculative truth... means very much the same as... mysticism”. Hegel adds that “there is mystery in the mystical, only however for the understanding which is ruled by the principle of abstract identity” (*Enc.* 82 add.)

² Cf. Henry B. Veatch, “Concerning the Ontological Status of Logical forms”, *The Review of Metaphysics*, 1948.

³ *Enc.* 82. As mentioned earlier, I alter or modify the Wallace translation here (“determinations” for “terms”) as suggested from the podium at Pittsburgh by Joseph Kockelmans in late 1967.

CHAPTER FOUR

LEVELS OF DISCOURSE

There is this question of time, to turn aside for a moment, including here the sense in which time itself is a “moment” of the system (as distinct from a category¹). Is it real or not? For everyday purposes its concept is real enough. Funny things start to happen to it, however, already in the discourse of physics. We understand physics as the application of a degree of abstraction beyond the immediacies of sense, even though consciously basing itself upon the deliveries of sense (e.g. when looking down a microscope) at every turn.²

If one wants to say time is ultimately unreal, however, that there is (ultimately) no time, then one seems to presume an ultimate *discourse*. From many points of view, however, this seems contradictory. Discourse, the very form of judgement, is itself finite and hence false. A cannot be B unless B is A and so not B. There is only A, the Concept.

In respect of Mind and its works, just as in the case of Nature, we must guard against being so far misled by a well-meant endeavour after rational knowledge, as to try to exhibit the necessity of phenomena which are marked by a decided contingency, or, as the phrase is, to construe them *a priori*. Thus in language (although it be, as it were, the body of thought) Chance still unquestionably plays a decided part; and the same is true of the creations of law, of art, &c.³

¹ Contrast Possibility, which Kant considered a mere modality, “since these categories do not in the least increase the notion as object, but only express its relation to the possibility of knowledge”. Possibility, Hegel shows, is rather the first or immediate form of the category of Actuality. This is indeed a relation to (absolute) knowledge, like both all the categories and Nature herself. Nature, though, reflects, represents, the Method in self-alienation. This moment is distinct from the immediate moment of the categories’ mutual otherness as a mere “covering” for identity. And yet it is not. Nature, in the Idea where all is realised (as End), is rather a distinct projection in representation of this same “logical” moment. See following note.

² Cf. *Enc.* 143-145.

³ *Enc.* 145, add.

But if there can be no ultimate discourse then one can choose one's philosophy, as to its expression at least. The choice will be, in its very rationality, guided by aesthetic criteria, i.e. it will never be entirely "presuppositionless". This, the realm of *techne*, or of creativity, is one where there is no previous rule, unless such that may be validly violated, as Aristotle points out, contrasting art and morality as two species of practical thinking. One thinks also of the higher justice, *epieicheia* or equity, the virtue, as a "part" of cardinal justice, of knowing when to *break* a law in accordance with the intention of the lawgiver. This Hegel does throughout his philosophy, reason correcting and/or contradicting understanding.

To opt against time is to side with philosophy, with thinking. Time is the doom of the Spirit that does not think. It is, though, the "cunning of reason" (EL209 and add.) that makes us see fulfilment as in a future. Yet the future was truly said to be a being of reason (*ens rationis*), though this, the supposed category, should not have been posited, as thus named at least, in a restrictive sense. The reasonable is the actual. Time is unreal for philosophy. We might seem to concur, then, with Findlay's interpretation, only if crucially adding that, philosophy, thought, is all, and therefore but thinks itself:

Hegel certainly says that, in the final insight of philosophy, Time will be expunged or annulled, but this "annulment" stands for no metaphysical or theological timelessness, but for an annulment in and for philosophy.⁴

As it stands, however, this is obfuscating, illustrating what is defective in the idea of "universes of discourse"⁵. Final insights are precisely metaphysical, the word means no other than that. Such thought is absolutely free. It does not, for example, confront any ready-made dilemma between free construction and interpretation, such as we routinely assume. In interpretation it creates or causes, it loves. Knowledge as a supposed preliminary moment to this has vanished away, because it never was. Thought knowing itself, equivalent to "thinking itself", is, rather, the basic element. This element is ultimately self, to which an ultimate self-consciousness corresponds. "I will be what I will be" is the true "I am",

⁴ J.N. Findlay, *The Philosophy of Hegel*, Collier, New York, 1966, p. 146.

⁵ See, for example, Peter Winch's "Understanding a Primitive Society" in *Ethics and Action*, London 1972 and my criticism in *Moral as Founded on Natural Law*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt-am-Main, 1988, pp. 86-90.

determining "at the end of the day" the speculative character of thought and knowing, certainty and truth, indifferently.

This self is indifferent to death because it is not (merely) alive. Being alive is phenomenal, the "idea immediate", whereas the self, rather, is reason itself. Reason is its own self, however, and as such it is one with all "things". It is evident that it is this man who thinks, said Aquinas, but this only holds good if there is a "this man" in the first place, if this is not a moment of defective vision to be superseded, not merely as if but such that it never was. Thought, act as thinking, is what is evident to consciousness, i.e. to thinking over again. In just the same way *viventibus esse est vivere*, for the living to be is to live, is only true if read as a critique of the living, or rather of living, as "the Idea immediate" only. They, in "the pride of life", misread being as themselves alienated from their true being, "groaning and travailing". Mediation, in one or all of the three forms of absolute spirit set out in the final section of Hegel's *Encyclopaedia*, is required.

So it is that time does not exist for philosophy, as Findlay says. It is our initial identification with philosophy in re-membering. Reason, however, converts this statement from truism to a truth of substance. We identify ourselves in "realising" that we, and everything, are thus identified. We have not to do, Findlay says, with a theological vision, meaning by this a kind of time after time. For what comes after must be time again. Yet all is accomplished, is present, *parousially*.

That we have these illusions, the *maya* of time and space, is necessary if what is to appear is beyond appearance, as essence and finally notion, the end and result. Each person is end as identified with this totality, as "standing for", carrying and even begetting all. Here too the law must apply, as long as we speak at all, that two or more things identical with a third thing are identical with one another. This must add to and not retract from the dignity of personality, of "the human face", we might wish to say.

There is a glory that we "had with the Father before the world was". This is the dignity. To be self-conscious is to know this, to transcend life, to "pass from death to life because we love the brethren". That is, we see ourselves, the all, in each and everyone. We have transcended the particular or family principle. "Who are my mother and my brothers?" The end, in every sense of "end", of death works backwards into, permeates life, as each carries his Cross, denies himself, in Scripture's clearest blend of image and imaged. "I live yet not I", not that I which we cannot "mean" or say⁶ as we would wish. The self denied is the affective, epistemic or

⁶ Hegel, *Enc.* 20

linguistic illusion that philosophy clears away, making intelligible the noumenal phenomenon of love in all its variants as a catching sight, with inward participation, of the Idea, the Concept. Without love, said Aquinas, without the mutual recognition of likeness, including (for him) recognition of *appetitus* in the lowliest "substance", the rational fabric of connectedness between all things would fall apart into chaos.⁷

We dream perhaps of eternally savouring chosen moments, persons, past joys. None of these can, by its very notion (concept), be lost in the Concept, where all, in being unified, is "raised to a higher power", sublated. I intended no pun there, but one may mark it if one wishes. This sublation is implicit in the theological vision of Aquinas. For Aquinas, namely, "the society of friends" is not needed for eternal happiness, while Gregory "the Great" asks rhetorically what there could be that those who "see" God do not see. Philosophy in fact gives the rationale or "accomplishes" these (theological) adumbrations at once of our natural desire (*desiderium naturale*), as rational beings matched *qua* rational with the universal, and of selected or canonical texts. In accomplished explanation, Hegel thinks, it is better to avoid the term "God" as being precisely the name for the unexplained or, rather, unknown. "This is eternal life, to know God", says the scripture, but as known God becomes identified with something knowable. We can only say what God is not, says Aquinas, not incorrectly since, as Hegel highlights, language and predicative speech are essentially finite and hence false. So we do not merely kick the ladder away after use, we kick it away *in using it*. It is that kind of ladder, made for abuse at the hand of ungrateful Spirit (as Krishna, Hegel notes, produces even the *maya* directing to him) but not likely to be going on sale in any shop.

Yet Aquinas specifies that this *societas amicorum*, while no part of the *esse* of absolute or eternal happiness (*beatitudo*), yet belongs to its *bene esse* or is fitting for it. God, one may therefore expect, will "mercifully" provide it as, in another version, he provides the houris, for the men at least. This though is a distinction without a difference, as of thought recoiling from itself or "losing its nerve". Unity of all in all is precisely the nerve of the Concept.⁸ More generally, "the body" is fulfilled in Spirit and this is the (its?) resurrection, superseding without reducing the "individual" self. The term "resurrection" is clearly figurative, to say nothing of the more abstract "of the body". Thus the Apostle Paul became,

⁷ On this see our chapter later in this book on "Renaissance Scholasticism as Mediating Hegelian Thought", which discusses the Analogy of Being.

⁸ In general, in God, in the Concept, the first act is not abstractly distinct from any secondary act, since this is limitation and imperfection.

in his own description, "all things to all men" and could have wished himself "a castaway" if, *per impossibile*, this might more immediately bring about this union of all with all, which, as all in all, is the Absolute (or what God "shall be", in eternity figured as future or "not yet"). However, it is only if the individual self be seen as in essence a "castaway", "ruined" from its entirely illusory inception, that such a thought, otherwise horrifyingly opaque, can find entrance. The same applies to the mystical recommendations of St. John "of the Cross", where to come to what we are not (*sic*) we must "go through" what we are not (*The Ascent of Mount Carmel*). Whether choosing the unpleasant, actively seeking humiliations or the bad opinion of others and so on - these are the recommendations - is a true anatomy of this life in the Spirit let each one decide for himself. Maybe with Hegel he will want to "send up" such "isolated action".⁹

The fact remains that a "turning aside" to pursue finite pleasures or honours as unrelated *teloi* (ends) would be, at least as thus represented, a choice against universal harmony of thought in love, "pure play" (Hegel) or something unnameable as perfected and *ipso facto* sublated knowledge.

Consonant with this identification of the Absolute with the *vita contemplativa* the latter was defined as not properly belonging to this present life, to life. Those who chose it, therefore, typically monks and nuns (along with bishops who did not choose it), appeared as "eschatological icons". They were, in intention at least, nothing but signs of the life, the "age" to come, *vitam venturi saeculi*, as the Nicene Creed concludes or, rather, it concludes with "amen" or the willing of this. Yet the sacrifice, says Hegel, of the life thus consecrated, as of the Mass, *qua rite performed*, it would follow, is of itself merely a "sign". Doubtless one must so view a regular presence at liturgical celebration, the dressing up, the observing of "times and seasons" to represent, in *res et sacramentum* (in sign as reality, this phrase seems ineptly to intend), to "show the Lord's death until he come". Yet these are not the substance, though it may still be fitting to "observe" or enact "the sign", not needlessly flouting or destroying it. There must, all the same, be a maximum finite distance beyond which it is no longer reasonable to travel to church on a Sunday, or at all. Such a distance, or its equivalent, can be lodged within the soul itself. Thus St. Francis in his last days did not even wish to have the Gospel read to him, as if not bearing it within him as being it. Philosophy, we find, takes part in or directs, rather, a general movement of introversion

⁹ Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, tr. J.B. Baillie, Harper Torch, New York 1967, p. 574f.

or "spirituality". This, and not envy, is the divine hiddenness, the "cunning of reason", that it could not in logic become object for us or for anyone without ceasing to be what it is, the Idea. This only appears to us as cunning, Hegel would surely agree.

The Christian movement even from the beginning was not simply identifiable as a species of general religion, but as liberation and good news. In transcending Judaism, whether or not by the latter's own dynamic, it might plausibly be seen as transcending religion as such (the rending of the Temple veil), out of which, however, it arose. Thus a more conscious "secularism" is often explained as arising out of Christianity, which first secularised the State itself in favour of the chosen or at least "called" assembly or church (*ek-klesia*, called out) of God. Such texts as "I and my Father are one", down to the statement of James that "true religion is visiting the fatherless and widowed and keeping oneself unspotted from the world" point in the same direction. Religion here is sublated as ethics. In the ethics of St. Thomas, indeed (called moral theology), religion survives as a virtue, as just one of the parts, however, of the virtue of justice. One pays back to God or higher beings, even to parents or ancestors, as much of one's unpayable debt as one can, by cult, piety or "observance". Thus Socrates directs that a cock be offered after his death to Asclepius.

For the State, however, whom, or whose gods, Christians refused to worship, Christianity could not but appear as a religion (though charges of atheism were frequent) to which it henceforth submitted instead of itself demanding such "religious" submission to the "gods" of the state. Thus, however, the kings of Israel had submitted to the prophets of this new, more "absolute" unity, in virtue of which the Jews were called by Porphyry a "nation of philosophers", long before Swift imagined his Laputans.

The condition for such Constantinianism was that the Christian movement or body, in the person of its overseers (*epi-skopoi*), would, as priests (*sacerdotes*), offer the sacrifices reckoned necessary for the good of the state, for its protection by higher or more absolute powers.

The later Protestant movement within the Christian *populus*, this *Pöbel* of priests, prophets and kings (and not really a *laos* or *populus* at all), can thus appear as endorsement of the move to introversion. This is in effect annihilation (overcoming) of "the world", the cosmos even (cf. Hegel's term "a-cosmism"¹⁰) and identification with the divine or absolute as "subject", Spirit, "universal of universals". Paradoxically the State

¹⁰ I intrude the hyphen.

becomes re-acknowledged as an independent power (in contradiction, beyond a certain point, of natural law theory) but now as part, merely, of that whole illusory world of objectification (objective spirit) standing over against the Subject as, therefore, ultimately one with the Subject himself or herself, thus become infinite Subjectivity rather.¹¹ This translates the resurrection mentioned into dialectical terms as ever-present, as freedom. There is uncanny anticipation of the Freudian super-ego, seen rather as true self, however, urging to a love and eros beyond rather than in restraint of the usual, to a more comprehensive discipline, that is to say. The New Law, it becomes slowly plain, *elicits* absolute idealism.

This Protestant movement, in fact, was a dialectical movement or moment within the body, within Thought as a whole, eliciting sublation and integration, over four or forty centuries. This integration is transformation, not just re-integration or fixation upon “the primitive” so as to “get at the concept” thereby. It should not be degraded into any ecclesio-political arrangement merely, the ambiguity of “ecumenism”.

So now we need to see why an identification of immortality or timelessness with philosophy, the “lady philosophy” (*consolatrix*) of Boethius, San Severino as he is himself remembered around Mantua, is not a reduction from a previous sacrality and infinite glory but the true view of it, rather. The reticence of the Scriptural texts concerning the “eternal life” that Scripture itself puts forward is here explained. There is a conflict, namely, between Spirit and text or language, “dead words and letters”

But pure consciousness is just as much a mediate relation of conscious certainty to truth, a relation constituting the ground of belief. For enlightenment this ground comes similarly to be regarded as a chance knowledge of chance occurrences. The ground of knowledge, however, is the conscious universal, and in its ultimate meaning is absolute spirit, which in abstract pure consciousness, or thought as such, is merely absolute Being,

¹¹ The contradiction, of natural law (whereby man naturally “belongs to a state”), is in fact older than Protestantism. It is reflected in the Gospel saying, “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s but to God what is God’s”, as against, as it seems, the Pauline “The powers that be are ordained of God”. Thus the “two swords” (“Lord, here are two swords”) were interpreted as if in parallel, missing the weary irony of the one not understood, “It is enough”. He knew, as philosophy knows, that the infinite power of God was always there to be summoned. “It is useless to count” (Hegel). So Scholastics would say that creation brought “not more being but more beings” than God, which was already not enough but too much, this discourse of religion remaining at the natural or “realist” level and thus falling into self-contradiction with nothing “speculative” about it but mere paradox rather.

but *qua* self-consciousness is the knowledge of itself. Pure insight treats this conscious universal, self-knowing spirit pure and simple, likewise as an element negative of self-consciousness. Doubtless this insight is itself pure mediate thought, i.e. thought mediating itself with itself, it is pure knowledge; but since it is pure insight, or pure knowledge, which does not yet know itself, i.e. for which as yet there is no awareness that it is this our process of mediation, this process seems to insight, like everything else constituting it, to be something external, an other.

This essential moment

then seems to it to belong to belief, and to be, in its character of an external other, a fortuitous knowledge of stories of "real" events in this ordinary sense of "real".¹²

Hegel adds that if belief wants to be guaranteed with that sort of "real" evidence and "foundation" and "is really serious in thinking and acting as if that were an important matter" then it has *eo ipso* been corrupted and led astray by Enlightenment itself. Such an apologetic must be essentially reactionary, belonging already to the supersession of what it attempts to justify, *viz.* religion prior to sublation into and by discursive philosophy and its enlightenment or "clearing up" of things.

*

Time does not exist for philosophy, as immortality as anciently considered extends in both directions, i.e. there is no direction, no time's arrow. I have loved thee with an everlasting love, chosen you before the foundations of the world, thus Scripture, and of course what is chosen is "already" there. With the Lord a day is as a thousand years. With McTaggart such considerations amount to an atheism, in that the existence of such immortals cannot depend upon an extraneous divine will, he thinks. Each is necessary to the whole as having the unity of all within his self, while, equally, the whole is necessary to each. Either position is a consequence of the other. Reason runs here in both directions indifferently. One will, therefore, holds all together, in freedom. There is not, ultimately, an infinite will plus a finite will the former might over-rule, as if on a par. Thus in destroying myself, in submitting to death, I destroy the world in passing out of it, not merely as if it had never been but as establishing that

¹² Hegel, *op. cit.* pp. 572-3.

fact in eternal resurrection.¹³ This is the evil of murder, its contradiction (evil as “sham-being”), that the agent there destroys the world and yet remains or at least could remain in it. I prescind here from any further questions about suicide specifically.

Thomas Aquinas had admitted even created necessary beings¹⁴, such as angels, human souls and, surprisingly, prime matter. These were necessary as God was necessary, indestructible, not subject to annihilation. Yet still they depended upon divine causation, knowing (and willing, it is the same in the Absolute) them as being in just that way, and this with its own necessity.

Yet for Aquinas too, as for Gregory and for Findlay benignly interpreted, all is seen in seeing God. In seeing God, indeed, “we”, our concept, are and is sublated. Only God sees himself, since such seeing is one with him and/or her and/or it, which would not exclude the moment of “them” either. This is absolute self-consciousness. For McTaggart the dignity of absolute personality, of each one of us, seems to be here compromised. Yet he is surely inconsistent, as we found St. Thomas inconsistent in effectively insisting upon a society of friends as belonging to the *bene esse* of, as appropriate to, absolute blessedness (*beatitudo*). Aquinas here goes back to considering *beatitudo* as the property of each one severally, at the same time as he is bound to deny that God created out of loneliness or insufficiency. It belongs to the *bene esse* of God, indeed, as self-manifesting or “glorious”, to create, but not out of a lack such as loneliness would be. Hegel shows well enough, and it is otherwise implicit in Aquinas, that a category of *bene esse* is hardly or not at all distinguishable from necessity in the ultimate case, since there necessity is one with absolute freedom. One can compare also Aquinas's distinction of the necessity of end (identical with that of precept) from any necessity of compulsion.¹⁵

I am you, claims Daniel Kolac¹⁶ in our day, and even, necessarily, the whole world, urges the physicist Schrödinger¹⁷, since it could not be

¹³ The doctrine of a purgatory need not be denied in saying this, any more than by its possible representation as a series of re-incarnations.

¹⁴ Aquinas, *Summa theologica* Ia 2, 3; Q44, 1, Obj. 2; Q19, 8; 22, 4; Ia-IIae 93, 4 Ad 3. Cf. Patterson Brown, “St. Thomas' Doctrine of Necessary Being”, in *Aquinas*, ed. A. Kenny, Macmillan, London 1970.

¹⁵ Aquinas, ST Ia-IIae 58, 3, ad 2: *Alia autem est necessitas ex obligatione praecepti, sive ex necessitate finis, quando scilicet aliquis non potest consequi finem virtutis, nisi hoc faciat.*

¹⁶ Daniel Kolac, *I Am You*, Springer, New York, 2009.

otherwise. This seemingly drastic resolution of the difficulty is nothing new. "In God we live and move and have our being", preached St. Paul. He also declared, in contradictory figure, that we are all "members one of another", whether or not wishing to limit this to a manifestation within the Christian body or *corpus mysticum*, itself understood more and more in its development as a figure for or bearer of the whole. But this, "that all may be one", is a view far from any mere "ecumenical" platitude. It is rather actualised and willed in one unitary act of absolute subjectivity. Philosophy has brought us to this point, which various texts, as held variously sacred, represent.

Philosophy then, as a harmony of coincident solipsisms (and this is the truth of solipsism as inherently transcending itself) can well be viewed as or identified with a lady as may be required, recalling too the priestess Diotima.

Here we unexpectedly rejoin as more literally confirming the factor, the doctrine, of *allegory*, where the figure becomes the reality, in first and true presentation, of the figured. The virtues really are spirits, the graces, the muses, as philosophy is, it may be, a lady and this might well be her ultimate charm, for other ladies as for us males, if such we are. They are personal, as personality, says Hegel, is the very "principle of universality"¹⁸, or they are nothing. The principle of personality, of concrete universality, is indeed absolute. Each one is absolute in transcending the "each". Self-consciousness here "finds itself at home with its essential nature" (*Wesen*).

Because of this the distinctions... are not accidental... because of the unity of the essence with self-consciousness... they are... unsundered spirits transparent to themselves, stainless forms and shapes of heaven...¹⁹

It is in accord with this that Hegel defends the truth, the reality, of the very surface and appearance of nature, just as he can suggest that it is in sensuous incarnation that the Absolute is "first" realised, as personal, we might now say, or truly universal, not abstract merely. "I have said you are gods".

Omnis, singular, includes merely *omnes*, plural, when used in distributed or subject form. The subject, as a matter of logic, is always taken *quasi materialiter*, even when highly abstract, the predicate then not always or necessarily "giving" the form, but always and necessarily taken

¹⁷ E. Schrödinger, *My View of the World* (transl. Cecily Hastings), CUP Cambridge 1964, pp. 21-22.

¹⁸ Actually he says the converse, but in a relation of equivalence.

¹⁹ Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 452 (Baillie).

as if formally, *quasi formaliter*. This is part of the falsity of finite or linguistic judgement. The hylomorphic reference is analogical merely, like hylomorphism itself. So "every man is mortal" says more than "all men are mortal", which would merely be a kind of empirical leap (Hume's "problem of induction").

The material world is the supposed place where anything just is itself and not another thing. Mind, spirit, overcomes this, is in its very essence the to-be of another and even its own other, This, intentionality, is what spirit is, reflecting the unity of absolute subjectivity with all or any idea or predicative formality. Language begins to emerge from this, but only so far as falling into contradiction and falsity, since if the subject is the predicate then the latter should not be needed. Predication falls away here as untruth and abstraction, not admissible within absolute knowledge and its limitless clairvoyance. We are members of one another *before* we are members of ourselves. The dawning of abstraction upon prehistoric man, the first linguistic awakening of the understanding, would of necessity have produced all the psychoses with which we are familiar:

He thought he saw a bank clerk descending from a bus,
He looked again and found it was a hippopotamus.

Thus wrote the Victorian logician-poet in serene acknowledgement of this. Yet this "forbidden fruit", knowledge, has to be assimilated.²⁰

So we should cease trying to explain away Plato's insistence that knowing is re-membering. We should rather try to recover the philosophical notion of memory, Augustine's *memoria* where God is found, as not tied conceptually to an absolute or real past. It is that "dark pit" of which Hegel speaks²¹, our unknown or forgotten selves. Here knowledge itself is de-absolutised, thematised, its ineradicable duality which "shall vanish away" before something better and fuller, Spirit, not as such transparently nameable, since not finite (McTaggart suggests "love"), but not thereby kept from us in eternally dark or "envious" mystery. The "jealous God" and smoke of Sinai evolves into the "light and no darkness at all" of the once Johannine and then Hegelian Absolute, awaiting further transformations no longer purely dialectical, since in the Concept dialectic has finally overcome itself in its result. The transformation might well be from knowing to what we call enjoying, tasting, as Hobbes said of heaven that we shall "no sooner know than enjoy it." That is, knowledge too, as limited, negates itself, in a dialectic of

²⁰ Cf. Hegel, *Enc.* 20 on the *Genesis* myth.

²¹ Cf. Hegel, *Enc.* 453.

dialectic itself, a seemingly bad infinite, which, it might seem, we must therefore discount as forever renouncing or going beyond language, itself a finite or untrue production. "Be still and know that I am God." Know beyond knowing, in "unknowing" though without clouds, in *docta ignorantia* (Nicholas of Cusa).

*

I have learned to write, to think, to talk. Still I do not know who or why I am. Self, with or without the "my", means everyone and more indeed than everyone, every possible one, rather, source of each, selfhood as such. I, reason, cannot be by chance or even choice, except my own but then in just the phenomenal sphere we are calling in question. It cannot just happen to me, by either chance or compulsion, to be. That would be to say I was born before I was born. In fact I cannot say I was born. The mystery evaporates. What I mistake for "my" self-consciousness in isolation from the other, as master or slave, is actually self-consciousness as such, personality as "the principle of universality". This phrase of Hegel's, or its converse, or that "personality in its own nature universal" (EL63), is of the deepest significance. The absolute Idea, hence God, "is the absolute Person", who "alone really is" (EL151 add.). Hegel's view here is that what religion represents as a gracious and gratuitous "grafting in" of pre-existent subjects into the unitary divine life actually stands for mind's own process, as its "own result", of grasping this eternal reality. It is the same error or representation as is, finally, time itself. Time, in truth, is finally a moment of being, whereas being is not a moment of time, not even "for a moment", absorbing rather momentariness as such. There is just one infinite event or "happening", *Ereignis*, or, finally, act. This would seem to be the final thought of Heidegger too. Time, like nature as a whole or, *a fortiori*, being as first conceived, is a "moment" of the Idea, in the self-speculating dialectic of the system, which is, of course, not finally restricted to the preliminary logico-linguistic mode as such. Nor is this something "whereof", in consequence, "one cannot speak". Speech is nothing other than the echo of this process and knows its own essence, as equally manifestation, utterance and "revelation" in it. Thus the triad Being, Nature (essence), Concept, is a first moment of that of Logic, Nature, Spirit. In Spirit all these participate in identity. Thus in (the doctrine of) Essence, as in Nature, each species (or individual) is what it is not and is not what it is. "This also is thou, neither is this thou", the poet's "world in a grain of sand" or whole as part and conversely.

Or, I could just as well have been female or Chinese, or anything at all. It is not entirely true that I am neither, in other words. "O anything of

nothing first create", Romeo declaims. But why be anything, why be I? Is it not because this whole complex has to be thought and this, thought or thinking, we call I? I am the asker of the questions I answer, their prime possibility, even, therefore, possibility as such or, rather, the Concept. "Viewed as an identity in general, Actuality is first of all Possibility" (the category), writes Hegel, adding almost immediately though that this "mere form of identity-with-self", that "everything is possible", is philosophically empty, "meaningless". Yet it is a misunderstanding, inconsistent in fact, to now conclude that the ego, "the" ego, is transcendent merely as a "formality", of language perhaps. Rather, I disclose to myself this, that I, and all with whom I stand in mutual identity, each necessary to all and all to each, am the source of thought and all its putative "formalities". As source, though, I am identical with it so that thought can be thought as thinking itself "only" in thinking all. So nothing forbids thus far that the I that I am now is not necessarily the I that I find in memories or even that I may hope to become. "Mine eyes shall behold him and not another", indeed, but we have here been thinking of that which is ever "at home with its other". Self and other are suspendable modes of finite speech.

This is what the child or young person grasps in wondering at his own being, in dark situations comparing it to the surrounding reality to his own despairing disadvantage, the "inferiority complex" or "sense of sin" indifferently, not grasping the latter as itself the call to "leap", and that "ungratefully", from finite representations.

Does reality have no "grain", then, someone might ask? We do indeed witness a general reconciliation amounting to dissolution or, more nearly, ab-solution of knowledge, an overcoming of its essential objectificatory mode, as we know it empirically, the "tragedy" of knowledge as Kant conceived it. McTaggart has pointed here to a finite quality in it as limiting it, an inescapable dualism between subject and object, one dominating in willing, the other in beholding. He concurs with the Apostle, it seems, in saying that such knowledge shall "vanish away", only adding that it therefore never was, that something further (love, he suggests) is the reality as, nonetheless, completing or fulfilling knowledge. He claims, also, that this is implicit in Hegel. If so, of course, then Hegel, by his own principles, must be claiming that it is implicit in every other philosophy too. We, however, are placed as Hegel was, and any other thinker; we have, that is, to make up our own minds but as needing to justify them, all the same, before the bar of all, since all, we have said, are intrinsic to each. And this is certainly is in Hegel (as it is implicit in Kantian ethics, the "kingdom of ends").

This philosophy, to be true, must have roots also, though not determinatively, in patterns of psychology, in trauma, as they in turn find their resolution here. “They” might include, as well as anything else, a boy at school, away from home, waiting to be beaten, a girl getting raped, or equivalently. How did I come there, he wonders, to the school? Did this not show it was not home, since they sent me away? Everyone experiences this finitude; at home is not at home. I was not from thence, and they too, dream-figures, unknown, even after gratitude and piety have been given its due. Only if the dream-figure were infinite would it not be dream, but then not figure either. I am, simply, since I am I. Being is immediacy, simply, sub-species, thus viewed, of that self-conscious identity, the necessity, the universality, to which I then awoke, or sub-species of itself as a thing’s highest form, in growth, “absorbs” all previous or subsidiary forms of it, as form itself absorbs and annihilates matter. And since I came not from any other, so I go not to anything other. I, that is, am not the individual generated by “Kind”. What, if anything, I came out from and what I go to, that is none other than my self and its ground. This we are taught first to see as represented in the Christ-life, going out so as to return to that essential “glory” never actually left, or in the Absolute, “from whom all fatherhood in heaven and earth is named”. This too, therefore, is represented in being spoken of. The denial of representation is a representation. Negativity, this means, is a “constituent function of the Notion (*Enc.* 160) and not, impossibly, a distinguishably controlling parameter for conceiving of it. Logical form, that is, belongs to what it orders, is “its own result”. In this sense the Concept (notion) is the Absolute, as is also the Absolute Idea (*Enc.* 213).

So I am not some chance being since then, if I would judge thus, it would be by chance and so not valid.²² I am rather the law of logic, the Method, in discovering which, said Lukasiewicz, one seems to discover the mind of God.²³ No such law is a law for me unless and until I see it, i.e. it is a law in my seeing and hence decreeing of it.²⁴ This is at once the freedom of thought and the prerogative of lunacy, as Aristotle in his way acknowledges in *Metaphysics* IV, when discussing the “law” of non-contradiction. It is indeed a law, which Hegel observes also when pressing

²² Lewis was in the right here against Anscombe in their famous 1947 debate at Oxford. She simply refused to accept his way of speaking, his use of “valid”.

²³ Quoted as a footnote in *A Wittgenstein Workbook* (ed. Geach, Coope, Potts), University of Leeds (1970s).

²⁴ Cf. “Classificatory Expressions and Matters of Moral Substance”, *Philosophical Papers*, Grahamstown, S. Africa, 1984, reprinted in our *Philosophy or Dialectic*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt 1994.

the claims of Reason against Understanding. Reason, this is but to say, is not heteronomous, a stranger within, but my very inwardness, rather. Here the unity of the human person, as distinct from its individuality as discussed above, is at stake. All the debate about why one should be reasonable is here cancelled and suspended, as only originating in the deceitful clumsiness of language, speaking of reason as if it were itself an instrument and so less than a person. Reason, rather, is the very instrument-wielder and organist. It entails, indeed, on account of its universalist interest and nature, "the ruin" of the individual as unreflectedly experienced, but it is erroneous to see it as a threat to or as somehow the opposite of freedom.²⁵

Further, if reason is I then it is voluntarist too, beyond all faculty psychology. *Sensus est quaedam ratio*, sensation is a kind of reason, as consciousness of the other in self. I am, conversely, my choice, my action, as these are my thoughts. Every thought, as expressed, becomes *praxis*. So also my opinions, I am responsible for them. "Every soul gets what it expects", remarked one adept (Thérèse of Lisieux) and it is up to us, to our reason, to know great desires beyond the snail's pace of our understanding, argued her namesake and predecessor of Avila, engaged friend of some of the foremost metaphysicians of her time. So "the peace of God which passes all understanding", this is reason, philosophy, as it is apprehended in religion, not to speak of music, "absolute" or otherwise, the philosophy, that is, of identity in difference of one with every other, without confusion or reduction.

The natural desire for infinity is the demand and foundation of Reason, as the world points beyond itself as appearance and mere sign. It was futile and self-contradictory for theologians and their authorities to wish to limit such an idea in defence of the supernatural privileges of "grace",²⁶ as they are too univocally imagined to be, in deference to an unanalysed notion of personal identity. We do not naturally desire full fellowship or friendship, ultimately identity, with the absolute, they wanted to claim, defending the gratuitousness of gift(s) but tending rather to a deep corruption of philosophy, to a "fideism" which is in turn a corruption of faith. Spirit is itself or in essence rather gift, *donum*. For Aquinas this is the identifying mark of the Holy Spirit but here too grace builds upon or perfects (*perficit*) nature in ways not dreamed of, apparently, by these theologians. As

²⁵ R.M. Hare tends to assume this in his *Freedom and Reason*, Oxford 1965. The heteronomous aspect of the Kantian or even, *mutatis mutandis*, Humean "ought" is not resolved by sheer elimination of the Absolute as End. See our note 6 above. The latter is rather one's true *autos*, self of self and ultimate identity.

²⁶ Cf. H. de Lubac, *Surnaturel*, 1947.

Aristotle showed long ago, it is always the ultimate difference which defines, perfects and constitutes the whole, or as the late Karl Rahner exclaimed, "everything is grace", as necessity is freedom indeed, or the other way round, rather.

The world, the whole, must be other than its immediate appearance, which it causes, since this does not appear as a whole (cf. Schrödinger, *loc. cit.*). The immediate must mediate its other, which is the same more deeply, as the film of understanding must lie upon deep water (and not merely the film of words, as Wittgenstein has it), which yet would itself not be seen, would not be, without such a film. This again, the depth, is I, "the self-thinking Idea"²⁷, "the logical system but as a spiritual principle", self, subject, Mind.

Krishna produces, he claims, even the delusion, the *maya*, of the empirical universe, Hegel approvingly remarks.²⁸ Ultimately each one of us produces, begets, all the others as types of his or her self. We beget one another and thus are members one of another in a mutual context transcending causality, the cause that was not able to exist without its effect and so ceased to be cause merely. Rather, I am that universal relation, as are you and you, he and she, in mutual solipsism, which is thus no longer solipsism, as relation is no longer relation (as "accident" of substance), each one being the all in the perfection of unity beyond all abstraction and limitation or false finitude. This seems to have been a breakthrough on Hegel's part, best compared in sweep, perhaps, with Aristotle's reflective discovery of logic in the first place, the logic employed by and employing his master Plato.

²⁷ Hegel, *Enc.* 574.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 573.

CHAPTER FIVE

LOGIC AND THE WORLD

In previous work we suggested that argument forms were arguments, of the most generalised kind simply.¹ But we neglected to enquire if, in that case, judgement forms and even the form of the judgement as such (including the syllogistic judgment that "two things identical with a third thing are identical with each other", Aristotle's third "organ of reason", of which concept-formation is the first) should not itself be a general judgement. If it should, then by parity the concept formally considered "as such" is itself a concept and perhaps the all-inclusive concept, as "S is P", and its extension into argumentative reasoning by triple identity, would include the programme for all discursive thinking. For finally both judgement and "syllogism", thus taken, would rejoin the formal concept or notion.

The aim here was to unify one's view of logic and the world, to allow for logic and thinking generally as an activity, and even as such an entity, within "what there is". A main insight here was that one could not reason by external specification, by rules supplied from without, since one had to believe, to know, to understand that, for example, two things identical with a third thing are identical with each other. Logic had to be something one saw, in seeing the world, in apprehending reality inclusive of the possibility of thought. This appeared to make logic into a potentially empirical reality, its principles, at the same time as one thus, necessarily, implied a necessity in the form of reality perceived.

A second if related principle was that language as such refers or "stands for" (*supponit*), relates itself to an extra-linguistic reality. This explains why, after all, we feel the need for it to be able to refer to itself too, as that by which all else is known. It was a system of signs, and this included the "internal words" of thought, whereby, typically in the judgement, one united or identified that which our faculty of abstraction or of particularising attention was forever taking apart or "analysing".

¹ Cf. Stephen Theron, "Argument Forms and Argument from Analogy": *Acta Philosophica*, Rome 1997, pp.303-310. See also the Preface, above.

Here one attempted to define "the domain of logic" while thus charting the contours and being of human reason itself. To what extent this should be called a "critique" is a separate question, even if one lying close to hand. Hegel, for instance, rejects the very idea of a critique of knowledge or reason, relying rather upon the distinction between understanding (*Verstand*) and reason (*Vernunft*).

Logic, anyhow, is by no means a restriction, impossibly, upon reason. It is how reason goes to work, its instrument(s), *viz.* concept-formation (*apprehensio*), judgement and syllogism or argument. This is in fact language (*logos*) itself, since this is made up of judgements or statements, of predications, whereby one "says something about something else". The exterior word or phrase corresponds to or flows from the interior word or *verbum cordis*, brought forth in the very act of thinking. So close are language and reason. Reason makes language as it makes concepts or ideas, in the very act, again, of primal thinking.

If Wittgenstein's denial of private language is the whole truth then why is there a plurality of languages? In fact I understand all other languages, the languages of others, if I do, upon the touchstone of my own. That is, I translate, whether a wholly other language, which however will always have certain deep structures identifiable with my own, or a dialect partly dissimilar or just the other person's stylistically diverse usage. In the end, furthermore, I understand my own language as expressing my own thinking, giving it body or incarnating it. This thinking is none other, though, than the unity in harmony of being itself and there the subject, of predication, can only be the conscious self, subjectivity, identifying with or making its own all that can be said of anything and, not less, anything of which anything can be said. The two classes, two senses of "subject", interchange, as Hegel shows well in the *Preface* to his *The Phenomenology of Spirit*.

In the Scholastic *logica docens* such thinking gets explained as issuing in logic, in speech, quite naturally. Yet it is evident that it is this man who thinks, Aquinas notes. This man is the subject, is subjectivity, absolute. This subject has no fixed standpoint but different ones at different times. The subject, of his sentences, is as variable as the predicate and either one may determine the other, as when the predicate defines the subject or, conversely, the subject determines the predicate's reference. They pass into one another, as Hegel will say. This is in fact the function of the judgement, to unite what abstractive concept-formation has first sundered, while keeping the newly minted concepts. By judgement language takes us away from itself. Ultimately, therefore, we make no judgements. They pass, that is, into the concept in the making of them. Hence they are "all

false” and wholly false, not only, namely, in their respective contents but also in their common form. The whole skein of language is illusory, a system of signs, which, however, are purely relational and so without being, relating ourselves to ourselves. The world itself is the creation of language, which just therefore sets its limits. Only thus can thinking, as distinct from a mere talking to oneself, be accounted for.

Language, that is, judgement, is as a ladder one kicks away as the time-series passes into, comes to be understood as, what as series is no longer thereby temporal. Taken absolutely, temporality is impossible. All judgement becomes the judgement that is being, the uniquely one Word that God has spoken. This expression from theology means that there is no particular or finite standpoint from which a particular judgement can or should be made. Temporality would deny the infinitude of any possible subjectivity, which is always subjectivity as such and indivisible, such that all is in each and each is in all, the Idea thinking itself, which is therefore the indivisible being celebrated (in poetry, let us not forget) by Parmenides. Here the most perfect unity possible is conceived as achieving the final simplicity of infinity, final as result of the dialectical process. Just so is time revealed as illusion as we pass, again dialectically and not in time, into our final maturity or end-state. Thinking annihilates time, not merely "subjectively", because there is no object except in the fragmentary thought of finite or not yet accomplished subjectivity.

The judgement that is being is equally, even more properly or absolutely, the concept. It is finally the Idea that thinks itself. So it just is thinking, act. For the judgement that is judgement is *ipso facto* the identity of all identities, which thus fall into one, a *simplicitas* no longer (it never was) merely abstract and unsatisfactory, therefore. The notion, as act, is "pure play" (Hegel) or wisdom, without need or desire for rest or change. This play, therefore, is neither *motus* nor immobility, but the hypnotic, self-focussing quietude of unceasing dance, where every step, every encounter, embodies the whole, embodies, that is to say, all other steps, all other encounters. There is no time in which to get bored. There is no time at all. All is act, uttering the one Word, begetting as one is begotten. The limits once thought constitutive of the self are superseded in quasi-substantive interchange or act that is act of no actor or "substance", that is no longer predicate or predicated, that is Idea, notion, being, in utter simplicity and fullness.

The coincidence of philosophic realism and absolute idealism is patent. It depends upon the identity of mind and known reality elaborated earlier in Greek and scholastic epistemology. There is no unknown reality. Reality is generated in knowing. To this corresponds the Thomistic

praemotio physica of the finite will by *ipsum esse subsistens*, that subsistent being itself, Pure Act, which Hegel shows to be the Absolute Idea identified as itself the Absolute. Once conscious subjectivity is discovered as infinite in itself the identity is complete. What is infinite, that is, has to be, or it is not infinite (the Anselmian moment, to which Hegel accords qualified endorsement). *Cogito ergo sum* is thus not, as in form it appears, an argument, not even an imperfect one, but a description. The felt nexus of thought is self as generated. The field is now clear for viewing the dialectical treatment of logic as completing, or at least supplementary to, the earlier *logica docens*, at the time of Hegel the only such logic in the field. Nor is the question of the relation of Hegelian thought to the movement initiated by Frege as simple as is often believed, as if, namely, there were no relation at all, historically speaking, nor any call to relate them otherwise.

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We have sketched here a notion of actuality that transcends movement or change. Creation, it has been taught, entails no change in God. Yet creation is all the same generally viewed as a putting forth of power, to which the attribute of omnipotence corresponds. God “produces” something as if externally, abstractly *ad extra*, in “ontological discontinuity” it is even claimed, somewhat self-defeatingly. Yet Aquinas, whose talk of a *processio ad extra* is only an analogy of the *processio ad intra*, and others insist that God can have no real relation to what is thus outside, but only to its “corresponding” divine idea. Thus his talk, too, of the principles of practical reason is only an analogy with those of logic; practical reason is the same logical or theoretical reason as *ordinata ad opus* particularly, within which, ultimately, actions themselves fall.

Both of these positions, however, fall short of the simple statement, vindicated in Hegel’s logic, that “In God we live and move and have our being”. The supposed discontinuity is actually the continuity, the *analogy* of God and the world, where analogy is understood, as it should be, as a thesis in logic only. There are not two beings, God and the world, between which there is an analogy². This corresponds to the truth of “mysticism”, as when Catherine of Siena hears interiorly, as it is called, the words “I am he who is, you are she who is not”. The routine exploitation of the sexual difference reaches back to denomination of the Church as “bride of

² Analogy, this finite representation (of the finite) remains in its finitude even if one adds (as by a twelfth century Council of the Lateran) that the “likeness” between God and the world is on the side of the world “more” than on that of God.

Christ”, bridegroom. It only needs completion with the account of Identity in Difference whereby “if God were not then I would not be *and* if I were not then God would not be” (Eckhart). Precisely *by* this truth I am absorbed in God as having no other reality. What escapes this is finite, evil, “the absolute sham-existence of negativity in itself” (EL35 add.), hell, non-being, call it what you will. Here belong Hegel’s mysterious remarks about punishment of the criminal as “only the manifestation of his own criminal will” whereby he is “architect of his own fortune” (*Enc.* 140 add. and 147 add., final paragraph)³, so that he is said to seek this punishment as needing it. Hegel here stresses the text that God *wills* (Lat. *Vult*, Gk. *thelei*) “that all be saved”. This “absolute consolation” (of Christianity) is the knowing of God as “the absolute subjectivity”, thereby recognising all particularity of *personality* as itself “the principle of universality”, to invert Hegel’s equivalence, and “something to be preserved”, i.e. saved, absorbed, put by, etc. In this way all that is abstractly finite is “cancelled” in the same eternal motion. Here again philosophy “leaves everything as it is” (Wittgenstein, who adds “The *riddle* does not exist”, *Tractatus* 6.5).

To this paradox, of logic and nature, corresponds Hegel’s discussion of the concept of force in the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, to give it its full title, from paragraph 136 onwards, leading, *via* an identificatory destruction of our contrast of outward and inward, to the category of actuality, as he calls what he has in mind. Even this will not of course be the absolute, which is the Idea alone, or thought thinking itself. Here Aristotle finds partial vindication in Hegel’s thought. In Hegel natural necessity is not denied but, rather, absorbed or swallowed up into logical necessity, such that “the only necessity that exists is *logical* necessity”⁴ as the Absolute is itself Idea.

³ From the “realist” side one may compare this with Peter Geach’s suggestion (*Providence and Evil*, CUP 1977), of a “time fork”, whereby “the damned” pass into what would then be “ontological discontinuity” indeed. In Aquinas’s words, they would be “outside the bond of charity”. We may ask, would they be anything at all, in that case?

⁴ Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 6.375. He wrote here, perhaps, more truly than his intention, if that were to project a real and yet abstractly contingent being. *Was it, though?* Is not, rather, the attribution of such realism by the late Michael Dummett and others to both Frege and Wittgenstein (implicitly at least), an error of perspective? Cf. Hans Sluga’s “Frege and the Rise of Analytical Philosophy”, in *Inquiry* 18, 1975, and “Frege’s Alleged Realism”, *Inquiry* 20, 1977. “You have never understood me, Russell”, Wittgenstein declared later to his first English patron and presenter of his *Tractatus* in English. Russell apart, the situation is aggravated by the fact that the Wittgensteinian Fregean movement in England during the last century was chiefly the work of a group of “fideist” but declared

Causality was one of the concepts or categories that the medieval or at least early modern thinkers hardly dreamed of subjecting to philosophical critique. Hegel's reproach stands concerning metaphysicians who simply imported into otherwise sophisticated systems unexamined concepts from the normal life of "common sense". Common sense, in fact, *Menschenverstand*, McTaggart will point out, belongs to Hegel's "doctrine of essence". It has no place in the final vision of "the notion", of spiritual reality. Hegel also brackets it with "faith or immediate knowledge", idolisation of which he criticised in his contemporaries such as Jacobi or Schleiermacher.⁵

Here, in his discussion of force, Hegel begins to show that notions of causality are as unworthy of infinite being as he had earlier tried to show was the case with that of existence. We should not ask if God exists, but rather try to discover what God is. What we call creation is, rather, "the thoughts of one mind", in each of which the whole is refracted or differentiated, forming a perfect unity in simplicity of all in one. The particular face of one's child, the Thomist Joseph Pieper once remarked⁶, says everything, gives full knowledge that all is well with the universe, with the whole or all.

Aquinas and other earlier thinkers really say or mean to say the same thing. Aquinas shows that the power of God is exercised, achieves its end (though God is his own end, again), by intellect and will, not by the putting forth of physical strength, earthquakes and so on. It did not occur to him to see this as actually a setting aside of causality in favour of something more worthy. Thinking as causing events, evolutions and so on puts one most in mind of the man who could bend spoons on television by concentrating his thought upon them. That is not our God, surely.

The approach, though, is an old, indeed, a constant one. Thus we may consider the prophet Elijah, in the three thousand year old *Book of the Kings of Israel*. Elijah seeks wearily for the unseen God of his people, of tradition, whom he has served as has none other. He looks for him in storms, winds and earthquakes before finally finding him in "a still small voice", an idea, that is, of something quite beyond any suggestion of

Catholics (Anscombe, Geach, Dummett) who tended to see and thus defend philosophical realism as a supposed pre-condition for this very faith, as it is not. See, for example, Dummett's "A Remarkable Consensus", *New Blackfriars*, October 1987, pp. 424-431. Wittgenstein, it is at least rumoured, was received into the Church on his deathbed at the home of two of this trio. His largeness of mind knew no bounds!

⁵ Cf. *Enc.* 63.

⁶ J. Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*.

power or force. For Nicholas of Cusa, too, God will as well be the smallest of things as the greatest.

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What we are seeing is that the *cogito ergo sum* is not a mere confirmation from the empirical act of my thinking, such that I objectify and describe it. It is rather the claim that thought, the Idea, is prior to or independent of existence, which, as a finite notion, depends upon it. Also the first "person", that of the subject, is used. This has nothing to do with psychology but is, rather, absolute, subjectivity as such, where all coincide as "members one of another".

Logic was bound to catch hold of, to absorb and fascinate the mind of philosophical man. In so far as it does so logic becomes ontology, metaphysics. "The limits of my language are the limits of my world" (Wittgenstein). Physics takes as its task more and more not that of thinking how the world is but of thinking how it can think the world, such thinking actually starting from this very thinking of the world in the sense of making it actual. Of course this conception includes an uncovering of the world's existence and reality but only as long as we rest content with the finitude of these terms, these notions. It certainly would not prescind from them in what would be self-improvement, but goes rather beyond them. So, saying that "*that* the world exists is the mystical" (Wittgenstein) is elliptical for saying that existence, this category, is accomplished and "cancelled" (*aufgehoben*) in the Idea. In other words, the mystical is "speculative truth" (*Enc.* 82 add.), is itself absorbed into that.

Now we have claimed elsewhere⁷ that a valid argument form is itself an argument, and hence valid. In practical things, similarly, there is just one law (not though a "meta-law"), that all law is to be obeyed. Syllogistic, for that matter, is based upon the claim that there is just one final argument form (that of triple identity), in virtue of which all validity of argument takes its rise. This must be so, moreover, if argument is a univocal and scientific notion. This argument-form, as we choose to call it, is yet an argument and not some "meta-argument". What could that be?

Similarly the form of judgement is itself true and even truth. Judgements are not valid or invalid, but true or false. The form of judgement is the identity of subject and predicate, i.e. the identity of or in their difference. That is to say, that S is P, judgment, is based upon the prime condition for thought that S is S. This condition is unique, not

⁷ Cf. Note 93, above.

shared with some requirement that P be P, since as predicate the predicate is always predicated. The subject, by contrast, is what is first conceived (logically) prior to predication. It is in fact the concept, engendered in *apprehensio simplex*, as the scholastics apprehended it. As final apprehension of all things in unity, nonetheless, the grasp of the concept, the notion, is the reverse of simple. Simplicity, alternatively, is something to be won at the end of the day. Just this possibility, however, that judgments *can* be false, as this reposes in the dual structure, of identity in difference, in judgment, leads Hegel to his final speculative conclusion that "all judgments are false", of course that one first of all. We are not far from Heidegger's "truth is un-truth", the concealment of the unconcealed. Wisdom, again, is justified of her children.

Just as there is one form of judgment, so there is one concept, notion, *Begriff*. There is no form for the concept, as there is a form of judgment and of argument. We may call it the Idea, which just means the Idea of the Idea or conscious subjectivity. For thought to think itself thus is not a matter of rejoicing in supposed powers or faculties. We have seen that force is a finite and so untrue notion. Thought leaves everything as it is, for the simple reason that everything just is thought, its refracted light, this refraction being only subjective in the negative sense, as proportioned to our manner of apprehension, a manner which philosophy can show, has shown, to be defective. Thus to rise to the concept is not to rise to a new manner of existence but to transcend existence. The real and the existent do not coincide.

To posit judgment, therefore, is to envisage the drawing of all that appears to be multitudinous and abstractly different into the unity of the concept, the idea, which though transcending form is yet one and in that sense "simple". Similarly, and as we all know, argument seeks to bring all that is obscure under definite judgment. Indeed this judges it, preparatory to possession of that one reality, the "notion" or concept. Here judgment not merely ceases but is discovered never to have been. We have to kick away our starting-point, not proceed "as if we were only reasoning from one thing which is and continues to be, to another thing which in like manner is."⁸ The common-sense world is like nothing so much as a counter-factual assumption made at the beginning of a process of reasoning for the sake of concluding to the truth. Thus it is a species of *reductio ad absurdum* and so the "existentialists" were thus far correct, they too.

⁸ Hegel, *Enc.* 50.

In Aristotle's logic the concept, in "simple apprehension", is put as first of the three "instruments of reason", organs rather, which are concept, judgement and syllogism. In only apparent contrast Hegel's logic teaches that the concept, put last, synthesises the prior "doctrines" of being and essence.

The concept or notion, as truth, is finally the Idea, which "is not to be taken as an idea of something or other, any more than the notion is to be taken as merely a specific notion." The Idea, "as absolute unity of the notion and objectivity", is no mere logical form or abstraction.

In the idea we have nothing to do with the individual, nor with figurate conceptions, nor with external things. And yet, again, everything actual, in so far as it is true, is the Idea, and has its truth by and in virtue of the Idea alone. Every individual being is some one aspect of the Idea... It is only in them altogether and in their relation that the notion is realised.⁹

This vision of things is encapsulated in the ontological argument for God's existence. Ultimate truth is a conceptual fusion of being and essence, the concept that is "objective", that cannot not be, is, rather, being, in identity. As infinity it is being, to which nothing can be added. Hence it is not the mere abstraction, falsehood therefore, of *esse commune*. St. Thomas is right that existence cannot be derived from thought, as he takes Anselm to have intended, but what is shown rather is that existence is transcended at the level of the concept, in the Idea. It is not univocal as between Kant's hundred *thalers* and the Absolute.

Such a view must be abandoned to those theories, which ascribe so-called reality and genuine actuality to the existent thing and all the other categories which have not yet penetrated as far as the Idea. It is no less false to imagine the Idea to be mere abstraction. It is abstract certainly, in so far as everything untrue is consumed in it: but in its own self it is essentially concrete...

Here philosophy is shown as aspiration to the divine or absolute point of view. It realises indeed that a viewpoint as absolute is no longer such, but simple disclosure. "I am he who is; you are she who is not." The Absolute is "closer to me than I am to myself" (Augustine) and this is what Hegel calls "the ruin of the individual" as we routinely and abstractly conceive it. Ultimately life itself "runs away" as being a defective category rather than "genuine actuality". Those things that are purely alive but which do not think, such as plants and animals, are not subjects, do not form part of the

⁹ *Ibid.* 213.

resurrection, St. Thomas himself teaches, which yet, in its definition, includes "all in all". As absolute, eternal, the Idea, "the bodies of the redeemed" include as transcended, *aufgehoben*, all lower notions and categories. Existence as such never "corresponds to" its notion since it is conceived as being the latter's antithesis. The identification of these two contraries, essence and existence, on the other hand, is final truth. For it is the divine intellect, if conceived of at all, which is the place of reality, where all is as it is. It can never be some special exceptional case. Thus to consider it we must consent to go up into it, to be "consumed", not stay with some "two truths" theory.

Plato wanted that philosophers be kings. The truth is that anyone, as subject, is king and more than king. Humanity, under the influence, it can well be claimed, of Christianity and associated movements, has attained to this freedom, assumed in the preaching of Eckhart and others. The doctrine of faith, of what faith is, cannot but develop in the light of this development. This will entail, in turn, development of this very doctrine of development, once developed by Newman¹⁰ out of earlier notions.

Inssofar, then, as the tradition-bound peasant, subject to the *Obrigkei*t as much as to God and even confusing the one with the other, fades into the past with the development of society, he cannot longer be taken as the type and ideal of the person of faith. This was indeed always a mistake and misrepresentation, one which as a means of domination has wasted a lot of people's time, as if

...man is not intended to seek knowledge and ought to remain in the state of innocence... and harmony. Now all this is to a certain extent correct. The disunion that appears throughout humanity is not a condition to rest in. But it is a mistake to regard the natural and immediate harmony as the right state... Childlike innocence no doubt has in it something fascinating and attractive: but only because it reminds us of what the spirit must win for itself. The harmoniousness of childhood is a gift from the hand of nature: the second harmony must spring from the labour and culture of the spirit. And so the words of Christ, "Except ye become as little children," &c., are very far from telling us that we must always remain children.¹¹

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Whereas in Scholastic thought the concept, along with judgment and syllogism, was usually seen as an instrument, *organon*, of reason in Hegel

¹⁰ J.H. Newman, *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 1845.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 24.

it is reason, "effective of itself", not so much *causa sui* as effective "no longer as the cause is".¹² It does not cause the effect as something else, namely, but constitutes its own individuality, the "I", subjectivity, upon which all individuality is based. This individuality is not the unmediated or natural individual distinguished, but only as prelude to reintegration, in judgment. It is the same rather as actuality, as the unity presupposed to consciousness. As such it is, also, the universal of universals, at the opposite pole from the "abstract generality" with which analytical *Verstand* normally and quite properly and necessarily deals. The concept, as identified with Reason (*Vernunft*), is self-particularising or differentiating, active. In this sense it is "not we who frame the notions". The concept is "not originated at all", though it is in its own nature self-differentiating, "through itself and with itself", not as something added on or to it. Thus, for Christians, God is necessarily a Trinity. In this sense the notion, thought, "is the genuine first", not *a posteriori* abstraction and concept-formation. It makes things to be what they are "out of nothing". Thought is "the infinite form", free and creative as "not needing a matter that exists outside of it".

This primacy given to thought may seem foreign to a science based upon observation. Thus even the earliest evolutionary forms, also those prior to life, are products of thought, of the self-active "concept" which is one with absolute subjectivity, individual and actual. Yet the consistency and freedom from contradiction of such science itself depends upon an account such as this. Evolution itself is lost if thought is no longer conceived as self-actualising (and therefore universally actualising) but, absurdly, as itself evolving to the point of conceiving the evolution of itself.

Such a view can in fact be called materialistic idealism, as compared with absolute idealism, based upon spirit and truth as self-validating posits. The former is converted into realism by supposing the process to be transcendentally directed by a transcendent God, thought of as creating matter as a positive reality at the opposite pole to himself. This though is product of the self-contradictory fantasy of theological or fideistic voluntarism, whether of the late-medieval or earlier kind. To see the contradictions, however, requires analysis of the categories of power or force or causality such as to show how they produce contradictions beyond a certain point, to show, that is, their finitude, their inapplicability to what is infinite, the Absolute.

¹² *Ibid.* 163.

As for straight materialism, it is in the end simply a name for the refusal of thought, of philosophy, historically masked by an appeal to Aristotelean empiricism, to *nihil in intellectu nisi prius in sensu*. But "in God we live and move and have our being (Gk. *esmen*)." The Apostle declared this to a gathering of Athenians as a philosophical statement, which he backed up by appeal to one of their poets. In Hegel's analysis the category of revelation, which St. Paul went on to propose to the Athenians, takes its place in the dialectic of philosophy's history. So does the attempt by the theologians to separate it off from philosophy ("sacred" theology), with which however it will be reintegrated in the category of philosophy of religion, part of a final absolute knowledge beyond metaphysics. With great boldness a later thinker, McTaggart, will argue, from a broadly atheistic perspective, that even this category, knowledge, is finite or limited. "Whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away" was indeed an ancient insight. Knowledge will be superseded by something more absolutely reciprocal, which McTaggart suggests is best called love, in apparently total coincidence with the Christian claim and hope.

The proposal of truths as extrinsically revealed, as we find in a Tertullian or a Gazali ("What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?"), is in absolute terms a first sketch of the transcendence, the absolute freedom, of reason itself. Having thematised the notion of the development of doctrine (in and before Newman) Christian thought is able to interpret the notion of revelation in this more integrated way. In philosophy it accomplishes religious views of such revelation. This was Hegel's path, presaging yesterday's "modernism", now no longer a crisis, since it was come "not to destroy but to fulfil". This insight into development was again anciently presaged in the image of the mustard seed, smallest of all seeds, growing into a tree where birds might find resting place, or in the idea of being led by Spirit "into all truth".

Evolution then, first appearing as antithesis of all that has gone before, compels a revolution of thought of which Hegel and "romanticism" generally were harbingers. Intending to oppose the *telos*, teleology, it lifts it higher, to where it includes the subject's own theorising, thus rejoining and filling out Aristotle's insight into reason as thought thinking itself. For only thus can evolution itself be thought, natural history too coming to be seen as dialectical, as in the "phenomenology of mind" when dealing with human and political history. For Marx too man is totally "autonomous" and reshapes the world, *Erdbildung*, and hence nature. "It is somewhat astonishing to see how flippantly he identifies cosmic evolution with

ontological self-sufficiency," comments a conservative or "realist" theologian¹³, somewhat crossly.

In fact no disrespect need be intended, but imagination rather, whatever be the case with Marx, as young or old. Man is God and God is man. "I have said ye are gods", runs one Davidic "psalm": *tou gar kai genos esmen*.¹⁴ In general the realist always refuses to take the idealist argument seriously. He thinks the idealist does not mean what he says, points out that he basks in the physical sunshine like the rest of us, and so on. But when spirit has taken the leap it does not look back and what looks like a mere argument is really a journey, a way or *via*. Only connect, in E.M. Forster's words.

The argument of C.S. Lewis¹⁵, much obscured by G.E.M. Anscombe's irritations, was that reason must come from outside nature, guiding it, if nature itself is a closed and blind system. This insight, true as far as it goes, was needlessly dualist in form. Nature itself is, rather, "the thoughts of one mind" (Wordsworth), and it is known as such to us, as our perception. This is not a veil of perception. Rather, we are what we perceive. *Anima est quodammodo omnia*. As McTaggart will say, there are only persons, though he may have absolutised that particular differentiation, into persons, more than was warranted. Religion will teach that we are "all one person in Jesus Christ", or "members one of another", i.e. we are not we, in the immediate sense. "I live yet not I" and so on. In general, the object is but a mode of the subject and not its antithesis. But one should rather say this of the predicate, which as "said of" the subject refers to or stands for the same thing, though differently, as several medieval logicians taught. In fact subjectivity and objectivity are "wholly dialectical."¹⁶ What we perceive we create, conceive or beget, as we are ourselves begotten, in a world where individual and universal are one. *Humanus sum et nihil humanum me alienum puto* (Terence).

The aim of knowledge is to divest the objective world that stands opposed to us of its strangeness, and as the phrase is, to find ourselves at home in it: which means no more than to trace the objective world back to the notion, - to our innermost self.

¹³ Leo Elders, *The Philosophical Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Brill, Leyden, 1990, p.284. He refers to Marx-Engels, *Kleine ökonomische Schriften*, Berlin 1955.

¹⁴ Cf. *Acts of the Apostles*, 17, 28.

¹⁵ C.S. Lewis, *Miracles*, London 1947, ch. 5.

¹⁶ Hegel, *Enc.* 194, add.

Note the equivalence. But Hegel uses here a concessionary way of speaking. If this is knowledge, once achieved, then there never was a strange world and we are "in no strange land" as the poet says, asking "Does the fish soar to find the ocean?"

In fact the concept of matter is wholly vacuous, so much so that it might not seem to differ much, rightly taken, if we call ourselves spiritualists or materialists. When the medievals identified matter as the principle of individuation they might therefore just as well have meant, and perhaps they did, that matter is our name for there being individuals, outside one another as the material attribute of quantity was said to consist of "parts outside parts". So here thought will dialectically disclose that the inside is the outside and *vice versa*. Man is nothing without the air he breathes, the colours he sees and so on. They are in him as being outside him. Thought, which is knowledge as knowing its own self, in each and any of its moments, divests matter, shows it up rather as a fugitive concept, like the harpies, said McTaggart. It "traces it back to our innermost selves". This though is just to say that this moment, as one in this with all moments, is a moment of the Concept, with which, again, it is thus identical, as the poets above all have born witness. "Turn but a stone and you touch a wing". The infinite treasure you seek, if you do, lies buried in your own yard, is, finally, you as you are not finally yourself but Mind, Spirit.

The Augustinian argument from truth in the mind to mind's absoluteness and hence infinity cannot be sidestepped. For a "naturalist", in Lewis's sense, knowledge, which cannot be thought without the positing of truth, can only be justified in evolutionary terms, which yields absurd results. Thus we might say a belief in transubstantiation succeeded for a time as for that time furthering survival for humanity or that portion of it holding the belief. It disappeared, died out or atrophied, when it no longer served that purpose. But then, just as the belief, since the passage of time and environmental change disqualify it just as they give rise to it, has no call to be called true, so this general account, or any other, has no call to be called true either. The same applies to "materialism" and evolutionary theory as a whole, thus taken.¹⁷ So if we are convinced of the latter it has to be taken some other way, dialectically namely. We have no other way to think nature at present. It is how nature presents itself to us, but it has to be seen as partial truth only, like any pure object. More than any previous view indeed, evolution obliges us to build into the theory that it is we ourselves who conceive it in the act of what we are so inclined to reduce to

¹⁷ Cf. J.B.S. Haldane, "Some Reflections on Materialism", *The Rationalist Annual*, 1930, pp.33-34, cited in my *Morals as Founded on Natural Law*, Lang, Frankfurt, 1988 (1987), p.155.

a mere discovering, as we dis-cover the fossils in the ground, or so it seems. These, of course, were not put there by God so as to *appear as* part of a real material world, to deceive the unwary or presumptuous perhaps. So one might just possibly conceive things on an earlier, quasi-Ptolemaic pattern of design, innocent of all notion of the growth of thought or nature equally from within itself and, indeed, from nothing, a growth not measured indeed by time, since time itself is a vanishing (not of course temporally vanishing) moment within it.

This, though, is but a continued recourse, now become absurd, to a realist scheme into which miracles are extraneously injected. So when it was said, on this scheme in fact, that God creates nature from nothing, the meaning is that God himself results as himself from nothing, eternally and necessarily, his end (*telos*) in his beginning, as ever or as such realised, but from no extrinsic agency, i.e. from nothing, and such is Spirit (*Geist*).

So the fossils, in our natural and temporal representation of things, were, rather, necessarily to be found one day as recording previous natural history. Such history again as a whole, however, is read by us according to an *a priori* form of sensibility which philosophy, i.e. thinking, shows is not to be passively assumed into thought just as it *appears* and even granted that it is the very nature of Spirit, of the Idea, to appear, to re-veal itself. Abstract sensibility's deliverances negate it, rather, as anything standing apart from thought. Thought, the concept, again, is indeed "the absolute first", creating the world free of temporal constraint and "out of nothing". That is, only absolute idealism resolves the dilemma between two *incredibilia*.

Nothing finite or partial is absolutely true and life itself "runs away" as being a finite category. We have to do, therefore, with "models" (of explanation), as science indeed generally recognises. Nor is the solidity of scientific knowledge hereby challenged. The change, one of thought, is *pro parte objecti*. Whatever is "in" time, "in" space, even "in" space-time, is inconsistent, finite, and contained within the unity of the perceiving subject. Even our saying "in" here, a spatial metaphor, is as though attempting to confer an absoluteness that is not there, as also Newton felt obliged to do. Space and time (or space-time) are not absolute, as it were finitely, even in themselves. They are never unrelated to the finite objects, i.e. they *are* their relations. Again, our subject-predicate structure is not absolute and not in the end suited to the notion or concept, where identity is fully realised. It represents an attempt to capture in one relation, in appearance dyadic (abstract identity), the relations obtaining between the world's *constituent* entities or objects.

Even the roundness of the world will not last forever, while evolution is but the latest name for the alterations, not excluding alternations, however, as we perceive them, either reaching an omega-point or returning cyclically. This though is little more than an image of the eternity of the notion, ever realised, ever unfolding before us dialectically.

We mentioned earlier Peter Winch's "On Understanding a Primitive Society". Winch was able to show how for the members of that society everything would confirm their fundamental beliefs and nothing would clash with them, just as nothing, within a given range, can clash with our belief in, indeed knowledge of, the world's roundness. It is, as Quine said, "on a par with the Homeric gods", a cultural posit.

Yet confronted with another, stronger or more advanced society, as, by our gradations at least, when the Spaniards appeared in America, the "primitive" society dies, or adapts, just as in evolution. The only way out of the relativism threatening here is to admit that everything finite is false, in Hegel's words. No finite category is ultimately compatible with the Idea, the actual. This is the principle behind the dialectic. Nothing escapes this sharp sword, not even the concepts we use to express this insight itself. One such concept is revelation, which also we touched on above.

Thus even the absolute ego, which I had begun to think I was, yields, and this too but "for the moment", to the absolute as such or simply, as Hegel shows in the section on "spirit in self-estrangement" in *The Phenomenology of Mind*. This is the arrogance in humility and the humility in arrogance of religion. As subject of revelation I am lost in what is revealed, in revelation itself. So the prophet said of the envisaged man who would be mediator: "There is no beauty in him that we should desire him" or regard him at all. In saying this he begins to take on the same characteristics, the unloveliness of the prophet, a dusty and disagreeable locust-eater, one who in losing the very notion of happiness is in fact supremely happy, inasmuch as between him and death there is no longer distance. He has discarded himself in becoming what he sees. Hegel's descriptions in this section give a genuine rationale of mysticism as fulfilled in the Gospel preaching with which he was himself profoundly conversant, though this cannot be said to be their intention. finite as that would be. Being is its own expositor, sublating all possible object thereof, however, in this very exposition. It is, again, revelation itself, *diffusivum sui*.

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There comes a day when time-honoured symbolic forms, representations, rituals, once in exteriorised harmony with the reflective self, come to lose that harmony, when the god, as we say, has flown. Central here is the notion of spirit, as in the Gospel notion of worshipping in spirit and in truth, not, let us say, in rites and ceremonies exclusively. Central to spirit is inwardness. This is the paradox of the Holy Spirit, if holiness denotes otherness, since it is precisely this spirit which shall be in us and by which we shall live, not so much just "led by the spirit" as possessed and taken over by it, surmounting otherness in self's own self-denial, just as philosophy tranquilly depicts. Spirit is both self-consciousness and universal being, since the self is at home with itself in its opposite. This was Hegel's analysis of and further contribution to the account of knowing bequeathed by the Scholastics, that it is self, the knower, having the other as other. Only in this having of the other thus is self, the soul, known at all, concluded Thomas Aquinas. It is known as that which becomes and is all things. This "all" implies divinity, and this is not pantheism but its opposite, the rejection of any world outside of God who is identical with each of his ideas, with which alone he is related thus, which alone he knows as themselves defining absolute knowledge "in idea".

It is thus obfuscating when C.S. Lewis speaks, in *The Abolition of Man*, of humanity's natural inclination to a pantheism which only a notion of a divine revelation in power can overcome, as if God had not spoken to Moses from a burning bush, or to Elijah in a "still small voice", or as if God is not first properly known when "made" man. Re-velation consists in God's being known, i.e. as what he is. He is known as spirit, as "the process of retaining identity with itself in its otherness," as knowledge, in short.¹⁸ "In this form of religion the Divine Being is, on that account, revealed." The reference here is to incarnation, "of the Divine Being, its having essentially and directly the shape of self-consciousness". This is "the simple content of Absolute Religion". Speaking generally,

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 itself. 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.

¹⁸ Cf. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, New York 1966, Harper Torchbooks, p.758.

consciousness immediately knows itself there, or is manifest, revealed to itself in the object... It is the pure notion... the truly and solely revealed.¹⁹

This, again, is not pantheism but the total return of creation and self to God, their annihilation in God, whom they never left and never could leave, God being infinite and not simply supreme among a class of objects. We may employ analogy but philosophy has to be conscious that it is then analogy that is employed and to get behind it while explaining and elucidating the need for it in the first place. We cannot simply rest there, philosophically, with the well-known religious forms. Even theology admits as much and to that extent goes over to philosophy of religion. Today theology is in crisis and one has to ask if its very being, as sacred theology, does not depend upon a dualistically extrinsic notion of revelation overcome in a proper analysis of just this concept, revelation. Assimilating this to pantheism is just a propagandist's wilful disregard, while, regarding dualism, we have to learn to distinguish better the form from the content of our faith-affirmations. The form of a sacred history, for example, might colour an essentially dialectical content with a contingency indeed contingent to the form itself.²⁰

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Thomas Aquinas proceeds in his main *Summa* from a treatise *De Deo uno* to a treatise *De Deo trino* and then straight on to *De Deo creatore*. Those dealing in "philosophical theology" today, even or especially those styling themselves followers of St. Thomas, may be found as it were religiously following, retailing and interpreting the medieval thinker's first treatise before simply hopping over the *quaestiones* on the Trinity to consider what might be said about creation "philosophically", i.e. without a supposedly impure admixture of "revelation". The works of Etienne Gilson or Leo Elders are typical here. Thus Elders compares the "philosophical" insights of, say, this *Summa theologiae*, to physiological chemical processes which though occurring in the body (which is theology) nonetheless can be studied, as to their truth, outside of that body.²¹

¹⁹ *Ibid.* p.759. Cp. Augustine, "Et ecce intus eras et ego foris... Mecum eras et tecum non eram", at *Confessions* X, 27, 38. Cf. Hegel, *Enc.* 140 (esp. subtext).

²⁰ See G. Van Riet, "The Problem of God in Hegel", Parts II-III, *Philosophy Today*, 1967, pp.75-105, esp. p.102.

²¹ Cf. Elders, *op. cit.* p. viii, note 3.

A form of barbarism is at work here, a lack of the requisite openness.²² The requirement to "think the Trinity" entails a requirement to bring it under the rubric of our religious philosophy. Otherwise we are no true philosophers. Revelation, that is to say, if it is not to be cast aside, has to coincide or be brought to coincide with our own true vision, a task to be *begun* here and now, wherever or whenever it is to be accomplished. This we have been saying above.

The barbarism mentioned, incidentally, is one of which St. Thomas is himself innocent, however he stands with respect to the alternative charge of dualism. Thus he passes serenely on and without a break, after considering what divine "attributes" there might be, to asking the question as to whether there are processes or *processiones* in God. The thrust of his reasoning here continues to be philosophical as before just as, also before, his mind shows itself as inherently synthesised with a tradition not in itself to be questioned but which he nonetheless develops and elucidates almost wherever he touches on it.

That is, it was not barbaric to take a pure-hearted philosophical decision to submit all one's future thinking to a transcendent revelation coming from outside in a quite new sense.²³ This process is described in St. Augustine's *Confessions* and it is an example of a metaphysician's taking a category from public life at face value, which was Hegel's criticism of the modern metaphysicians before Kant. This is a weakness, not a barbarism. No one was wilfully dualist. There just seemed no other way to see things.

It does dishonour, all the same, to Christian dogma not to be able to imagine that, once implanted in the mind, it might not be found to guide and fulfil all one's philosophical or sapiential striving hitherto. A principle of sacredness is employed in justification of not doing this, which was, after all, the principle of the Pharisees as portrayed in the Gospels. This attitude is portrayed in Dostoyevsky's "Legend of the Grand Inquisitor" in *The Brothers Karamazov*. It is implicitly criticised, from an ethical and political point of view, in Maritain's *Christianity and Democracy*, where he pleads for genuine application of the Christian principle of universal love and brotherhood, as opposed to mere civic friendship. We would regress to the latter, he claims, as against, say, Edmund Burke or Paul Ricoeur, to the scandal and disappointment of humanity.

²² Cf. John Macquarrie, *Twentieth Century Religious Thought*, London 1971, SCM, ch.18, section 89, cited in Theron, "Faith as Thinking with Assent", *New Blackfriars*, January 2005, p.101.

²³ Aristotle had said, in *De partibus animalium*, that reason itself "comes from outside".

In fact we should expect to find a relation between the identification of essence and existence in God, which though Thomist is ultimately Anselmian and indeed Augustinian (*non aliquo modo est sed est, est...*), and the doctrine of the three persons, which is a doctrine as to the presence of otherness in God. God, as pure form, is nonetheless, by an internal necessity, emptied into the alterity of existence, which is yet his own estranged self. It is the same necessity as that for persons or relations in God. There cannot be two necessities. It does not help much to call these relations real, since it is just this category, reality, which we transcend here, in the sense that the real is usually distinguished from what we otherwise call the merely conceived. Spirit, we might say, is the thinking, the living, the consciousness of this, or simply Love.

Of course revelation comes to people immediately as "figurative thinking", in Hegel's phrase. It is the philosopher's task to get behind this, to bring, rather, such thinking closer to inward consciousness, and inventing names such as "sacred" or "mystical theology" does not alter this or destroy its unity. This would be the Hegelian answer to such "cradle" Catholics as Adorno or Heidegger who seem constitutionally unable to envisage a transmutation not of belief, indeed not, but of the theology *from within*. Theology should rather let philosophy alone and *vice versa*. This indeed saves Heidegger from a wrong identification, he at least thinks, of God with being and its supposed nothingness, as *ipsum esse subsistens*, but at a high price, of a loss of vitality even. The infinite must *absorb* the finite, philosophy theology and its consecrated "picture-thinking".

There is no doubt that Heidegger has a high esteem for Christian theology, although he insists that it refrain from engaging in purely philosophical and metaphysical argumentation. If he disavows a primary interest in the problem of the existence of God, he does so as a philosopher who is more concerned with "Being" than with "existence". In this disavowal he deviates of course from Thomism as well as from traditional Catholic doctrine. The alternative of theism or atheism, he states, does not face the philosopher in his inquiry into the nature of "Being". God, in other words, is not directly and immediately encountered on the philosopher's way from existents to the ground of "Being".²⁴

This is, I consider, correct and timely as far as it goes, particularly in its sublation of the theist-atheist alternative, echoing that of Hegel's concept

²⁴ Kurt F. Reinhardt, *The Existentialist Revolt*, Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, New York 1960 (1952), p. 154.

of Spirit. It is deficient, though, in its intention of leaving theology severely alone, in wishing to abstain from any thought recognisable as theological or as direct participation in ongoing theological interpretation of the faith as “deposited” to its guardians, if any. It would divorce philosophy from any kind of “grammar of assent” (J.H. Newman, not always a cardinal, after all). This is directly contrary to the Hegelian programme which is clearly set, despite an apparently explicit disavowal on Hegel’s part, toward an assimilation of the esoteric element in current philosophical thinking into a future or, rather, transfutural exoteric consciousness of which the voluntaristic and manipulative mass-ideologies will have been the transitional fore-runners. In this his thought reflects the promises of scripture of the spirit being poured out upon “all flesh”, so that no man need say to another, or to the *laos*, “Know the Lord”.

The religious mode is a type of thinking which humanity passes through. Nor do we leave it behind, remembering it always as the ladder whereby we ascended to our present insights, being led "into all truth" as promised. This ladder, however, passes away or gets transcended by our feet as we step upon it, like the sacrament as it is consumed. The case is similar with the ways, *viae*, of thought's ascent to God. They change, or rather reveal, the world in our minds, not leaving it as it had seemed before.

The necessary identity of thought and being is consequent upon the actually infinite which alone is non-composite and true. Infinity, however, is necessarily, *qua* infinity, differentiated and differentiated infinitely. Infinite differentiation, however, transcends composition, since this is a limiting principle. The differentiations, that is, are identical, not abstractly merely, but in the sense that each differentiation contains or coincides with each and all of the others. This is the principle of spiritual or perfect community. As the activity of love this, again, coincides with the procession of Spirit.

Just as infinity, although necessarily idea and the Idea, is necessarily manifested as existent, so this absolute being, which is Mind or consciousness, is of necessity infinitely diversified as subjectivity without limit. There is no self without infinity of selves, passing in and out of one another. Incarnation, therefore, as manifestation in self-emptying, is necessary and limitless, to and for necessary being, to and for the Idea to be such. It is not a merely possible *choice*, therefore, but what God is, his revelation therefore. God, Hegel concludes, *is* (his) revelation.

To understand this, however, for it to take root in the mind and culture of humanity, it has first to be known as occurring in one consequently posited individual, since only the individual is real or concrete, the true

universal. Similarly the eternal and infinite life or actuality of spirit thus represented has to be understood or "defined" (in that sense in which one might define the infinite) in contrast to a universal death. "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive". Men and women thus participate in the life of this individual as a setting forth of or as identical with their participation in one another. This, which in religion is understood as an efficient causality, though this names a mere finite category only, is nonetheless a formal principle. It is thus that matters must be thought, the truth being that we beget one another and hence that I am as necessary as the next spiritual instance. This can be called a universal coinherence and it is attained in the simple notion of bearing one another's burdens, thus after all fulfilling "the law of Christ". The concept of a New Law, all the same, is figurative as belonging to the religious mode of consciousness. Begetting one another, in contrast, is synonymous with thinking one another. Religion, however, is not rejected since religion of itself passes and did pass into philosophy. Those who interpret the martyr Boethius's search for philosophical consolation in the death-cell (like Socrates before him) as a turning from religion, in the sense of a turning back to aristocratic models superseded by the new universal movement of salvation, miss the point altogether. He whom people, the people around Mantua especially, still acclaim as San Severino here fulfils the destiny of religion taken absolutely, being neither the first nor the last to do this. Each such an uplifted one "draws all men" and women unto him as standing in their place, in the place of each.

This transfiguration of the everyday, again, leaves the person unchanged, showing him or her as they really, that is eternally, are, since he or she carries all within him or her to a necessarily infinite and therefore unquantifiable degree. That this is broken down for us in what we call history, physical reality, creation, is necessary condition for our perception of its perfect unity in simplicity. Nor is this pantheism, to say it yet again, but rather a refutation or overcoming of the world of multiplicity, an "acosmism" of "all in all".

But who is not uplifted, finally? This universality, in interpenetration of good and evil, was well approached by Sartre in his *Saint Genet*. It was no more than approached, however. Gollum becomes the hero of Tolkien's drama as Satan is the hero, some claim, of *Paradise Lost* and we might know that we are, like Milton, "of the Devil's party" (*sic* Blake, clearly not meaning to condemn, however) without thereby despairing. *Jeder muss sein Schicksal tragen*. Evil, that is, is dialectically necessary for creating the contours of good, of final everlasting reality. But it has no being, is rather as the scales that must fall from our eyes when coming to see. The

saints saw themselves as guilty of the sins of the whole world, as "made sin", whether or not in their phenomenal lives they passed through a period of committing such sins. Here too the *felix culpa*, like the death of God, finds application. Spirit, as embodied, incarnated, in either history or nature, does nothing in vain.

The passage from being to spirit, indeed, in our thinking and representation, is a leap from the first to the last page of Hegel's logic. Spirit is the name for process. As realised in dialectic it is the ceaseless motion or "becoming" of mind as such, of itself, that is. But if this is "process theology" then it is it with a difference. For in naming process Spirit absolutises it as *act*, as the speaking of the Word, ever new and beyond all change from old to new, therefore. Spirit is passage between opposites, from self to other, reconciliation, love, final "objectivity" when the centre is everywhere, superseding "points of view".

CHAPTER SIX

LOGIC IS THE FORM OF THE WORLD

Logic is the form of the world.¹ This is the basic insight of philosophy, ancient or modern, as was startlingly re-asserted in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, completed 1918. Descartes, called "father of modern philosophy", even if himself descended from William of Ockham and other late Scholastics, did not speak much of logic, yet the form of his insight, in its self-reflection, "I think, so I am", constitutes Hegel's *The Science of Logic* (1812, 1831), where I and being coincide. Logic, namely, is the knowledge that knows itself, "absolute knowledge", identified by Descartes with subjective certainty, inasmuch as it *has to be* subjective. There can be no "objective" first rule of logic, since this could have no *value*. Thus I have to *see* even the need for beginning before beginning. Thus absolute reflection is knowledge's own self-reflection, its self-image. So when it is said that to know is to know that one knows it is the reflexivity of knowledge itself that is thus phenomenally touched upon. Logic itself, however, has nothing to do with psychology.

Descartes appeared (pre-modern as founding the modern) a "medieval" philosopher, as Luther was first a Catholic theologian, as *renaissance* was a medieval movement or mode. The medieval logicians were followers of "the ancients". They, Boethius in particular, developed Aristotle's philosophy. The modern insight we mentioned is, necessarily, insight into Aristotle, inasmuch as the latter is *the* philosopher, remaining what he was once identified as. Aquinas, notwithstanding that or even because he was a theologian, was a medieval logician. His saying that the logician does not consider the existence of the thing, therefore, as does the metaphysician, was a statement within logic. To say that a standard theologian is a logician is to make a claim for logic, for *logos*, for *nous*. Reason is divine, *ho theos*, and therefore absolute or law, categorical in the Kantian sense (cf. Cicero, *De legibus*). Thought remains itself, "as it was in the

¹ See our *Hegel's Philosophy of Universal Reconciliation*, subtitled "Logic as Form of the World", Cambridge Scholars, Newcastle-on-Tyne 2013.

beginning, is now and ever shall be”, to cite the well-known if untutored attempt to cancel time in appealing to it.

The final identity of metaphysics with logic consists in its being the science of being *qua* being. So, for Hegel, logic does not merely begin with being. Being is the beginning. As such it is the end, or what is finally identified as the Idea or as Spirit. Hence, “the lesson of Christianity is that God is spirit” (Hegel). Spirit, mind, *Geist*, is the absolute, is absolutely. It is being as necessary beginning, the first truth. Even non-being is thus being as, precisely, its opposite and thus derived from it as being “before” it. Non-being is the ultimate or “deduced” *a priori*. Being has only to *appear* in order to establish this directive priority as realised end. So nothing, like the soul, only knows itself in its knowledge of something else, only knows itself as non-being specifically.

This knowledge is necessarily, therefore, a result. It is, in Hegel’s terms, mediated, but by itself, necessarily, again, so that it is “its own result”. Dialectical mediation, that is, absorbs this same notion. This is confirmed by Hegel’s analysis of End (*telos*) as in its notion realised. There are no results, as there is no abstract finitude. So Aristotle begins his great work by distinguishing the known by us from what is known in itself or, his final position, knows itself. The position is of course incomplete, since the latter concept cancels the former. Only knowledge knows knowledge. Philosophy transcends, supersedes, man and the world in one, as man transcends himself in philosophy.

Our object here, however, is being, that is to say self, as “universal of universals”. Yet if it is subject that is object, then both fall to the ground. Ground, moreover, is the soil in which cause and effect in their opposition, they too, are consumed. They are not merely consumed “dialectically”, they are simply consumed, as, by this same move, is any notion of finite mind. Mind, therefore, is not part of the world, but contains it as being it. Wittgenstein’s saying, “The limits of my language are the limits of my world”, simply distinguishes the immediate I from what he calls “the metaphysical I”, which can have no limits. Nor does that contradict his statement here, specifying it rather as the truth of language than of the self or I. Part of this truth, all the same, is that it is always “my” language, without thereby being “private” or deprived of its universality, in which all coincide. Here however, as did Wittgenstein, we concern ourselves with what cannot be said, i.e. cannot be predicated, for the reason, precisely, that it “shows itself”, in the speculative destruction of the form of judgment particularly. This potency in impotence is the truth of silence, of “thinking” (*Tractatus* 7). This seventh section is, consistently enough, not developed. To have done so Wittgenstein would have had to have adverted

to Hegel's dialectical principle of dynamic contradiction, of retention in abandonment (*Aufhebung*), which becomes in Heidegger, for better or worse, the concealment in unconcealment of truth itself, logical or otherwise. The Infinite, that is to say, to remain so, must above all remain concealed in its own self-constitution as "revelation itself" (Hegel), in its *unconcealment*. What Heidegger abstracts from, seemingly, in this assertion, however, is the identity, in difference (without which there is no actual identity), of any subject with absolute subjectivity. This, though, is the nub of Hegel's account, in terms of this identity, of what was first postulated in theology as the *lumen gloriae* or borrowed light (grace) needed for any possible *visio beatifica* or, in virtue of reason's universalist claim and constitutive requirement, being made happy, *beatus*, generally. He in fact identifies this end with thinking in itself as "blessedness" (*Enc.* 159). In a word, there can be no contingent self, just as there can be no bodily organ apart from this body's own working or organ-isation in one. Here though this "one", as absolute, is absolute and not "organic" unity merely, a many transcending composition, hence "countless". This exposes the ultimate particularity and hence finitude of the theological *figure* of "the body of" Christ. This figure "stands for" Christ simply, mediating the mediator in its immediacy. The necessity for such particularity, articulated as Christ and *the* Christ that "is to come", is the import and end of Hegel's system as a whole. As a universal necessity of thought, of the Concept (notion), it is to be distinguished from its individual "figure" (*gemeinten*) as, however, is, even within religion, the Christ of faith is distinguished from Christ known, if or wherever, "after the flesh", to the advantage of the former. The latter knowledge in representation does not "get at" the Concept, its immediacy notwithstanding or just because of that. The devotion to Christ's humanity as manifested, to relics and holy places, though a powerful evidence and guarantee of the requisite love, is yet infected or held back by a merely finite nostalgia from which those coming later or from elsewhere are held separate in disunion. We must, therefore, "know him so no more". "Other sheep have I also that are not of this fold. Them also I must bring." This evangelical word thus conceals a word of reason itself.

So, it follows, no philosophy, as incarnated in language, can abstract from the limits of its time and place. Equally, it is the transcendence of limit as such in mind's self-realisation. This applies equally to Aristotle's predecessors, to those in separate regions and to all representations of consciousness as such, in aboriginal Australia for example, since no external representation, the loftiest language not excepted, can escape from itself, can escape finitude. It belongs to infinity's own notion, which

is the Idea, to be self-revelatory *in itself*, without qualification. The proto-linguistic word is, equally, prior to linguistic composition as founding it, the first word is itself in self-representation, or substance generally. This, indeed, disqualifies the finite as anything other than ideal (*Enc.* 95), as it also, Hegel says, disqualifies or “ruins” the immediate individual, who is thus exposed as abstract. Mind is illusion’s nemesis.

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That logic is the form of the world commits us to absolute idealism and, hence, to solipsism, as was clear to Wittgenstein, the later rebuttal of a private language notwithstanding. Yet the issue of idealism he leaves undecided, open, as his commentator Anscombe does not. The point of conflict here lies in the treatment of will where, in the latter writer, the dialectical compatibility of freedom and necessity is not canvassed. Wittgenstein’s later notion, of a “form of life” enshrined in “our” language, continues to leave this issue open. There is strong suggestion either that it *should* be left open or, which is the same, that it makes no difference either way, that nothing is said by either assertion or denial. As Hegel once remarked, it does no good to the things themselves to predicate existence of them (or not, it is implied). “What is the world without the reason?” Frege had asked. There is no reason that is not our reason, no reason of ours that is not reason simply, moreover.

In this way the religious view founds absolute idealism and is its ancestry. This is as much an argument for religion as it is an argument against idealism. The world is mind in self-alienation, unless and until it is otherwise regarded by us, is pounded and ground into conceptual form, as Hegel expresses it. The physicists do this with mathematics, which is the general science of quantity as superseding all qualities within the parameter of extensional space-time. There this science and physics have their common limit. Mathematics, however, derives from logic as inward mind. So finding it to be the language of nature is equivalent to declaring the outward inward, or *vice versa*, thus sublating this categorical pair, which again is idealism.

The converse procedure, however, of attempting to derive logic from mathematics, is pure error. The extensional allows of no identity, which is *the* logical relation, by no means equivalent to the more general relation of equality. Whereas identity is a relation of reason only, that of equality is extensional or “real” in the first instance. Thus we say that two sticks are equal in length, not that they have an identical length. We speak of *this* length, as Aristotle spoke of *this* white.

The physicists find sixteen or so “particles”, in three groups, after smashing a proton. They cannot say why there are these numberings and groupings. To do this they would have to look to idealism, to philosophy, for which “it is useless to count” (Hegel). This would have to be, finally, a philosophy of harmonics. Number loses its abstraction only when identified with the musical octave; quantity, rather, finds here a unique possibility of explanation. Here it is noteworthy that Hegel does not base his triadic logical system upon the Trinity, though he defends the latter against Enlightenment deism as the only rational account of God. But it is the plurality, the identity in difference, which counts here more than the number three, to which he envisages, rather like C.G. Jung, a fourth and even a fifth addition and beyond. Such openness harmonises well with the musical scale, which traditionally includes its own “Devil’s interval”.

Abstract finite science would thus be led back to art, the first or immediate form, in Hegel, of absolute spirit, in its final form philosophy. Such a cult of “elegance” is not in fact wanting among the natural scientists today. It offers a counterweight to science’s undoubtedly beginning with a congeries of objects, needing to be set in order. Where in fact the world is treated as an object it can only be found as made up of many objects, in what is however an abstract multiplicity, not convertible with one in unity of system. Therefore the standpoint is necessarily transitional. Physics however has not found out how not to treat the world as an object. Hence Wittgenstein begins his *Tractatus* as wishing to resolve exactly this point. So “The world is all that is the case”, the totality of facts, and so on. A converse of the first statement might run, “Each thing that is the case is the world”. Several sections are devoted precisely to how any one of the propositions implies all the others.

He does not touch particularly on the falsity of judgment in general, a point highlighted by Hegel. Where Hegel gives priority to concepts Wittgenstein employs the open notion of fact, open, that is, to ambiguity. There is nothing ambiguous in the concept, no hovering above thought and reality as alternatives. The concept is ideal. As ideal it is understood as active, however. Already for Aristotle the form gave being to what was easily taken as a composite (of matter and form), though he overcomes this view in the *Metaphysics* and it is not found in Hegel. The compositions of nature taken materially are mere moments of spirit’s self-development in concrete dialectic. Taken materially therefore they are the illusions of finitude.

Hence for Hegel, referring to the supposed second “instrument of reason”, “all judgments are false”. A difference is presented between what are declared to be the same, the subject and the predicate. At the same time

his whole philosophy is one of identity in difference. This however is straightaway the concept. In this way the *copula* declares the falsity of the judgment in which it features, as constituting it as judgment. In scholastic terms, the judgment is the act of being of “the thing”, of a unity, “in” the mind, putting together what abstraction has separated. Hegel’s point, however, is that in being put together it is no longer a judgment and so never was. There are no judgments in heaven, McTaggart glosses. Language, therefore, along with life, is but a moment in the self-actualisation of self-actualised spirit. Life is the “Idea immediate” merely. When that which is perfect is come, *sc.* mediated, then that which is imperfect, *sc.* immediate, shall be done away with.

What, though, is “the thing”, any thing? It is, again, a finite, hence untrue idea or category. In Spinoza substance showed itself to be just one and infinite. Hegel showed, explicitly recalling Aristotle, that here was no stopping-place. The Absolute Idea is not thus inert, is rather necessary freedom. It knows itself only in being uniquely act, act as such and purely act. In this act of self-reflection, image of itself to itself, it is universal knowledge. That is to say, it is in its own being the positing of all beings, each such act being the act itself that it is, in intrinsic self-multiplication. Here there is no composition, no dialectic of whole and parts. Each idea, rather, is one with the system, with the Absolute Idea. This system is constituted as system by and in unity as such, unity as perfected by and in its own dynamic. So none of its constituent aspects is even potentially separable from it as if accidental or contingent or as anything, therefore, in abstraction from it. Nor is it itself, it follows, actual apart from its manifestation in each and every such constituent.

McTaggart shows that only persons as concrete universals, each equally I, can fulfil this role. He, however, without more ado identifies these with the particular individuals divided forever apart from one another as found in our immediate experience, interior or exterior. This does not seem warranted. It is rather the case, finally, at least as fitted into this scheme, that I extend to and contain you, without limit, possible or actual indifferently, the two pronouns having identical reference. “I am you.” Of a third person we need not then speak, as McTaggart again does, his doctrine being that each union in love has some third persons outside of it. He here stays with a notion of number, as it were the grammatical, which has no place, can receive no consideration, at the absolute level, *in divinis* as Aquinas says. “It is useless to count” (Hegel). Theological thought confirms this in figure, thus “You are all one person in Jesus Christ” or “Now you are the body of Christ”, looking forward to a moment, to the end of “moments”, when “God shall be all in all”. Just as this is put,

necessarily, under the aegis of one concrete universal person, the Christ, so all these citations are of one person, Paul of Tarsus or “the apostle” or “one sent”. This is a representation of the philosophical truth, of the necessity, for all decisive advances in thought to be the work of one concrete individual become, or declared from within self to be, universal.

The moment of Nature, in this syllogistic and/or triadic self-extension of Logic, concretely, into Logic proper, Nature and Spirit, is the moment of contingency, which therefore is not nullified in what would then be, in self-contradiction, a finite or partial version of absolute necessity. The Absolute, that is, would not be absolute, as a mathematical “truth” is not absolute, just by reason of its separateness in absolute distinction. The final truth rather, Hegel will find, is that the identical is the non-identical, that otherness is self-expression, that expression is impression as going into self in final self-knowledge, the word or, less figuratively, *conceptum*. This sameness in difference, having for us the appearance of contradiction, has to be expressed without contradiction or logical inconsistency. Thus logic secures itself against all appearance of finitude.

So it is that the final or absolute being is not being at all, and this is its being. So it is known in unknowing, and the more absolutely the better. “If there be knowledge it shall vanish away.” Incurably we see this as merely preliminary to a better knowledge, but it is not so. Here McTaggart suggests Love as name for the final or absolute category, the end of categories, thus vindicating, he thinks, his ingrained atheism. Yet again the last is first or, to adapt the parable, the last state of that man, his habitation swept clean of the original devils, shall be worse than the first. Here again we imply, in Hegelian or perhaps Christian spirit, worse is better, better worse. One should consult the discussion of good and evil in the (revealed) religion chapter of *The Phenomenology of Mind*, where Hegel admits to, and as it were draws back from, a form of expression he knows will be found “un-spiritual”. The ancient author of *Job* was more bold than the professional philosopher of yesterday, asking, “Have we received good at the hand of the Lord and shall we not also receive evil?” since, it is implied, “Lord” means Lord of all.

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These insights, it must be remembered, all belong to Logic specifically as “form of the world”. Logic broadens into ontology, as pure form founds or “gives” being, without itself having it. Being, that is, as is easier to see for essence, is itself a limitation. Pure and therefore infinite being, only limitable by being, *i.e.* itself, again and therefore unlimited, illimitable,

transcends being altogether, in a freedom itself perfected in self-generating necessity, absolute form informing nothing else. It is self-ordering self-manifestation projected first as nature, in order to return as spirit. It is indeed a game, at least therefore something like a “language game”. “The notion”, says Hegel, “is pure play”.

The Zen philosopher Suzuki could not understand why God should have “made a world”. On this point he took distance from Christianity, though he might or could have seen himself as developing its own doctrine internally, as Hegel does, as once the doctrine of the Trinity as we have it was developed with, at one point, again, one man, Athanasius, “against the world”, even the Christian “world”. Answering the question, Hegel reasons from the dynamic character, in logic, of the Absolute, of infinity, to its necessary self-manifestation to an infinite or unrestricted degree. The infinities of time and space reflect this, as in their mathematics they reflect reason, that supposedly purely human faculty. The error here though lies in treating the human abstractly, as “purely” human, instead of as self-transcendent towards, again, infinity. Freedom, rather, is founded upon reason, as the latter is placed impartially between alternatives, *ad opposita*, itself therefore freely deliberating towards guilty or not guilty, for example, in a verdict. Nature, by contrast, is always determined to just one thing, *determinata ad unum*. Hence the true *unam sanctam* contains all or is “catholic”, *kat'holon*, according to rather than merely “containing” the whole, in identity. This is the identity of religion with philosophy, even though in a limitedly religious aspect the wisdom from above remains contrasted with the wisdom from below. But there can be no wisdom from below. So the Apostle speaks of the foolishness of God and this again recalls the ridiculousness of the first known philosopher, Thales, falling down the well while contemplating the stars.

Hegel finds the rationality of the Trinity, its identity with reason, with Mind, on the triadic nature of reasoning, called syllogism. What causes a con-clusion, *Schluss*, closure, is not the two premises in concurrence so much as their conjunction. Their conjunction it is that engenders new being, new knowledge. Yet it is only the additional premise that makes the first thus fruitful. Hence Hegel can suggest that it is from the Son, as full expression, manifestation, of the otherwise “abstract” Father, that spirit, the Spirit, proceeds, pours or is poured forth indifferently. Here too “it is this man that thinks” (Aquinas), as lying in the nature of thought thus thinking itself. This man thinking is thought itself, spirit, *fons et origo*.

So the Trinitarian persons are active in all thinking. This Augustinian insight, stimulated by the religious phenomena themselves, by their proclamation as truths, is not reducible abstractly or precisely to an

analogy, as Augustine appears to have started off by suggesting. Rather, inasmuch as analogies are themselves caused by analogy's own principle, that "Like causes like", so they participate as outreach, which is finally identity, in what they represent. They are never merely nominal or equivocal. So it is also with human persons in relation to these divine persons, which are in fact relations also in their first instance.

The infinity of persons, human or divine indifferently, is never a merely abstract infinity of number. The latter is only analogous to that absolute which infinity properly has to be as condition for being infinite. Thus Findlay's suggestion that acquaintance with Cantor's mathematical suggestions concerning infinity would have led Hegel's thought along quite different paths here lacks credibility. The linkage Hegel makes with the ancient Atomistic philosophy, when discussing the community of persons, would have remained in all its fruitfulness.

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Unity in diversity and contrariwise is the essence of Trinity, which thus overcomes dualism as three surpasses two (by one again). It is the true or concrete universal, of which Plato says that it is "neither one nor many". For this reason it is an error to say that syllogistic is just a small or insignificant part of logic. This remains true even after, with Hegel or, differently, Frege, we have transcended a barren syllogistic formalism. This should be done, however, not by contemning the forms but by internally trans-forming them into philosophical principles. It can be shown, for example, that the mathematical approach of the Venn diagrams to syllogistic, even or especially as a teaching aid, entirely debases or misrepresents the logical relation, which is identity and not extensional containment.²

This being-for-self, in Hegel's language, transcends or dialectically replaces being-there-and-then. As every something "comes to be an other" (I am an other for you and so on indefinitely) so each is "self-related in the passage" and this is "the genuine infinity", surpassing even the abstract infinity of Anselm or Scotus. It is its concrete realisation, corresponding to the identity in difference of logic or of reasoning generally and hence of all speech and, still more, thought. This would show the tendency of the distinction between finite and infinite, as previously between being and

² Cf. our "Argument Forms and Argument from Analogy", *Acta Philosophica* (Rome), 1997, cited above; also "The Interdependence of Semantics, Logic and Metaphysics", *International Philosophical Quarterly*, New York, March 2002, 63-91.

nothing, to be made as if they were two contrasted and hence finite realities. Hegel refers for support precisely to Plato, the *Philebus*. The two pairs are, rather, unities, i.e. the same transcendental finally all-absorbing unity. Being “absorbs” everything in its very concept, i.e. in *the* Concept. So even granted that the finite is firstly reality, yet its truth is rather its “ideality”, as a phase in the dialectic which any contemplation of God or the Idea, or, as we say, of “the very idea of God” or of the Absolute, supersedes, absorbs or cancels. This conclusion of philosophy is in fact the whole impulse of religion and its “laws”, especially of its first and “greatest” commandment, from which the second is, at first mysteriously, metaphysically inseparable. I refer to love of God and neighbour.

Philosophy shows this, however, without any necessity of mentioning God, though not to do so might seem at least “bad manners”, a false esotericism in fact as, on the other hand, the so-called “Christian philosophers” remain esoteric by their philosophical calling. We are no doubt Christians, as Hegel himself freely mentions God when he finds it appropriate, but there is no “Christian philosophy”, only philosophy itself, into which Hegel assumes Trinitarian and, why not, Christian thought. Theology itself must come to terms with this universality, toward which all ecumenical movement is groping. This is nothing other than the divine self-emptying in intrinsically manifested self-definition. Thus it is manifestation of concealment, the self-surpassing of absolute knowledge in love referred to above, which only seems “muffled still... without eyes”. For then “I shall know as I am known” (my stress) or, rather, that alone is how we do know, each of himself having a measure, a full measure, of that “cunning of reason” Hegel refers to as one with the speculative, wherein something, anything, “is virtually an other against it”. Speculative Reason “apprehends the unity of determinations (propositions) in their opposition”. This “true reason-world” is not exclusive to philosophy but “is the right of every human being on whatever grade of culture or mental growth he may stand”, including, he says, the child.³

³ Here should belong also Heidegger’s remarks about the concealment of truth in its unconcealment (*a-letheia*), given that God, the infinite, is truth. As such it cannot make itself an object for another. Hegel’s thesis, his thought, however, is that there is no such “pure” other. This resolves the paradox. It underpins the saying, “Seek and you shall find” and is the basis of Hegelian “self-consciousness” as of “The Subjective Notion” with its three “moments”, each of which is “the whole notion”, of universality, particularity and individuality (*Enc.*163). Thought as self-actualising “is simply denoted by the term ‘I’”, unveiled and not concealed (*Ibid.* 20).

Regarding Being-for-self, its “readiest instance” is the “I”, again, infinite reference to self or, equally, “universal of universals”. Ideality is “the truth of reality”, not, again, anything beside it. This is the nullification of the world, he says, “acosmism”. Hence nature too “attains its goal and truth” in mind as absorbing nature in itself. We say “in” rather than “into”, as if it had been something “before”. It is *we* who come to see that nature is thus absorbed, namely. In Frege’s words, “What is the world without the reason?”

The *void* of ancient Atomism, a nothing “existing” between the atoms, Hegel insists, is mere figure for their mutual repulsion, as each being I, we may add. The One distinguishes itself from itself in self-repulsion, making many (ones), each of which is, all the same, one. You cannot have the One without the Many. Whence do they come? It lies in the thought of the One that it explicitly makes itself many. Unlike Being, as concept, it is not “void of all connective reference”. In its unity of some and the other “it is a connexion with itself”, albeit negative, in “self-repulsion”. This term is of course figurative, he says, as taken from the study of matter. Yet the One does not repel the Many but just is self-exclusion (emptying), “explicitly putting itself as the Many”, each of which is itself “a One”, or is One. By being “all-round”, however, this “repulsion is by one stroke converted into its opposite, - Attraction”.

This is no mere “waving of the dialectical wand” (Findlay). It is, rather, a precise analysis of *love*. It is thus respectful of religion as making it self-conscious. The many are in fact one and the same (as quantity transcends and perfects quality). The mutual negative attitude is “just as essentially a connective reference of them to each other” in which the One is “thrown into relation with itself”. Repulsion is Attraction and “the exclusive One, or Being-for-self, suppresses itself”. In fact even Being, the beginning, is not “void of all connective reference” inasmuch as it is referred to non-being, to Nothing as concept, and that immediately. Or, this first reference is closer than connection as the first identity, that of identity itself with non-identity, though not specifically with the later category of Difference. In *The Phenomenology of Mind* this recognition of the negative, at the opposite pole to an abstract nihilism, is paired with an identification of Good and Evil when taken as abstractly separate from each other.

Quantity, all the same, the category emerging from this dialectic of One and Many, stands in Hegel’s logic for community, for Being as Quantity. “Now you are the body of Christ”, religion teaches, though this should not be a (grammatical) second person in abstraction from the first, the one, thought itself. A body is one, a differentiated or non-abstract one, as the body of someone is that someone. It is not added on to him. So the

multitude remains within the three. “It is useless to count”. *Numeri non ponuntur in divinis*. The “within”, as also the Johannine “in”, is clear figure for identity, “I in them and they in me”, and so is literally nonsense. Where A is in B then B is not in A. Such members cannot be “members one of another”. So we have to “understand spiritual things spiritually”, all along the line. Just so, two is one added to one again, three is one more and so on. Prior to that, however, one is added to (or taken from) nothing, zero, which is “every whit as good” as it. This is the Hegelian fullness (*pleroma*), “bringing to nothing the things which are” and raising the “things which are not”, in the original Pauline phrase.

Quantity, of course, is, taken in itself or abstractly, a moment, “a form of difference that does not touch the essential nature”, as the circumference and diameter of the perfect shape beyond shape, the circle, are incommensurable, because not merely connected in reference as if at first separate from each other as from the all-initiating Concept or Idea, real as opposed to the unreal, having “existence in its very notion”. They are, namely, nothing apart from the circle itself, even (or especially) in thought.

As to time... this is the notion itself in the form of existence... Philosophy, on the contrary, does not deal with a determination that is non-essential... It is the process that creates its own moments in its course... This movement includes, therefore, within it, the negative factor as well, the element which would be named falsity if it could be considered as one from which we had to abstract... Appearance... itself does not arise and does not pass away, but is *per se*, and constitutes reality and the life-movement of truth. The truth is thus the bacchanalian revel where not a member is sober; and because every member no sooner becomes detached than it *eo ipso* collapses straightway, the revel is just as much a state of transparent, unbroken calm...⁴

In philosophy, in mind thinking, existence is raised to self-knowledge, which either transcends existence or is it alone immediately, as a moment within thought itself. “I live, yet not I”. “In order to come to that which you are not, you must go through that which you are not” (John of the Cross). The witnesses converge, and I am as much the author as the product of this “revel”, as we may call that perfect unity logic presses towards in which “not a member is sober” since there just are no separate members, all being “members one of another” rather. A member is a part, but here the part is the whole, the whole part. “It’s in the book”, of Hegel’s

⁴ Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, Harper Torchbooks, New York, 1966, pp. 104-105.

Logic (at *Enc.* 135) namely, which is “the science of logic” in the sense of showing what logic is (*logica docens*).

Each “one” that “secures specific existence” in self-knowledge might see itself as collective product of chance couplings, say, directed however by “the cunning of reason” Hegel mentions. That is surely misapplication, however. There is no proportion. Rather, birth and death are self-contradicting illusions. In self-knowledge alone the “I”, which is just every ‘I’” (*Enc.* 20), knows itself in self-*realisation*, the term preserving the speculative difference in identity of making real in recognising the same. “Forget also thy father’s house”. “I came out from my father and I go to my father.” That is self-consciousness, figuratively expressed. The “father” is thought. The “I”, as name for *ego*, is universal and so self-cancelling in “the ruin of the individual”. Here again infinity is the process from the finite to itself. Philosophy knows itself and nothing, but nothing, is outside of it. This is self-knowledge consuming itself in and as act, which thus rises anew from the ashes, the poet’s “immortal bird”, now knowing it was not born at all, is “before Abraham”, each bearing the fate of all as its own, as others bear his or hers, in “co-inherence”.⁵

⁵ This phrase was regularly used by Charles Williams, d.1945, poet, novelist and theologian, who may or may not have read Hegel.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ARISTOTLE AND HEGEL

This active emphasis (self-knowledge “in and as act”) just mentioned, along with the Hegelian account of ancient atomism, is characteristic of Aristotle. For him, though, even the simplest *bodies* are not atoms, but activity, an interacting, the hot acting on the fluid-dry (*De Gen & Cor*). “Bodies are interactions, not stuff that fills space and time”.¹

Our topic here is precisely this relation of continuity between Aristotle and Hegel and certain questions arising from this. The whole thrust of Hegel’s thought, whether in *The Phenomenology of Mind* (e.g. the chapter on Force, in the shape of Understanding) or in the two works of Logic, is to establish that bodies are “interactions”. Such interaction is in effect self-consciousness itself and alone, to which bodies are assimilated as phenomenal. Also this last point is implicit in Aristotle, who emphasises accordingly the active role of sense, that colour, for example, is not in the bodies themselves when unobserved, nor therefore any other qualities of sense, or of intellect, we might add. This is the force of his saying “The sense in act is the sensible in act” and later, built fairly and squarely upon this truth, “The intellect in act is the intelligible in act”. Both of these sayings sabotage the division into active and passive, just as is worked out in Hegel’s text. A further question, however, would be the relation of Aristotle’s intellect, *nous*, to the restricted *Verstand*, set against *Vernunft*, of Hegel.

A further area still for discussion and clarification arises from the fact that Aristotle’s conclusions here are drawn within his book *On the Soul*, the foundational text of rational psychology as a, so to say, secondary branch of philosophy. This is not to deny that questions of the soul are further treated in his *Metaphysics*. That is, they are treated metaphysically in “first philosophy”. In Hegel, however, such matters are worked out within a focus that never deviates from “the Concept”. All is written with an eye to this Absolute, which is “the absolute Idea”. Yet it can be

¹ Cf. Eugene Gendlin, *Line by Line Commentary on Aristotle’s De Anima*, Focusing Institute, Spring Valley, New York, Vol. 2, p. 16.

confidently claimed that this is also the final “unity of Aristotle’s metaphysics” (F. Inciarte, chapter “The Unity of Aristotle’s Metaphysics” in his *Substance and Action*, George Ohms, Hildesheim, 2002).

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It seems that Hegel wants to treat the seemingly more specific topic of the understanding, of reasoning, under the more general notion, as one might think, of Force (*Kraft*) and its expression. We must ask why he follows this line or path. This is made clear in the chapter on understanding (*Verstand*) in *The Phenomenology of Mind*. If one only consulted the Logic of the *Encyclopaedia* one might miss this altogether, remaining puzzled as to why Force and the Expression of Force should be treated along with the Whole and its Parts and, thirdly, Outside and Inside, as main instances of the “Essential Correlation”. The risk of missing the point is increased by Hegel’s referring to a contemporary physicist, Helmholtz, who enunciated a “Law of Force”. One would not usually connect such force with Understanding, though this latter term gives the chapter its title. The point is, though, Helmholtz’s saying that “force is merely the objectified law of action”, if we remember Aristotle’s doctrine of the active intellect specifically (act, action). Hegel will stress how knowing, like sensing (which thus participates in and “grounds” knowing or thinking), is an act and ultimately Act purely or as such, precisely Aristotle’s position. Helmholtz, by contrast, finds this characteristic reality most purely in its lowest instance, mechanical force.

In the *Encyclopaedia* Logic, in place of this clue, we find an anchoring of Hegel’s more immediate historical sources in Herder, whose confusion it was to conceive God as force (*Kraft*, power), he tells us (Herder, *Gott, Gespräche über Spinoza’s System*, 1787, 1800). “Force” refers here to God’s unremitting activeness. Hegel, we learn from the translator’s (Wallace) endnote, had criticised this doctrine before. Here he points out the finitude of force as a concept. Force requires “solicitation from without”, as cannot be true of God, of the infinite. He promises to clarify this “when we reach Design”. There we see how the End is as such realised, without striving of any kind, in pure thought. Hegel in fact transcends the means-end duo from which one simply reasons from the fact of order (in nature) to an ordering intelligence, rather like a computer, as in Anaxagoras, or as in Aquinas’s fifth “way” to God, without however establishing its absolute infinity, i.e. that it is Spirit. “External design stands immediately in front of the idea” (*Enc.* 205 add.). End as idea excludes all projection beyond itself. There is no “and” as of “force and its

expression". The Force or power (*omnipotentia*) is not a potency to be fulfilled further. The "object" is "merely ideal". So "in the teleological notion as the self-existent ideality the object is put as potentially null". The End is realised immediately as one with its execution, as soul is realised in body (inherent particularisation of the Notion as syllogism: "everything is a syllogism"). We refer here to the "absolute Cunning of reason" in its disguise as Subjective End, in religion the infinite activity of "divine providence", by definition excluding nothing and no one as outside of its self-determination or realisation. This is "the overt unity of subjective and objective" and "this is the Idea" (*Enc.* 212). Thus is the finitude of Force "clarified in Design... the object is the notion implicitly". The action of the Idea "consists in getting rid of the illusion which it has created", that accomplishment has to "wait upon us". The Good is "eternally... accomplished". Thus, "the notion is pure play" indeed, "sport", and so this sport of "the gods" (*King Lear*) is not finitely wanton.

So from this point of view force, even if it is a more general concept, does not get to the bottom of what thinking is or even, one might think, more specifically, what understanding is. It is thus already clear here that action and passion are superseded, are one, in thinking. There is really no force, no expense of power, and this, in fact, is the point of the identification, the "essential correlation", of force and its expression, which is not its expression, since it is one with it.

The essential correlation, as has to be faced, in fact "sublates" (*aufhebt*) also "existence" in its notion or as a category. It means even that what we might take as the whole is not whole, but subject, just as each and any item of it is subject and is, we could say, essentially correlate with all and each and, for that matter, with itself. We have not, in infinity, cannot have, to do with a composite whole, but only with an identical centre which, in the end, can be "neither one nor many". Existence then, any standing outside, is phenomenon, misperception. It appears, that is, at the level of finitude. Infinity, eternity, the Idea, takes existence, takes Life, beyond itself. That is, it is only by an analogy that one speaks of the ideal sphere, of intellect, as life, as the third type thereof after the two organic varieties, vegetative and animal. For life is "only the Idea immediate".

Or we can speak of the unity of essence with existence, of inward with outward, and so of force with its manifestation, in what is the sublation, again, of the essential correlation in Actuality. This is only their "immediate" unity, however. Hegel is in fact here passing from Trinity in Unity to Unity in Trinity, the Father as Word, "in immediate external existence" (EL 142) from which, or within which, Spirit, Mind, necessarily proceeds. Such procession, emanation, understood now

logically rather than “physically”, is just therefore in no way accidental. Evolution, that is, as contrasting with this, is not a philosophical doctrine. For the same reason he had dismissed the notion of the ancient Atomists, that the atoms only accidentally met within a “void”, as being picture-thinking for the essential relations, themselves also essentially correlated, of Repulsion and Attraction (I use capitals here to denote categories). In fact only spirit, that is to say persons as each essentially universal, can correspond to as fulfilling the conditions for such atoms.²

Whether we are “logicising” Trinity or “trinitising” Logic is not so much an open as a superseded question. Logic as form of the world, of nature as mind considers it, is necessary as absolute Form. The absolute is the infinite and ideal, compared with which Existence “is a poor category”. So it is not meant that God, say, “falls short” of existence, any more than do we ourselves. In this affirmation, all the same, the “we” is itself sublated. I am not that abstract individual, nor is there any such. Mind, Spirit, is “neither one nor many” and “it is useless to count”, whether to three, to one hundred and forty four thousand or to six or seven milliards.

While Force and its Expression, the essential correlation, belongs to categorical dialectic, as a stage in thinking, the understanding does not. In the *Phenomenology of Mind* this category is used to explain understanding and, incidentally, to explain explanation. In the course of this explanation Hegel introduces the idea of *the* “inverted world”. Rather, thought itself comes upon this as positing it necessarily. It is but a version of the momentary identification of the Outside and the Inside (in dialectic). The Essential Correlation is the correlation of opposites in logic (that is what is essential), in self-reflection, as reason itself is alone *ad opposita*, itself thus opposing Nature as in its idea *determinata ad unum*, un-free. So in (the Doctrine of) Essence, Hegel says, everything is literally the opposite of what first appears.

This inverted world recalls unmistakably the paradoxes of Christian proclamation, inclusive of the latter’s “first” or, better, fundamental ethical proclamation in the representation called the “Sermon on the Mount” (happy are the poor, the mourners, the persecuted etc.). It is thus one of the most immediate instances of Hegel’s project of showing philosophy as the “accomplishment” (cf. *Enc.* 212 add.) of religion, philosophy’s only or exclusive object, as he states here and there. This requirement, however, must be intrinsic to any religion designated as absolute, as a form (one of the three) of Absolute Spirit. In abstract terms, that is to say, there cannot

² See McTaggart’s *Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology*, Cambridge 1901, Ch. Two.

be an absolute religion as such. Religion is itself, like Art, a mere moment of absolute spirit, of (the development of) philosophy, of Logic as “form of the world” (see Chapter One above).

The inverted world is not so much an instance as rather the very theorem of Essence, of what Hegelian Essence, its doctrine, is. Essence is the reversal or inversion of being as fulfilling it, in progress towards the Concept or notion (*Begriff*). Unlike being as in relation to nothing, the positive without “essential correlation” with the negative “has no sense” (*Enc.* 111 add.). In understanding or explaining things, then, we invert or reverse them, mediating what was immediate. This alternative is presented, but as concealed, in Kipling’s “just so” stories, where in order to “explain” trunk or spots, the elephant or leopard is first presented, unimaginably, without them. As a further step, in the (post-Hegelian) logician Lewis Carroll’s taller than tall tale, *Alice in Wonderland*, we get explanations that are not explanations at all but delightful nonsense, where indeed, but not in philosophy, “language goes on holiday” (Wittgenstein). It goes on holiday from philosophy, thus making a philosophical or “speculative” point (about the understanding).

Here we recall that philosophy must transcend language. This is the meaning of speculation. So Hegel points out that the truth is inexpressible in language since predication inevitably distorts, itself wrecked upon the rock of identity posited in separation, whereby two are one and conversely. The universal in fact is “neither one nor many”, again. Thus “it is useless to count”. In this sense intelligence is necessarily “bewitched by language” (Wittgenstein), here dyadic³, and “Word” is only figure for essential self-manifestation in an ex-istence transcending its own notion. Of course Hegel needs language to say this, as also Wittgenstein speaks, against his own principle (*Tractatus* 7), of what can only be “shown”. The *Tractatus* and the Hegelian corpus, however, are two different if not unrelated “shows”. In fact “the greatest show on earth”, philosophy, sublates earth altogether!

So the “true being of things” is the opposite of what “exists immediately for consciousness”. This is how we get to self-consciousness as itself this true being of things, where any “thing”, however, is totally sublated in the subject, I as universal of universals, in me who is you. This “leaves everything as it is” while, however, totally displacing it. This “movement”,

³ Bertrand Russell called simple predication “monadic” (“The Philosophy of Logical Atomism”, *Logic and Knowledge*, London 1956, p.199), as if predication were not already itself a relation between two, since he uses “real” relations to upset this primal linguistic scene, so to say.

that is, sublates the notion of movement, as Becoming is sublated early on in the dialectic.

If all we could say about the inverted world were that it recalled or reproduced Christian proclamation we would not have come very far philosophically. It is in fact related to the “kingdom of laws” discerned or propounded by the Understanding. These laws, however, as of the Understanding, cannot remain in a plurality but must “coalesce” in one. Thereby, however, laws, whether of gravity or of identity indifferently, “lose their specific character”. The law “becomes more and more abstract and superficial”, the mere “conception of law itself”, of abstract identity, for example. Here (*Phen. Of Mind*, “Understanding” chapter) Hegel relates Newtonian gravity to that “universal attraction” of the atoms, to love in repulsion as he later analysed this in the *Logic*. Here, consistently, he will dismiss such “laws of thought” as “silly”. Yet “this kingdom of laws is indeed the truth for understanding”. What Understanding thus misses is that thinking, notion and idea too are each self-identical “only insofar as they at the same time involve distinction” (*Enc.* 115 add.).

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These first three chapters of *The Phenomenology of Mind* represent, therefore, depict, the absorption of individuality into personality, though this latter category is not yet mentioned, of knowledge into love (*Enc.* 159), where there is nothing to know but itself. Alternatively, they are a philosophical exposition of the Gospel injunction, often misrepresented as mere “Semitic” paradox or exaggeration, to hate one’s life in this world. Everything that appears here by that very fact disappears, even likeness, since the like is found to be unlike itself. The full force of this long book’s concluding chapters are here therefore anticipated.

Hence religion teaches “resurrection”, not however to life in this world over again but to this other or eternal life that speculation, contemplation, inhabits. Philosophy makes clear that it is not so much a rising again as a rising from. It also teaches, however, that this very distinction is the reverse side of a real and constantly practiced death to “common sense” or to “the world”. We learn here that there is no world, no being of self against others, or of others against self. The dialectic of the one and the many permeates everything at every level of “the method” later disclosed in the *Science of Logic* (in either of the two versions). There are many ones as there is one method or “reason world”. “What is the world without the reason?” (G. Frege).

Philosophy discloses the nothingness of immediate appearance, which is just therefore a determinate nothingness, right from its beginning in examination of sensation, where “the object in its sensible mode of existence became transcended”, inasmuch as “sense-certainty is unaware that its essence is the empty abstraction of pure being”. Perception, and hence the temporal, is further deconstructed towards nothingness, as the like is found to be unlike itself. The whole is a play, a commentary, upon the self-contradictoriness of predicative judgment as a linguistic representation, performed all the same within the medium of language but as intending its own beyond in thought. When I think, namely, and this is what a predicative judgment “pictorially” represents, I destroy the abstraction, chiefly of “the thing” and its property, the elephant and its trunk or greyness. It is important that both are abstracted, equally. Alternatively, also the thing is a property, of the community, of the manifold. This latter, however, is not “the world” but, rather, the subject thinking who is again abstracted from “thought thinking itself”, since it, being or the notion, is essentially or in essence Act. Such Act is the true face of “force”, reducible to the “power” of Understanding⁴, a power inseparable and yet distinct (this is what makes it finite) from its expression. Still, what Understanding can understand it “already” does thus understand, as and when the thing to be understood, or itself indifferently, acts. Here begins the dialectical sublation of Object in Essential Correlation. The latter in fact subverts relation as it subverts in the same motion its own self or the self, which thus “dies” when understood as never having lived, as impossible. This is the answer to the question, “Why do I exist?” The “I”, self-consciousness, is “universal of universals” and so does not merely “exist”. It is.

⁴ Consider here the double sense of *potentia*, exactly mirroring that of “being” as either *esse commune* or *actus actuum*, as lowest or highest, emptiest or most full.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUBJECT-PREDICATE LOGIC

The foregoing analysis of the proposition as a dyad in identity of subject and predicate, its two terms, has been dismissively named “the two-name theory”.¹ Still, while terms may be names, not all names, or any, are terms, though Wittgenstein could conceive of his atomic propositions as “strings of names” and a name surely becomes a term when used in a proposition. But this is precisely because of an otherwise constant structure of propositions that Wittgenstein did not supply or confirm for such propositions as posited. Like Leibniz he thought that if there are composites then there must be simples, whether one were acquainted with them or not. This now is very much in line with the ancient philosophical atomism. This, as Hegel showed at length, is quite different from modern physical hypotheses concerning atoms. As we urged above, these atoms might as well be persons as anything else, as we find in McTaggart’s Hegelian system. Thus, in Wittgenstein’s sense, there might be ultimately just one atomic fact and this would consist of the community of persons and not a string of their names. A prerequisite for this view would be the insight that a person forms a much more perfect unity than anything else in nature unless it be just nature itself as whole and this would be yet truer of that community with which it (the atom, he, she) were as identical as it is with the members severally. Self and world are one. There can be no “the world” beyond my world. My world *is* the world, universal of universals. This though, again, requires the identity of all as each is denominated by “I” and hence is I, in a kind of universal solipsism. Here we have the answer to Wittgenstein’s lady-correspondent, mentioned by Anscombe as if telling a joke, who was a solipsist, she wrote, and couldn’t understand why everyone else wasn’t one too. It is maybe funny, but she was right in thinking that they could be, though we would then each be the same solipsist, “all one person in Jesus Christ”, say, and hence “members one of another”, reaching further, with the Apostle, into the speculative. In the last, “high-priestly” Johannine prayer, surely conceived of as fulfilled, the

¹ Cf. P.T. Geach, *Reference and Generality*, London 1962, pp. 34-36.

thought appears to pass back and forth indifferently between all being “one in us” (*John* 17, 21) and being “one like us”, as if the “head and members” image used elsewhere (the Pauline epistles) were itself interchangeable, in a co-inherence of substitution, so that, for example, where two are “at one” I am there and what you do to anyone you do to me, the me there surely standing for anyone spiritually (*geistig*) alive. The centre, as they say, is everywhere, *ut omnes unum sunt*, that all (masculine or feminine), may be one (neuter). This is the force of Hegel’s saying the Outside is the Inside, in “essential correlation”.

Thus the thought we are led to, in analysing the prepositional form, is not new. It is part and parcel of that logic founded and discovered by Aristotle single-handed, as Hegel further brings out. Defending it must be combined with showing how truths about logic are truths about thinking. These truths, like any truths, as we start off by thinking (about this thinking), are determined by how “things” are. Such correspondence realism, however, soon gives way to its converse, as the Hegelian Doctrine of Essence reverses that of Being. But what the two approaches, realist and idealist, have in common is their not basing logic upon the system of recorded language in abstraction from acts of speech or thought.

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We start, as noted in our previous chapter, by observing that although we may speak of predicating humanity or whiteness of Socrates, a subject, what we actually say in doing this is something different:

Socrates is a man.
Socrates is white.

We would not, could not rightly say

Socrates is humanity.
Socrates is whiteness.

These are not of course ill-formed sentences, but their meaning differs from what we intended. They are false, except within some or other esoteric philosophy. Logic itself, it might be said, in beginning historically as an art (*ars logica, logica utens*) and developing into a science (*logica docens*), proceeded, in and by reflection, from being exoteric to being esoteric. Its roots, however, lie in the common grammar or rhetoric.

Accordingly, in saying “Socrates is humanity” I posit Socrates as identical with the referent of this term that forms the predicate, unlike in the old school grammar where also the sign for this identity goes into the “predicate”, which thus becomes an incomplete string of words, like “is a man”. This is then treated, in Frege, as an unconvertible “string of words”, again, or “function”, unlike the variations upon the ground-form S-is-P which merely disguise the form, such as “John fell down the mountain” or “Marching can be pleasant”, where we can just add “is one or he who” or “is something that” respectively or even alter the idiom, so as to disclose the S-is-P.

There is but one sign, “is”, for this identity, as signifying unity in being as affirmed or negated, itself expressed or not, allowing in most languages for varieties of tense and number, just as, and for the same reason, it may in other languages be omitted altogether. These thus move closer to the reality of identity, saying perhaps “Socrates a man” or even “Socrates man”, while in no way moving closer to the incomplete function (string of words) of Frege, who isolates identity altogether, postulating rather a special “*is* of identity” with which his mathematical system, where “each thing is itself and not another thing”, conceptually has nothing to do. Rather, some things are alike and some are more alike than others, while where things are the same there is no difference at all, nor even, of course, two “things”. So the Orwellian joke (“All men are equal but some are more equal than others”), substituting “equal” for “alike”, is no joke at all for those, like his pigs (*Animal Farm*) thus thinking. This illustrates Hegel’s thesis that our normal everyday thought, typified in our “sense of humour”, is capable of the speculative, destructive of the abstractly extensional. This “right of every human being” is “the true reason world” (*Enc.* 82 add.).

In the same way, in saying “Socrates is a man” I posit him as identical with the referent of “a man” which is some man, namely, in this sentence, himself (see following chapter). Predication is thus a stating of an identity that is hence distinguished from actual predications of identity attributing just this as a (logical) property, as “Tully is Tully” rather than “Tully is Cicero”. The latter is a disguised predication of the sameness of reference of two names to those two names (compound subject), expressible as “Tully and Cicero are the same”. It uses predicate-identity to predicate identity. The former predication, however, is either, just possibly, a metaphysical statement or otiose, silly.

Similarly “Socrates is whiteness” is not an attribution of whiteness to Socrates (as is “Socrates is white”) but also a disguise for goodness knows what or just silly and even false, like “The moon is made of cheese”. Both

are well formed, more nonsense than gibberish, though not such pure nonsense as, for example, “John is smoking Mary” (where “Mary” is understood not to be a code-name for a cigarette).

Thomas Aquinas offers a reason for this difference between “white” and “whiteness”, “a man” and “humanity” as predicates, when he says (*De ente et essentia*, ch. 2): “Only wholes are predicated of wholes”, in harmony with this identity-theory of predication as saying what speech is, necessarily. It is not, that is, something we just “observe” in careful analysis of a phenomenon. The reference is, twice over, to what we see as wholes only. What are predicated of whole are wholes over again, in finely differentiated identity. “Humanity”, “whiteness”, taken as abstracted qualities and not as proper names, where we might call a man Humanity like we call a girl Prudence or Faith, while a half-caste racist might hopefully name himself Whiteness or Blackness², these are only predicable of other such abstractions. Hence if I say: “God is goodness”, then I am either re-casting apparently abstract universals as real Platonic forms or Hegelian “concrete universals” or I am treating “God” as an abstracted “part” like goodness or whiteness or humanity. Yet, the last-named, it is worth noting, is without awkwardness often said concretely after all, as in “Humanity is in a mess”. All depends on the *suppositio* (not immediately synonymous with “reference”) of terms in the individual sentence as and when “used” and this will be seen to apply to imperative and other moods of speech, *logos*, as well.

Still, Aquinas proceeds, the difference between “humanity” as a term and “man” is that the former “prescinds from the designation of matter”. This is “not part of the designation of man as man” but it “would enter into the definition of Socrates if Socrates could be defined”, he says. He assumes here his own more general thesis that the material individual cannot be defined, this being the essence of individuality, that it is not an essence. Scotist *haecceitas* had still to surface, to be later corrected by Hegel’s “The individual is the universal”, which rather returns us to the

² In the other direction we have Damon Runyon’s “Harry the Horse” and so on. The phrase “a descriptive name” obscures this. Logic has nothing to do with descriptions, as if quasi-material objects were what words primarily stand for or denote, the very assumption Russell or Wittgenstein wanted to get away from. But “the author of Waverley” stands for such a being, real or “in the soul” indifferently, as “Scott” stands for Scott or “Frodo” for Frodo. *Logicus non considerat existentiam rei* remains true, even granted that in Hegel’s thought the category of this existence is superseded. Similarly, in logic it does not matter whether Runyon’s Harry is a horse or a man or if Harry (or Runyon) exist(ed) or not. Hegel will make this same point about the objects of religious belief.

earlier position, with differences, where “man as man” is always individual, the universal concrete.

The term ‘man’ expresses it as a whole, because it does not prescind from the designation of matter but contains it implicitly and indistinctly, as we said the genus contains the difference. That is why the term “man” can be predicated of individuals.³

There is something fishy or, rather, unduly specific here, we might think. Logical syntax gets explained in terms of a “dogmatic” theory of matter, as it seems. Only seems, however, since *materia* is an Aristotelian category, of his reflective or philosophical physics (not inductive, though he discusses induction there) or metaphysics indifferently, just as it is a finite or momentary category in Hegel, unlike the “concrete universal”. For Aquinas matter is a principle of changeable being (*ens mobile*) along with form and privation, these three, as it is in Aristotle’s *Physics*. It is only beginning to mutate into our post-Cartesian conception of the extensible under the influence of the Biblical account of creation of the objects of immediate experience, where matter becomes more like an all-pervasive substance in the sense of “stuff”, a substrate that is never questioned. So Aquinas can slip into this immediate or “dogmatic” way of talking in off-moments, as he slips into dualist talk of the soul, against all his most defended theses.

In fact if Socrates cannot be defined he can only be either nothing or everything. This is also implicit in Aristotle’s final, decidedly Spinozist position, as charted in the *Metaphysics*. It is what Hegel makes explicit, as is brought out so clearly and painstakingly in McTaggart’s earlier writings. Even though his later stress, influenced by Moore and Russell, is upon Hegelian criticism, McTaggart continued to affirm that Hegel got closer to the truth than any other philosopher (see the final page of his *A Commentary on Hegel’s Logic* of 1910). But we should rather say, following Hegel’s logic indeed, that Socrates is either nothing or everything or both of these. He thus becomes, momentarily, Becoming and, finally, the Absolute Idea.

We should not fail to concede that the above reasoning would apply to a chance insect or leaf or “grain of sand” and this is indeed the position of the poets, whose thought, like that of all art and religion, gets perfected in the absolute doctrine or, that is to say, philosophy, as Hegel concludes his *Encyclopaedia* by affirming. It is thus Christianity’s claim to be absolute that makes it philosophy, both eliciting therefore a theology and setting it

³ Aquinas, *De ente et essentia*, Chapter Two, 13 (cf. 5).

upon an infinite road, the Golgotha of the spirit indeed, of self-transcendence.

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So we have here a doctrine of the relative indeterminacy of certain terms, whether of genus as applied to species or of species as applied to individuals. It has much in common with Frege's doctrine of the unsaturated and hence functional character of predicates, which express "concepts". Objects reign supreme, it might appear. The object, however, is the implacable enemy of the actual infinite, which is therefore subject, and this demands, for theology, the doctrine of creation's self-transcendence, as, however, all finite theological concepts must be continually self-transcended, "passing from glory into glory" as Hegel explains philosophy's history.

As we have said (§5), the nature of the species is indeterminate with regard to the individual, as the nature of the genus with regard to the species. It follows that, just as the genus, when attributed to the species, implies indistinctly in its signification everything that is in the species in a determinate way, so the species, when attributed to the individual, must signify everything essentially in the individual, though in an indistinct way.⁴

He calls a genus, such as animality, an *ens rationis*. What exist are animals, not genera. But whatever we call an animal belongs to a species, more or less distinctly. Hence such a name is incomplete, requiring determination by species-name, like the unsaturated function. Yet, Aquinas's point, what is an animal is already some sort of animal. The *ens rationis* is *ens reale* after all, just as, in Hegel, even "nothing" is "determinate" and logic as form of the world is the most real of all, its essence, being and, finally, method, one with the absolute and only true subject, with subjectivity, absolute self, itself, absolute knowledge in self-consciousness, where objectivity is at once finally put by and finally fulfilled, as ever realised End.

Here in Aquinas, however, the naming is not truly "incomplete" since individuals as such cannot be defined and are thus outside language. They have "escaped from language" even, Herbert McCabe once said in a lecture. As Hegel put it, "Everything concrete is individual". This picture is at one with Wittgenstein's conception as also with Hegel's, for whom, as ready as Hume to say the unsayable, "all judgments are false".

⁴ *Ibid.* 11.

Nonetheless, for Hegel the individual is itself, again, the concrete universal. It is it. This identification, and not escaping from language as such, is the main philosophical result, ultimately thought's own result of itself. Where or what is this individual, this concrete universal? It is the Absolute, which is alone one with its Concept and which therefore, again, transcends existence. Really, the finite moments are not imprisoned in language. They are moments of thought, of thinking, set up so as to be knocked down, not first of all in the seminar room, but through the long aeons of history, natural or human. This alternative, however, is false, since the natural or the Idea as alienated can have no other destiny than the return to what it went out from, to Mind as Spirit (*Geist*). In art and thought this, nature's truth, is eternally thus contemplated, reclaiming the otherness. The pain of love, "whose view is muffled still", is the refusal of such otherness, otherness of a sparrow, a sheet of water, a person, the blind vision of that eternal harmony it actually effects, finding "pathways to its will". But will, as Hegel expounds it, is cognition, as the good is final absolute being, the Idea. *Bonum habet rationem finis*.

We have here, anyhow, an explanation of an otherwise unexplained feature of sentences. This, feature, we can now see, is simply overlooked in the Fregean theory, which in effect conflates "... is a man" (an incomplete string of words) and humanity, "...is wise" and wisdom. It seems to me that Aquinas shows, in the relative sense, that the part is not, cannot be predicated of, the whole. What is it, however, about predication that makes this to be so?

According to Aquinas's Aristotelian account of predication it is the identity *in re* of the referent of both subject and predicate that is the condition for this. Since in a true sentence these must refer to or *stand for* the same thing (as also a false sentence intends) the predicate may not refer, by pre-cision, to just part of what the logical subject refers to, i.e. to just part of the subject. One says "logical" and not "grammatical" since the grammatical form often disguises the logical form of propositions, of which, all the same, the "real" world does not consist, any more than it consists of "facts" in a totality⁵. To put it differently, I am not a fact, and if

⁵ Cp. Wittgenstein, *op. cit.* 1.1: "The world is the totality of facts, not of things". This, however, Hegel had taught, is said of the Idea in self-alienation, its intelligence "petrified", a finite and therefore false state except when seen as "moment" in a dialectical process. Wittgenstein, however, carries through the application of this to the finitude of language itself and thus refuses to speak about it, refuses the speculative moment. As a philosopher he refuses philosophy, therefore, and this can be seen as the next (historical) step in the dialectical union of contradictories, reconciling esoteric philosophy and all that is exoteric or

there is any consisting at all in the world to be considered then it consists of persons or, less pictorially, it is personal. “The principle of personality is universality” (Hegel).

The essence of a thing, generally, is not a fact about this, while the logical form itself gives the essence as, ultimately, Hegel concludes, a unity that is all in all or “intensional”, though as wholly so this makes Inner to be Outer and *vice versa*. In this sense, therefore, Aquinas says truly that *logicus non considerat existentiam rei*, not because the logician is limited to the non-existing but because existence is itself a finite idea. Hence Aquinas asks *utrum Deus sit* and not, in the first instance at least, *utrum Deus existat*. There is no absolute existence in abstraction from essence. The latter, rather, is identical with being, being as the beginning of thought and nothing else, since the beginning, as “realised end”, end as essentially or *in conceptu* realised, includes all.⁶ In this sense Wittgenstein spoke truly of “essence as grammar”, logic being finally a speculative rendering of grammar that cannot arbitrarily stop short before metaphysics as the final ontology (science of “being *qua* being”). That is why we have to begin with words without later leaving them, as even the one absolute Word, “ex-pression” intrinsic to being as to the absolute (revelation), is eternally spoken afresh without repetition, eternally returns. So Findlay’s suggestion that Hegel’s thought may be truly seen as “a set of linguistic recommendations” might indeed seem a reductionist account of its truth, before, that is, we fill out our account of *logos* as more than “thought dressed”, more like “the film on deep water” (Wittgenstein), depth being essentially concealed or, as Hegel’s essence, essentially mediated or opposed to the immediate, the other of being that is itself true being. Here though the film as *indicating* the depth is, in its phenomenal aspect, of thought dressed, “its incarnation” rather, or manifestation through mediation, as of essence again, hidden in its (phenomenal) manifestation, like Heidegger’s “concealedness in unconcealedness”. So Hegel’s English poetic contemporary:

Words are not thought dressed,
They are its incarnation”.

Since identity, then, is presupposed to what predicating actually is it follows that a predication in a contrary sense is literally or logically

“normal”, a process whereby philosophy becomes all the more esoteric in transcending just this quality.

⁶ See Hegel’s essay “With What Must Science Begin?” at the beginning of the Greater Logic. The “must” is crucial.

impossible. To attempt it is rather to predicate something else, as we saw above, to make, that is, an on the usual view probably false identification instead, like “Socrates is humanity”. This confidently asserted probability of falsity, however, turns aside from the true view of Plato’s participation-doctrine seen in terms, again, of identity, as does Aristotle’s “third man” argument as commonly interpreted. Thinking the absolute excludes counting.

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It is strong evidence for this identity account of predication that in terms of it we can explain what other accounts leave unexplained or even unnoticed. Judgment is then explained as putting together, in one act of being (signified by the *copula*), what we have abstracted or separated. It “signifies” this even in a false judgment or proposition, signifies *veritas propositionis*, the truth of utterance, whether intended as *in mente* or *in re*, as dragons are or may be green, which need not mean that they may exist. Aquinas is here at one with Hegel as he is with Richard Sylvan’s *sistology* or Meinong. In abstracting from existence one does not abstract from being, nor could one. The truest being is the Idea as true to itself necessarily in its first conception, which, as self-conception, it is. Nothing else corresponds fully to its own idea but solely to that infinite Idea, which may hence be called Nothing, self-determined as the other of all other being, not non-being (Gk. *ouk on*) but other than being (Gk. *me on*). This other of itself, however, is being’s “own other” and being’s final result, which is Spirit proceeding.

Heidegger is thus at his most Hegelian when he distinguishes existence from being, claiming that the existence or non-existence of God is a matter of indifference for philosophy and that being, on the other hand, is never conceptually identical with either God or the being of God. This is his version of the religious or “mystical”, especially Israelite idea that God is not to be spoken of or named, being indeed not merely predicatively “he who is” but, and in consequence, “I am”, which Hegel would reduce, however, to “absolute subjectivity”.

This apart, what emerges here is a distinctively logical relation, identity, which Hegel and others will later interpret as universal, not able to co-exist at the same level with other or “real” relations, and yet by no means “formal” in the finite sense, just as identifying the absolute as method and *the* method by no means places a formal limitation, or “solvent”, in the old sense of essence as limiting the act of being (*esse*), upon the absolute. Hence it is rather the logical relation that is real and “form of the world”.

Thought can brook no object but itself, which it then thinks rather than “posits” or “creates”. This theological term was always a metaphor taken from human making and the genius of theology will and does admit this. Things are in fact inverted, as “the things which are not seen are eternal”. The religious paradox “bringing to nought the things which are”, exalting the valleys and so on, find thus its key in philosophy, in logic. The argumentation is necessarily, therefore, supremely simple, though just therefore concealed, as the hidden is not hidden (Gk. *a-letheia*, truth, itself having this negative or inverting prefix). So a simple Gospel argument for resurrection, against the Sadducees, as natural to religion (the God of Abraham and of Isaac is a God of the living) bears out Hegel’s contention that speculative thought is open and natural to people at all levels. Rather, it is by Hegel’s account of it, taken up, we suggest, by Heidegger, that the Platonic theory of form(s), further developed by Aristotle in his criticism of it, was never reducible to an ultra-realist theory of universals, as in Scholastic classification. For the same reason the Neoscholastics dismissed the nineteenth century Hegelian “ontologist” account of form, of ideas, as a failure to understand even what the “problem of universals” was. They had not yet conceived the Hegelian transcendence of it as, specifically, literally faithful to Platonism and indeed to Aristotelianism, beyond the abstract fidelity of the schools. More seriously, they then as if unconsciously ignored or discounted those furthest outreaches of Aquinas’s metaphysical and theological thought (they routinely abstracted from the latter) which, in true Aristotelian fashion, define or situate his entire project.⁷

Our immediate thinking distinguishes a man and his humanity. Between these two, individual and essence, as equally between substance and accident (whiteness), a real, not a logical, relation holds. As real this relation is quite different from a second, logical relation holding between the two concepts or conceptions of that man and his being human, which is what the predicate, said of him, of Socrates, say, means or intends. Socrates and his humanity, i.e. his nature or essence, are two distinct if inseparable realities. By contrast, Socrates and a man that is Socrates are “one and the same”, identical, differing only in the mind. What shows this difference is that Socrates is a man but not his humanity. This, though, and this is the point, may be said without prejudice to a putative real identity between Socrates and all rational subjects in what is an absolute and

⁷ Cf. R. P. Phillips, *Modern Thomistic Philosophy* (c.1932), vol. 2. Cp. Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, VII to IX; F. Inciarte, *Forma Formarum*, Verlag Alber, Freiburg 1970 and *Substance and Action*, Verlag George Ohms, Hildersheim, 2002, chapter on “The Unity of Aristotle’s Metaphysics”.

infinite subjectivity or subjecthood. Thus it is, as Eugene Gendlin remarks in his *Line by Line Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima*⁸, yjay Aristotle, whom Hegel follows in this, does not systematically distinguish between thinking and an individual thinker.

Hence this second, logical relation, between subject and predicate, is a relation of identity between what each of these intends. It is not then a real relation, since this can only hold between two things. Implicit here is the subversion of “reality” in the contemplation of absolute mind, in self-consciousness as Hegel will later understand it. All “creation” is *penitus nihil* (Aquinas), deeply nothing, a purely “formal sign” to be seen through, as “he who has seen me has seen the Father”, as a word is not mentioned but used to mention its other, which it signifies purely conventionally.⁹

So the logical relation, identity, is a “relation of reason”, though what is here taken restrictively finally subverts or, better, “sublates” (*aufhebt*) all relation as complicity in complexity. So for Fred Summers¹⁰ identity is not a relation at all since identity-statements are “monadic” in Russellian terms. This, though, as correcting Frege, goes too far as, paradoxically, agreeing with him in his isolation of identity from a class of existing predicable relations. The Hegelian notion of it is of an identity in difference between things, so that we finally say, of anything, “This also is thou; neither is this thou”. It thus subverts (“ruins”) the abstract individual. The “thou” in question is thus always the absolute, in identity with which all subjects are identical with and in one another, are, in a word, infinite and infinity in this their identity. Objects, by contrast, are vanished, in Hegel’s phrase (“the vanishing is vanished”, applied first to Becoming).

By a logical relation then one cannot intend a relation between words, since no two words are identical. Two thoughts, however, can be identical in what they are thoughts of. This is the meaning of the old phrase “intentional identity”. This is precisely a real identity, even if only of form or nature, not restricted to “reason alone” as Kant might say. It is because of this real identity between concept and nature that the composition of two differing significations of the same thing in a sentence itself signifies the identity of the reference of the subject and of the predicate so composed. The composition signifies this (falsely) even when its elements do not in fact signify, though they accordingly “stand for” (*supponunt*) the same thing. In thus reintroducing thoughts into a logic become at times purely formalist in the sense of “graphic” (Petrus Ramus) one simply defers to the truth that words only signify things by means of concepts as

⁸ The Focusing Institute, Spring Valley, New York State, 2012.

⁹ See Hegel on language in *The Philosophy of Spirit (Enc. III)*, esp. 459 add.

¹⁰ See Fred Summers, *The Logic of Natural Language*, Oxford 1982, ch.6.

their immediate reference.¹¹ This is how language refers.¹² Otherwise it is just marks or noises, one more item added to the collection making up the world.

Taking up the talk of wholes or parts again we may note that all real relations hold between two different wholes or between a whole or one or more of its parts. That between two parts is indistinguishable from that between two wholes. No real relation, however, can hold between a whole and that whole over again, just because this is an identity.

In any true affirmative proposition the predicate and subject somehow signify the same thing in reality but diverse things in thought. For it is clear that man and white are the same in the subject, when they are, but differ in notion.¹³

The doctrine that words only mean in sentences (contextual principle) seems incoherent. “White”, by itself, means, stands for, a certain colour and what Aquinas is saying is that as used in the sentence “Socrates is white” it stands for (denotes as opposed to connotes, in a later formulation) not the colour, which it signifies, but the white Socrates. “Meaning” and “reference” in fact are not entirely equivocal with regard to one another. He says “white” means the colour *secundum rationem*, i.e. according to its definition. The definition of a word, though, is precisely of the word as not considered in a sentence. This is presupposed to how Hegel defines his categories. In the light of this (doctrine of the) Concept, as Essence turns out to be, itself developing into it, he finds that “all judgments are false”. Speculative thinking is thus a kind of dismantling of the language of the finite sciences and thus even of the language, *qua* language abstractly considered, in which it is itself *ex-pressed*. Thought in itself, by contrast, is self-presence of self to self in that other of itself that it is. Hegel even considers everyday speech to express a variety of such thinking, as in religion the most naïve opinions are assimilated to the most abstruse theology as somehow of a piece with it.

The meaning of “white” in the sentence, as a predicate, is its reference in that sentence. One can negate either a whole sentence or the predicate-term or both. Just so, and thereby, one can negate the whole thought or what is thought of what. The former two negations are syntactical changes. The latter is a logical operation. It is misleading, therefore, to speak of logical syntax. Syntax is syntax and thought is thought. Language does not

¹¹ Cf. Aquinas, *Summa theol.* Ia, 13, art. 4, on words: *non significant rem nisi mediante conceptione intellectus.*

¹² Cf. John Deely, “How Language Refers”, *Studi Internazionali di Filosofia*, 1972.

¹³ Cf. Aquinas, *Ibid*, 13, 12.

refer materially but mind may refer by its means¹⁴. Reference is self-knowledge. It is here that Hegel distinguishes between truth and mere correctness, as he calls it. Truth is not correspondence of idea with reality but of idea with itself. No finite thing is true because as finitely existing in time and space it is never true to its notion. It is in this way too that life “runs away” as an intrinsic necessity. Death is no contingent tragedy or misfortune. So if, as in traditional theology, freedom from it was a preternatural gift, then the being of the persons or groups concerned was not life as we know it, but rather the ideal knowable as its own result at and as the End, intrinsically realised. We are alienated from that as Nature is alienated from Mind, from the Concept, which yet “goes forth freely as nature”. For an understanding of this Hegel’s remarks on evil in the “religion” chapter of his *Phenomenology of Spirit* are pertinent.

So it is the denotation of the subject or predicate *terms*, of both taken together, which determines the reference of the subject. Thus “the evening star” in “The morning star is the evening star” means or refers to the morning star that is the evening star. That the same analysis would apply to the relative clause is no objection since we are not here re-formulating the sentence. We are naming the referent of the original predicate. The same analysis, note, could be applied to “The morning star is the morning star”. Within the logic of identity there is no special logic of identity. One expression too, as now subject, now predicate, is already, just thereby, differentiated as having a quasi-material and quasi-formal function respectively. Thus far Aquinas and Frege are at one.

Here then, in place of a dichotomy between meaning and reference, we have a distinction between two forms of signification, *secundum rem* and *secundum rationem*, coexisting without conflict in Aquinas, though not always in later scholasticism, with a developed doctrine of *suppositio*. Hegel will point out that in the judgment the former undermines or destroys the latter. This too is acknowledged in the earlier thought, principally when Aquinas declares that God is his godhead (*deitas*), is a *nomen naturae*. For this is but in line with the general principle that what is taken materially as subject is taken formally as predicate, where names themselves become natures, therefore, as in “The bear is a bear”. Note that this is not yet “The bear is the bear”, a full identity nonetheless analysable hylomorphically in this analogous way, it too.

For Aquinas, however, the meaning of “horse”, in contradistinction to “unicorn”, is in principle determined by there being (or having been) horses to refer to. This at once opens a possibility that unicorns, having

¹⁴ Cf. Deely, as at note 12.

once been thought, might also be about to be in some future. This is Hegel's approach, for whom "existence does no good to the things", to their idea. Aquinas thinks I can be mistaken about the definition of horse because there are horses, whereas the meaning-rule constituting the definition of the word "unicorn" is not thus subject to error. Where a meaning-rule exists, however, an existence of the unicorn *in anima* is implied, an idea resurfacing later in Meinong and in "sistology" generally. Any thought is eternal, a modality of thought itself rather than an object. So in tales of imagination fantasy objects and realities mix, horses and unicorns, real virtues and fantasy beings, Jonah and the whale. Here we explain the satisfaction given by such stories.

CHAPTER NINE

MEANING

Discussion of meaning and reference in terms laid down in a classic article of Frege's, "Concept and Object", has resulted in a stereotyped attitude to this apparently exclusive alternative, as against seeing them both as forms of signification, i.e. of meaning, whether *secundum rationem* or *secundum rem*, as discussed above. In general the term "reference" is more abstract and hence explains less than the term *suppositio*, which divides, for example, into material and formal supposition as corresponding to subject and predicate. Hence even an identity statement like "Animals are animals" is interpretable, is possible, as a "giving of the form" of animals, in virtue of which they are indeed all animals.

It is too often simply assumed that meaning is the contrary of reference. Thus "formal" logical systems, as a result of this, are postulated that are purely formal in the sense of being mere or pure *schemata*, as in Geach's *Reference and Generality* and related work, e.g. his *Reason and Argument*. Such formalism is now dubbed by some "analytical Thomism" (Fregean Thomism would be nearer the truth, in this case nearer the true contradiction¹), but neither this nor a posited Kantian or "transcendental Thomism" entirely succeed, mainly because they both bypass Hegel as Aristotle's and thus, willy nilly, Aquinas's simple continuator in "absolute idealism".

Alternative or "mathematical" logics developed on Kantian soil. So they are generally linked with the restricted or finite form of *a priorism* that finds its own *a priori* in biological evolution, in intimate self-contradiction. It is at the opposite pole to the "thought thinking itself" presented in a work such as *Medieval Logic and Metaphysics* (D.P.Henry),

¹ See our "The Resistance of Thomism to Analytical and Other Patronage", *The Monist*, October 1997, pp. 611-618. This article makes the same point as does G. Rinaldi in relation to the patronage of Hegel's system, that a falling short of acceptance of it as a whole thereby falsifies the whole. See his *Absolute Idealism and Contemporary Philosophy*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt-am-Main, 2012, first chapter, *Die Aktualität von Hegels Logic*.

itself presenting the “Ontological Argument” of which Hegelian Absolute Idealism is the sustained dialectical and speculative analysis. The violence of the movement against “psychologism” within this “logistic” school is hence ineffectual since the necessities of logic remain linked there with those supposed epistemic necessities, surely biological or “psychic” themselves too, that the non-Kantian realist or absolute idealist can only regard as spurious. “The soul has learned everything” (Plato, *Meno*), which of course includes the thesis, not a mere “assumption” of and for the validity of the project of science, that everything is learnable, that “all nature is akin” (*ibid.*). Many, of course, rejected psychologism exclusively as holding out for the purity of logic. Interpreting this quality abstractly, however, they remained within or left the field for mathematics. The *logos*, though, is through and through objectual or intentional. That is, it is to be seen through as in essence actively intending itself as other (what else could it intend?). Within this act all ideas, the ideas of all things, are conceived.

Realists, in the Dummettian sense, used recently to refer at times to these supposed epistemic necessities within Kantianism as a doctrine of “the veil of perception”, that in perceiving we falsify² or misperceive, McTaggart’s explicit doctrine, interpreting Hegel, in fact. In that case there would, however, be no misperception in the normal sense. McTaggart correctly referred to Hegel’s teaching with regard to finite perceptions of sense, identified as “immediate”, which intrinsically and hence always awaits mediation. By contrast, persons truly perceive themselves in others as, Aquinas taught, the soul is “only” known in the act of knowing its other. Rather, Hegel will further infer, this is what knowledge, as essentially self-knowledge, itself is. Thus he interprets the oracular “Know yourself” of Socrates non-restrictively. This will be “absolute knowing”, unrestricted, to which a doctrine of the identity of all selves, so as not to make them each parts of a larger whole, is corollary or even collateral.

The “veil of perception” actually lies over finite objects themselves as being nothing unless ideal constituents or moments of the Absolute Idea, which alone is absolutely, i.e. *qua* idea it is the absolute. The Absolute is the Idea, in absolute definition.³ That is, the finite reality is “spiritual”. The appearance of material things is, rather, a simple representation of the moment of individuality in the Subjective Concept. As such they, collectively, are necessary and not contingent, so not matter as we imagine it. Matter, said Aquinas, is created a necessary being, as are angels or

² Cf. J.L. Mackie’s study, *Problems from Locke*, or, for the phrase, Jonathan Bennett in particular.

³ Enc. 213: “The definition, which declares the Absolute to be the Idea, is itself absolute.”

human souls, necessary as God creating them is necessary.⁴ Mind is naturally called upon to proceed to this position as its own result. Our perceiving does not obscure anything but rather begins to *unveil*. It is thus necessarily extended into understanding, as it is mind that knows it perceives. Understanding (*Verstand*) too, however, cannot remain in its falsifying abstractions, themselves but moments giving rise to the phenomenon, the moment, of language.⁵

The same idea of an intrinsic veil seems retained in the notion of “internal realism”, as even in the Wittgensteinian “forms of life” doctrine. Hegel shows that in logic, in reality, the inside is the outside (“the essential correlation”), while life is but “the Idea immediate”; *viventibus esse est vivere*, he might have quoted: for the living to be is to live (though this easily translates logically into “is to *be* alive”. Hence, Hegel concludes, death, as “sublation” of life, is itself the entrance into spiritual or true being (*esse*), being as act, the Concept or Idea, where being is no longer restricted to a finite notion of life and its “kinds”. This entrance is “the Golgotha of the spirit”, a “highway of despair” perhaps, but of despair thus transmuted, “beyond hope” as they say, or a hating of life to keep it. He thus vindicates scepticism. Mind sees that this, the speculative deconstruction of predicative language, has to be, indeed is. Take it as being or non-being indifferently is Hegel’s stance, at the very beginning of the *Logic*. It is, he means, the beginning of logic, ultimately of knowledge. “With what must science begin?” At least in this respect, then, the indifference is relative, as, in his system, difference always is. For even if being is nothing, yet nothing is a being, a point Heidegger stresses,

It is not merely that we cannot check what we claim to know against what we do not know but that this project as posited has no sense. Yet the project merges with that of positing that “THE WORLD is independent of any particular representation we have of it” (Putnam’s notion of the “metaphysical realism” he rejects) and so not the world-as-known-by-me to which I am therefore as necessary as it to me. Kant assumed this “metaphysical realism”, thing-in-itself, as part of his subjective idealism. Reality cannot be “altogether independent of experience”.⁶ Rather, in knowing myself, in obedience to the Oracle, I know all reality. It is not altogether clear whether Putnam’s internal realism reaches up to this insight.

⁴ Cf. Patterson Brown, “St. Thomas’ Doctrine of Necessary Being”, in *Aquinas* (edited A. Kenny), Macmillan 1969 (London 1970, pp. 157-175).

⁵ See the opening chapters of and Preface to Hegel’s *The Phenomenology of Mind*.

⁶ For a contrary view, cp. M. Devitt, “Realism and the Renegade Putnam”, *Nous* 1983, p.297f.

CHAPTER TEN

PREDICATE PRESUPPOSITION

The forms of logic appear successively in their proper place in the dialectic, as traced by Hegel, under the moment of the Subjective Notion. Each is there presented as progressively supplanting or absorbing its immediate predecessor. Both Essence and finally the Concept, however, disclose self-thinking Being, just as much as or because this itself is finally the Concept as the Beginning of its self-revelation. So what we have to do with here is “the ontological status of logical forms”¹, of form. One might recall Aquinas’s doctrine of angels as subsistent forms, not abstract universals. There is nothing abstract about logic. Rather, the whole succession of forms, which is the Notion itself, issues in the particular and, this mediating, individuals without number, since each is the Notion, or Mind. This *logical* truth concerning the individual is that of which the space-time continuum, that is to say matter, is of necessity the representation, as Aristotle for his part emphatically confirms so that Hegel here recovers a central plank of Aristotelian interpretation.² Yet intellectual “soul” is finally intellect, psychology finally absorbed into metaphysics as, in truth, Spirit’s self-knowledge. So Logic, as “form of the world”, formally displaces world.

We have been considering subject-predicate structure. We now consider it more narrowly in relation to “supposition”. The word transliterates the Latin *suppositio*. This is an account of the signifying or standing-for relation of words or word to things or to reality earlier pinpointed by Aristotle as a remedy for not being able to get the “things themselves” into our heads. Self-styled linguistic philosophy works here with a doctrine, or doctrines, of reference, yet *suppositio* is more, much more, than a superseded theory of reference.

¹ Cp. Henry B. Veatch, “Concerning the Ontological Status of Logical Forms”, *The Review of Metaphysics*, December 1948,

² Cp. Eugene Gendlin, *op. cit.*, confirming the essential Aristotelian role of flesh, sense and matter, though here at least Aristotle stops short of categorising these as appearances in need of mediation, as seems at least implicit in his *Metaphysics*.

Since one cannot manipulate the things themselves in discourse about them but uses names in place of them we often think that the relations between the names are the same as those between the things. But there is no similarity: for names (words) are finite in number, things infinite. So it is necessary that the same sentence, or one name, should signify several things. Therefore in argument those not experienced in the power of words are often deceived by paralogisms.³

This is the key text historically. Language appears here as resulting from not being God, whose discourse has to be precisely a positing of the things themselves, which however are each indistinguishable from this very positing, are in fact the Idea. As Aquinas put it, any divine idea is identical with the divine essence.⁴ Not only so, but reality is nothing other than the relation of these ideas, and hence the Idea, so no individual is other than the universal. It is this within and upon which Hegel works. The divine ideas are not intentional of something *else*. Yet they are ideas, constitutive moments in identity of the absolute, which is the Concept. Hegel's working, furthermore, continues or further reflects thought's own thinking, since he intends nothing other. There is no other exit, as the apodictic or last judgment gives way to the *Schluss* or syllogism, which is reality or "all things", Hegel insists. "Everything is a syllogism" (EL181)⁵, though this is itself but a moment of speculative reason. Syllogism, however, is itself a judgment, as this is a notion or concept, of which the *copula* marks the actuality.

While Aquinas derives the *copula* from being, for Hegel being is the *copula*'s self-fulfilment, superseding judgment in self-reflecting identity, which is the Infinite or Absolute, necessarily self-knowing as this act. There is a hermeneutic circle of return between the two thinkers, who are in that measure effaced before thought as such. As act without a subject pure act (*actus purus*) is the true Subject or subjectivity as, for Aquinas, God is his godhead. Hegel unfolds this identity as the supersession of the name, though there is equally a supersession of the predicate, its identity with the subject. Both are put as supplanting the judgment as death

³ Cf. Aristotle, *De soph. el.* ch. 1. 165a 7-16.

⁴ Cf. Aquinas, *Summa theol.* Ia, 15.

⁵ The *Encyclopaedia* itself terminates (575-577) in threefold development of this thought: "The third syllogism is the Idea of philosophy". This Idea, i.e. the Idea itself, he has already identified in the *Logic* with "the method" or method, i.e. science in its praxis, as such, thus elevating method, what it is, to Absolute Mind (title of the final section of the *Encyclopaedia*). There is no reduction here but rather elevation unless, as we might want to say, reduction is itself elevation where each constituent of the Concept is itself the Concept in identity (*Enc.* 160, 161).

supplants life, the “immediate Idea only”. Their unity is the reality as, again, God is his revelation, which is not about this or that but revelation itself. In the end there is nothing to think about. Being is non-being. But this nothing is determinate. *Das Nichts nichtet*.⁶ This is Becoming or movement. Movement itself however, as perpetual return, is eternally Realised End, which is itself the Notion, the Infinite, all in all and all “at once”, perfect Act as movement is “imperfect act”, not in the sense of perfected or finished, however, but as perpetual realisation, “ever new” as one says.

Thought in Hegel, that is to say, has sublated theology, as was ever the intention of philosophy. True theology recognises this in its concept of the divine wisdom or spirit (*Geist*), holy as spirit is in its fullness. Only, all things are thus shown to be holy, what is without is within, all things profane are cleansed and not merely “common”. In St. Peter’s vision or dream this cleansing, hence an inherent state of cleanness, was put as self-realised. Events had manifested rather than brought this about. Eternity conceived the event, and all events, as *Ereignis* or generation itself.

Theology then was but a moment in that self-revelation which is thought. This is what Christianity realises, the secret it carries. Like the judgement it is a self-emptying, a going beyond self. This is the paradox of “God”. The heathen say to me all the day long “Where is thy god?”, the Psalmist complains. As for our God, he replies, he is in heaven or, equivalently, nowhere, not an object. God, said Nijinsky, is fire in the head, making God still an object, against his intention. One should be silent about it, says Wittgenstein, thus breaking the silence. Words falsify, “all judgments are false” (Hegel), for “God has spoken only one word” (John of the Cross). The Idea is self-speaking, is manifestation. Religion grasps this as “glory”, in annihilation of the world as *penitus nihil*, in its depth nothing.⁷

⁶ M. Heidegger. “Nothing noths” was Peter Geach’s humorous (and hence serious) attempt at translating this in his *Mental Acts* (1956).

⁷ Cf. Hegel, *Enc.* 50.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

ON BEING AS SUBJECT

Further meditative investigation is needed upon what repeatedly strikes one as the generating core to everything, hence to self. Yet one scarcely finds direct treatment in extant philosophical or even “mystical” writings. An exception is my own short piece, “Other Problems about the Self” (*Sophia*, Australia, 1984).

It is a question of understanding “this place appointed for my second race”, to borrow a phrase from Henry Vaughan’s poem, “The Retreat”. The image, or even idea, of a second existence (“race”), presented poetically as temporal succession, can as well be understood as a second layer of being, even as the phenomenal as opposed to (and yet identical with?) the real, as the noumenal as opposed to the phenomenal, as the outward as opposed (and yet identical with, as in Hegel’s Logic) to the inward, as (in St. Paul) the visible and temporal as opposed to the invisible and eternal, as “the show” as opposed to “the spiritual” as first or essential face of being. “Life is the Idea immediate” only, writes Hegel, “No birth no death”, say the Buddhists or some of them.

Thomas Aquinas teaches that the “proper object” of the human mind is this visible and changeable being, *ens mobile*, from which it rises with effort to “being *qua* being”, as studied and, equally, contemplated in metaphysics, as Aristotle equally teaches. He eventually identifies it with *ho theos*, God or the divine (*nous*, mind). God is mind, spirit, “the lesson of Christianity” according to Hegel. Accordingly, he identifies metaphysics with theology (Gk. *theología*). This effort, however, of rising above nature is, in speculative paradox, natural to man. The paradox, however, should signify to us the non-absolute character conceptually of “man”. He (as opposed to I) is, again, the Idea Immediate, an objectification of our self-consciousness.

Yet self-consciousness itself is something to be attained to. Properly it must replace our immediate idea of having been born, for example. This is not an impression, in Humean terms, but an idea, something we at best remember, more probably construct or just take from those around us. It is also though, as just stated, an immediate idea, not mediated through

logical process and not able to stand up, therefore, to logical analysis. For who is this I that is born? If he was there before he was born then he was not born, on the normal understanding of this term. The same critique, however, must extend, to be consistent, to the equally immediate idea of “before”, of temporality namely.

So far, however, we remain within the sphere of the object, of objectivity or, rather, objectivisation, even in and when treating of that subjectivity, that subject, necessarily absolute, which necessarily annihilates it. To illustrate I ask, why or how am just I the child of my parents? Obviously, I am inasmuch as they are my parents. But the same question arises again with this non-move. They need not have been my parents but parents of some other, one maybe exactly like me except in that truly ultimate difference which, as this is the point of our enquiry as such, we cannot specify objectively but which is nonetheless, or by that very fact, ultimate and, in Aristotelian terms, formally all-determining, to the extent indeed that my being an other in abstract otherness, as distinct from being other to myself within myself, just cannot arise, is without sense. All that arises is the reasonable, as the reasonable is everything that arises. Everything objective, likewise, is within and *as* the subject. Hence “the body” adds nothing to self, since revealing what is in itself revelation, what is self-revelation itself. This is why Aquinas says that “body” is not a term in metaphysics, but only for logicians.

But if each I is thus determinative then is not every I one and the same I, as any possible subjectivity is absolute?¹ We must answer in the affirmative, noting that this is exactly what is achieved at the summit of revelation in our tradition of it. *Sumit unus sumunt mille*, writes Aquinas, in a poem, of the sacramental and, as it appears, absolute communion. Each receives there the same reality, that of himself, and that self he receives is further specified as “the body of Christ”, *corpus Christi*. To speak of all, rather than each, would be to step verbally back into the element one is denying in transcending it. So, in logic, the universal premise is to be introduced with *omnis* or *omne* in the neuter, both in the singular, as we say, and never with *omnes* or *omnia* (plural). Every man is mortal, rather than “all men are mortal”, the *copula* being thus, in its logical form, always *est* rather than *sunt* or, equally, rather than some

¹ Cf. Gendlin on Aristotle, *op. cit.*, Endnote 117(5): “Nous is a part of the human soul, but nous is also the many unmoved movers and also “the divine”, God, the order of all things in the whole” (*Met.* XII). On Act in contrast to motion, see Note 42: “Aristotle has three terms where we have only two. He has ‘rest’, ‘motion’ and also ‘activity’. An internally arising, self-ordering activity is more active (more determinative) than the changes it makes, yet it does not change.”

temporal variant of *est*. The oblique tensedness, *pace* Aquinas in some formulations, does not belong to the *copula* as such but to the predicate. Hence Aristotle treats the predicate as such, considered as the giving of the essence, under this formality, defining essence itself, namely, as what “was to be”. Thus, in Hegel’s *Logic*, we advance upon this as from Essence to the Concept, which mirrors or declares this unity in identity of each with all as set forth above.

This entails, however, that any immediate sense, however, vivid, of self-contingency, as set forth in Sartre’s *Nausea* or Camus’ *The Outsider*, is merely the first positing of what has to be negated, as the finite is there to overcome itself in otherness to itself in infinity, thus first truly and alone or uniquely finding or “saving” and “keeping” itself. It is the passage from a shadow to reality, of which a connecting ladder can find no part, i.e. the passage is no passage. Hence Eurydice is not to be in-spected while she is in this passage, since she is not and cannot be in it, Magdalen may not touch Christ, though “risen”, “for I am not yet ascended to my father”, Psyche must not look upon the face of her divine lover, as if assuming she will be able to see, with her mortal eyes, such a face.

What, after all, is a face? “What is life to me without you?” sings the one-time bride in Gluck’s heartfelt melody of which, however, we can tire as of any other. Our union is closer than this immediate, overwhelming impression, as it may be. And we are born for death as life’s *true* face and, therefore, no death at all but End Realised, in advance, so to say. We are there already, not merely before we know it, but before the journey which is no journey is begun, and that eternally. This, maybe, is the secret of the Eternal Return espoused by Nietzsche. What returns eternally never departs and, more fundamentally, is never repeated but self-identical rather. For religion, meanwhile, each one has the face of Christ, “defiled and put to scorn” in its undeflowerable “bloom”, to cite from a Bach chorale.

We return, I return, to myself, including in it those who “read me”. Thus I read myself as, thus, too able to address absolutely each one, gathering up into one each who never has read me, who had “better things to do” and who, it may or perhaps should be, “looks down in mercy”. We have by this route annulled personal contingency. This does not render superfluous the pious giving of thanks for one’s own or the world’s *creation*, a transferred or analogous term after which, however, all creation “in heaven and earth is named”, as St. Paul writes of “father”, though the parallel does not especially strengthen the case, “father” being a clear case of Hegel’s “picture-language”, a representation. But *such* picturing too is that after which all picturing is itself named also, the *verbum interius* or

Concept. Our very word “infinite” is a picture, drawn from a mere spatial or temporal boundary, a *finis* or *limes*.

Rather, we are setting the thanksgiving in context, freeing gratitude from its abstract difference from the divine being as such, from the Absolute. As freedom, absolutely and hence self-constitutively, all decision, as absolute and infinite, every divine idea, is “one with the divine essence” (Aquinas) and in that sense necessity, “the real inward necessity which is identical with freedom” (*Enc.* 35 add.). Necessity itself, that is, is a *modus* of divinity since it is not and cannot in logic be set over it. And yet it is. Freedom necessitates everything. Only in this profoundest sense is the factual normative (Hegel), i.e. precisely as and because it is “factual”, because it is. We see here the coincidence, at the metaphysical level, with Natural Law and the doctrine thereof, the injunction, which cannot be too amply and freely interpreted, to “become what you are”. Save me and I shall be saved, runs the ancient Davidic psalm. It is philosophy indeed that “accomplishes religion”, whether or not we wish to regard this task as “ancillary”, since indeed that first *ancilla* is freely regarded in religion as *mediatrix*, and that “of all graces”. Thus religion lends support to philosophy’s self-acknowledgement of her own supreme dignity in even that first characterisation of her as “handmaid” of faith or theology, as philosophy herself is *consolatrix* (Boethius) as interpreting religion. Theology, again, was Aristotle’s name (one of them) for metaphysics. This is far from the unifying imagination, used in a recent papal document, of the “two wings” (faith and reason) on some bird or aeroplane. We have rather a duality in identity, each being itself the relation. As regards faith one can see, in the light of the above identifications, the exactitude of the Gospel observation, spoken under a figure, that if we had faith we could tell a mountain (“this mountain”) to rise and be cast into the sea and it would be done, done, even, just in the thinking. The rationale of miracles in general would lie here, even though the unreflected idea of a miracle is immediate realism, strictly unthinkable under an idealist or philosophical scheme.

Miracle, rather, is itself a figure or representation of the power or force of thought, of spirit. Thus Hegel excuses the inexactitude of some earlier formulations of what he himself wants to say as products of ecstasy. The deeper truth though, he would surely agree, has agreed, is that thinking itself is intrinsically or in essence ecstatic, and thus, as he says, alone able to endure death, the true face of which, in fact, is itself spirit (or, in a figure, eternal life). This sense of ecstasy, of the leaving of one’s daily self behind, deeply marks Hegel’s pages, or speculative thinking, as it marks

the examined views even of the natural sciences, intellect's first correction of the observations of sense.

All is thus resolved in a subjectivity that is (the) absolute. The going up into this, or *Aufhebung* of self as itself, in thinking or "taking up" of all, active and passive in one (reflected in the "middle" voice of ancient languages, surviving in what seem to us often mere "idiomatic" uses of the reflexive form, as where, e.g. in Spanish idiom, what is finished is said to have finished itself, *se acabó*), annihilates in its own self-conception the contingent self and any thought of it. It is the true death, which is life mediated, or Spirit, Mind. Wonder suspends itself, in sublation of the ecstatic in truth and its "blessedness" (*Enc.*159). The original finitude of the self, first reflected in subjective idealism, cannot be thought and is hence self-cancelling in essence. This itself finds expression in the Doctrine of the Concept, in which, Hegel writes,

each of its constituent functions is the very total which the notion is, and is put as indissolubly one with it. Thus in its self-identity it has original and complete determinateness (*Enc.*160)... For in the notion, the elements distinguished are without more ado at the same time declared to be identical with one another and with the whole, and the specific character of each is a free being of the whole notion (161).

This is no longer transition, but development, as "plant developed from its germ" or, better, developed in the transition, in transition itself rather, which is thought and thought alone, as "the notion keeps to itself". Alteration as such is purely formal or "logical", "without making any addition in point of content". Of course this development was not present beforehand as if beforehand developed or as if the implicit were the explicit. Appearance *is* appearance, namely, that too, and just as such is absolutely known, therefore.

Implicit to the empirical self, then, is this self-cancelling. It is born dead or not born, being but a figure of what thought is to reveal. Thought reveals itself as having been revealed, to its self, all along. "You were with me but I was not with you", as Augustine expressed it, while the truth of this verbal paradox is that the infinite has no relation to the finite (Aquinas), as nor do we as we open up in thought to the infinite or "become what we are", in apotheosis. Thought, of course, is spirit and so any of the forms of spirit partake of or, rather, essentially instance thought, spirit, as for instance art and religion or praxis in general (*Enc.*, final section, "Absolute Spirit"). Talk of "finite spirit", says Hegel, is "empty".

I am, always was or "was to be" (Aristotle's *en einai* as the essence or "what" of anything) "a free being of the whole notion", which therefore is

not without that, not without self however instanced. There is coincidence here with Kant's "kingdom of ends". Freedom is supersession of contingency in its very idea. Death is itself "transfigured into the universality of spirit" (Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, penultimate chapter). As thinking we "die daily", as the Pauline text has it, the author adding quite logically that "death works in us", the interpreters or knowers, "but life in you", to and for whom we interpret. A thinker, "close to death from my youth up", is one on the verge of attaining more and more to life, *ipso facto*. This is not merely "good Lutheranism" (F. Inciarte²) but the doctrine of "spiritual resurrection". "It is sown a natural body, it rises again a spiritual body" (St. Paul again, who elsewhere speaks, less figuratively, of the "living spirit" which Christ "became").

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Now you talk plainly, exclaimed the apostles to Christ, in the fourth Gospel, as having suffered perplexity from the latter's elusive discourse, and here we surely find the model for Hegel's own discourse, as one who "passionately studied scripture" (Findlay), the mode of which is somehow catching, like an American accent once heard a few times, a model not open to Aristotle, who nonetheless reflects the tension between things knowable in themselves and things as knowable merely to us (Cf. *Metaphysics I*).

The puzzles, then, of my own or anyone's existence vanish in the mists of daybreak, as shadows before the light. "Is my gloom then but shade of thy hand outstretched caressingly?" asks the Victorian poet of "The Hound of Heaven", with commendable exactitude. The Concept, as its "own result" (a phrase destroying any absolute causality or *causa extramundana*), though it needs nothing, essentially entails the finite from which, as infinite, to *as it were* result or become thinkable, to us but also, and this is Hegel's originality in this theological context, to itself. This is a necessity, not, again, of compulsion, but of self-constituting as self-externalising love, without which any infinite, as necessarily "self-resulting", is supremely inconceivable. What results from *us*, therefore, is our own infinitude as or as one with absolute subjectivity or self-consciousness. Since death is required to be thus ourselves, one's self, one can hardly object that this result and end is end or finishing (off) of that same self. At evening I am perfected or take flight, becoming what I was not and, hence, no longer

² F. Inciarte, "El bucle melancólico en perspectiva", *Nueva Revista*, October 2000, also on Internet.

remaining what I was, yet all the same remaining one and the same focus of personality.

This, however, is the significance of the Eternal Return, no less, where not only does a man's integral life return without end, as a replayed film but under "eternal" must be included each and every constituent or "moment" of it, only though seen "in time" as long as spirit needs such a prop or "does not annul time"³. This is to say, though, that it never goes away, nothing does. Endlessness, anyhow, is but our immediate figure of eternity, how it appears, indeed. Not even the mosaic, nor anything thus figured, reaches up to this conception. Hence the mystical body is figured as comprising those who are "members of one another", or one of another, an image chosen precisely for its flat impossibility, like that of the camel and the eye of a needle. This is the method of Scripture, at which we should not turn up our noses since it too is speculative as based on the "discomposition" of the form of the judgment. "Judge not", it tells us, the "that you be not judged" being added in consequence almost as a piece of speculative fun, if I may hazard.

The Return, that is, has to be comprehensive and not, in self-contradiction, limited to the return of the trajectory of life merely. Here the points or constituents of life, its aliveness in the spirit, do not return at all, and this is precisely why life as such is "only the idea immediate", not the true and mediated idea. Life is finally false, or "no life at all", our finite point of view here expiring in paradox. The line as such, or in its very conception, is here circled, since we are not dealing with a mere fable. But that means that the circle too is released from the contradictory finitude of mathematics and so, again, dis-composed to a singular point, lacking all such dimension. The significance of this is that matter and hence space are reasoned away precisely in the context of investigating the nature of time, which, it too, is *a fortiori* demystified. As *eternally* returning no moment, in its truth and not as it is "in life", ever goes away and so turns, acts, without re-turning. "I know not seems: it is", at once "particular" as it is individual and universal and just thereby. The Apostles, words, "now you speak plainly", we may thus say, apply as much to the appearing of the Word itself, "in the fullness of time", as to the words then and there uttered. Rather, the latter *are* this fullness, in plenitude of the infinite.

So we don't conclude from premises, the syllogism syllogises itself. Hence it is called *Schluss*, as closure or that which closes. Or, as Aquinas insists, the premises cause the conclusion. Note, he insists on this. That is, it is not a mere confusion between reasons and causes but the final

³ Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p.800.

necessity of pure form. Aquinas here approaches, adumbrates, the insight that the Idea is Act.

The unity enabling the temporal representation is brought about by this self-relating in identity of individual, particular and universal. Why is this so? It begins in the Idea itself, which is one. The One projects itself in its other, which it thus sets up or generates as what it itself is, this setting up or generating, like a father continuously in the act of fathering. There is nothing arbitrary about this, since its negation would be the reflection upon self of an inconceivable, solitary individual, which is nonetheless (necessarily) infinite.

The inconceivability would extend to the positing of an equally solitary duo. However, the generated self in other, because it is self in its completeness over again or, rather, the first self's very utterance, itself generates or, rather, as it is put, now "spirates" its own *spirit*, as an act, however, *included* in the first or prime generation, itself primal or "pure" act, all life or movement being here immutably poured forth. This then is the Eternal Return.

This infinite procession (*processio* rather than *processus*) is the procession of spirit, "from the father through the son", immediately as absorbing entirely the enabling mediator. Spirit, mind, is thus procession, is activity itself or in its purity. This expression illustrates, again, how the form, as form of forms or infinite truth, is not reducible to abstract universality. In this sense it is that we might say God is not being or, rather, that being is finally not being but perfect act in the sense of *the* perfect act. Hegel here recaptures, re-activates, that Platonic nerve which had been forgotten as surely as Heidegger asserts this of being, which he finally characterises as *Er-eignis*, event, happening, of course not passively.

Mention of the Son refers us to theology, all the same. The two creations there, in theology, are both of man. The two Adams, however, are at bottom one, in this resembling the Eternal Return. A "second" Adam has to be the original, his two comings one, and so it must be with any third. It is in this sense, or as imploying just this, that Scotus posited the incarnation as necessary, without necessary prejudice to the Thomistic emphasis upon sin as motivating cause, since this simply removes the necessity to the "happy fault". For, given infinite goodness, anything happy is necessary. So in this sense spirit proceeds from the Son most properly (Hegel's suggestion in an early work), as human or concrete. Tolstoy, meanwhile, spoke truly in saying that happy families have no history, since history itself, as unhappiness, is absorbed in absolute dialectical method.

So the One and the Many, this unity, arises, as Plato and the Atomists saw, of itself. Where there is a unity there is a plurality. Otherwise the One is not even one but more like Hegel's "object", a categorical moment that "falls to pieces". The many are one. This is reflected mechanically in syllogistic language, in language. The real syllogism is just reason itself, cancelling the contradictory form of the judgment in its return to the self-thinking concept as prime and pure act, as absolute and *the* absolute, *that is to say*. In thinking this conclusion, this *Schluss*, I, of which universality is the principle, Hegel says, and of whom you, he, she or it and their plurals, along with we, are oblique variants, am at my most personal. Only, we have seen, the plural is the singular and conversely.

CHAPTER TWELVE

PHILOSOPHY FULFILLS, ABSORBS, TAKES UP AND PUTS BY THEOLOGY

Close familiarity with Hegel's Logic cannot but suggest, to anyone versed in Trinitarian thought and belief, a thoroughgoing basis in the latter. Without it, indeed, he could not have argued for philosophy as perfecting or accomplishing religion, as an earlier moment of the same Spirit or Mind.

So Being and Nothing are each nothing but transition, Becoming, into this very becoming, transition, flow. This absolute becoming, however, as contradicting itself, itself becomes or, rather, vanishes ("the vanishing is vanished"), becoming "being there", *Dasein*. This is the Result of nothing and being together, their Unity. It is stable now in its simplicity, as again being, but not "for itself" as an abstract concept. For such a concept, abstraction namely, itself appears empirically within the whole, merely. It is people, namely, that abstract. In or as doing so they, abstract primarily, from their being as "who". Being there, determinately individual (but not abstractly) *Dasein*, is being as determining the whole. So being is *aufgehoben*, taken up, as *the* beginning of and in absolute knowledge as itself, therefore, formal method or the knowing. Being is itself *Geist*, spirit, and as such *verum*, the true, in which it is itself found as lost. Spirit, mind, to which being is presented, or simply present, as itself the true, is itself being or *is* the truth and the way thereto. The way *is* the truth, therefore, as absolute process, transcending movement or imperfect, unfinished act, as, rather, realised or perfect act and, hence, end, in or in view of which all called means are absorbed. Life or nature, therefore, immediately represents this, of which it would otherwise be the unreconciled other. Knowledge, therefore, begins with being as thought, as logic, and not as nature (*physis*), still less with the knowing of this knowing (*meta-physis*), which is *therefore* precisely *presupposed* to its own self-unfolding in this way.

Becoming, as itself transition into this unity of being and nothing, the unity itself as be-ing (*seiend* rather than *Sein*), this figure (*Gestalt*) of the

yet one-sided because immediate unity of just these moments, is being-there (*Dasein*). There is no call to expand this to “being there and then” (“and now” would be better), thus twisting the logic in the direction of materialism. The “there” refers rather to the individual, which is essential to the logical truth of the universal, as is later brought out generally when he treats of “the subjective notion”. It is not specified in advance as spatial. It would logically be more true, that is to say, that individuation, the individual, is the principle of matter than the more immediate, even unphilosophical view that matter is the principle of individuation, as of change and perishing generally. Matter, however, is rather the content and as such ideal, the idea of the geo-metrication of the arithmetical or of series as such, while simultaneously matter *is* change and perishing, *abstracted* from that eternal process of which it is a löinear or serial *representation*, under which the *doctrine* of creation is only first or immediately apprehended but not as such, therefore.

We referred above to the trinity, the threeness. Hegel here and everywhere presents trinity and incarnation in the closest union yet achieved in theological thinking, closer, for example, than that achieved by Scotus when proposing, as against the more reticent Aquinas, the necessity of the incarnation. The economical, that is, is entirely the immanent, the immanent the economical. In proceeding outward the persons remain inward (the godhead). There is no “out” and “in” because the “out” is as much an inward or ideal necessity of self-being as the “in” is clearly seen to be an identity, when one, God or man, is spoken of as “in” another. The difference of this more concrete or Scotist view, when pursued thus further, is that it is actually as *Dasein*, being there, that God himself is first realised. This is not, again, a reduction of God to just “man”, as in the Feuerbachian interpretation of Hegel or of Christianity, or as it is anyhow often taken. For in logic there is no abstract separation of a particular from a “common” intellect, no part of a whole. The whole is rather whole as in, i.e. one with, every part, thus transcending the medieval debates on an abstractly “common intellect”. What is transcended is a particularly *abstract* notion of particularisation. There are thus no parts in any unqualified sense. They are transcended along with all measure. Nor is anything said, in logic, about “man”. In the whole as becoming self-consciousness the latter is taken up (*aufgehoben*) into this whole, or contrariwise. The incarnation, that is, precedes itself. It is thus to be seen as a narrative representation of the intrinsic self-individualisation of the Concept, which means that all individualisation is one in identity. Number is left behind. In logic, in science, of which being is the beginning and origin, being is not other than thought, and hence also a thought, itself, and

hence too a self-thinking-thought. *Immaterialitas est radix cognitionis* (Aquinas). Animals and plants therefore, nature, as “rocks and stones and trees”¹, are thought’s momentary positing of itself in alienation from itself, corresponding in differentiated identity to the negative essential to dialectic, to Evil. It, nature, is thus, if taken on its own (*materialiter spectata*), a sham-being, as Hegel’s says of evil², to be directly seen through, as sign more formally than it is sacrament, whether we speak of nature or of evil. Of both it is always true that they are *semper in subjecto*, always in a subject, which is the opposite of each. So God, the only subject, opposes nature in containing it, good opposes evil in containing it (in dialectical process), as the love of enemies does not leave them in a reflexive enemy-relation. By his initiative, act of actuality, the Samaritan other becomes “neighbour”. Evil is absorbed, cancelled. “When that which is perfect is come, then that which is imperfect is done away with”. It is done away with in very truth, not by a mere attitude, such as optimism.

The sacraments of “absolute religion” in fact tend, in the intention of belief, to this, to being or becoming their other, which they “signify”, so-called transubstantiation, the material itself passing over into the spiritual, though this presupposition of substance is itself but a dialectical moment, of *Verdinglichung*.³ This, namely, is the only office and explanation of the finite in general, its signifying or “ideal” character.⁴ Again, becoming is what being dialectically becomes!

Being there, individualised being, succeeds upon Spirit, the perpetual becoming or transiting, etymologically a blowing or breathing as of wind. Spirit thus succeeds upon being as the first realisation of being and nothing in combination or unity. Being as it were begets nothing as its true content

¹ Cp. Wordsworth, Hegel’s exact contemporary. The body of the “phantom of delight” (my stress) is finally
Rolled round in earth’s diurnal course,
With rocks and stones and trees.

² Cp. *Enc.* 35add.

³ We remark that just this consideration, taken from Hegel’s philosophy, relativises as a mere *appearance* of unorthodoxy his explicit protest on just this point of the *ex opere operato*. Thus Aquinas himself conceded, in his treatment of the Church’s sacraments, that the whole of nature possessed, for the intelligence of faith, this “sacramental” character canonically attributed to bread, wine, water and other “matters”. The “this is my body” thus emerges as a selected focus rather than a magical exception, *before* secondary debate begins.

⁴ This view of it, rescuing evil from an unreal abstraction, is the reverse of the ancient Manichean heresy. “Have we received good at the hand of the Lord and shall we not also receive evil?” asks Job in the story. Cp. *Enc.* 95 on the “ideality” of the finite.

and both together, otherwise nothing, issue in or realise their unity as spirit. "It is the lesson of Christianity", Hegel says, "that God is spirit." It is not contrary to Trinitarian thought and belief that spirit issues from the first two "persons" as first realising them. McTaggart had claimed that it was thus contrary in his wish to hold Hegelianism apart from Christianity. In fact the Father is first realised as Son inasmuch as the Father is nothing other than this continuous begetting of or speaking the Word, as the latter is this its being spoken. What each is amounts to or is this relation (Augustine, Aquinas). It is thus from the Word or Son, as God realised, that Spirit immediately proceeds. Here Hegel rejoins the Greek tradition. Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son (*filioque*) but as proceeding from the Father indeed but through the Son uniquely. This Son or Word, again, did not just happen to be "made flesh" but, rather, dwelt or dwells "among us", be we flesh or no. Or, flesh is to be taken in the sense of temporality, of a life set towards death. This, as "the manhood", in one quasi-credal formula, the "Athanasian", is taken up into God. There is no conversion or reduction of the godhead to flesh. This, however, seen philosophically or finally, is no change in the sense of a finite happening, but rather, as the main creed has it, true God from true God, *Deum de Deo*. God is this transition, is, ultimately, Transition, uniquely *Ereignis* (to co-opt here Heidegger's development of the Hegelian moment).

It is a consequence of this that *Dasein* is the whole, is a moment but precisely a moment of the Concept. There are no pure moments, except in abstract and hence momentary consideration. Each such moment, says Hegel, is not merely outside the others (definition of Nature) but is "outside itself". I am not what I am and I am what I am not. The body is the representation of this, as Leviathan indeed. "Now you are the body of Christ". This organic unity though is but the figure for perfect unity, of self in other and, hence, all in each, each in all.⁵

⁵ We may add though that the Hobbesian and Hegelian moment of apparent conceptual absorption of church into the state or body politic generally is separable from its occurrence in the last days of the particular Constantinian era, as we now see it, though this last may have been the requisite condition for its initial conception, for the emergence of an in intention realised eschatology, comparable perhaps to giving the vote also to children as bearers, they too, of *speculative reason* according to their state. Infant baptism then appears as precursor of this as of Hegel's whole philosophy (cf. *Enc.* 82add: "the true reason-world... is the right of every human being, on whatever grade", where he goes on to speak of "the child"). This democracy, this true world, as such must include the ecclesiastical world of faith.

The addition of the *filioque*, by Charlemagne and his advisers, to the common creed of Nicea, a move rejected by Constantinople, which had not, perhaps regrettably, been consulted, is an early example of a doctrinal development suspended between esoteric intuition (here, merely incidentally, on behalf of the less sophisticated) and common acceptance. It thus exemplifies, again, a common or persisting feature of that philosophical redemption of theology from itself set forth here as “the development of Christian doctrine”, so that the one becomes the other reciprocally. The same may be said of the formulation of Trinitarian doctrine in the period, long or short indifferently, before its subsequent conciliar canonisation. Today, however, we have learned, the Church has taught us, that General Councils are mere figures in summary for such development, though they can have other purposes too. Luther was not wrong in saying they “can and have erred”, given a suitable definition of error. All this we now apply to our general thesis here of the philosophical reconstitution, demanded in each moment, of the previous “theological” moment.

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The differentiated identity of Being and Nothing, with which logical science begins and which this identity itself originates, includes all other forms of self-in-other or not-self, even or especially Good and Evil, so that one cannot hold back from positing, as a genuine moment of each, that good is evil, evil good. This Satanic moment, Hegel recognises, appears “unspiritual” but is not so. It is rather, relatively speaking as all speech is relative, the final or spiritual understanding of “things spiritual”, of theology, of faith, of scripture, of tradition.

The equation of evil with non-being, with *privatio*, did not begin with Hegel, who anyhow at the same time questions it. In *The Phenomenology of Mind* he accordingly sees Lucifer as *representing* this moment and as, accordingly, the first angel, son of the morning and true bearer of light. He is the iconographical embodiment of that knowing of good and evil together that is determinative of the divine and unconditioned, of reason in a word. Reason, however, knows itself in its own result, the choice of good in and as its own self-affirmation. This necessarily therefore comes after what is, logically, the first moment of the knowledge of evil, which, however, it has itself produced. Reason is the ex-pressed Word as verdict constituting the speaker. That is, it is the first principle, is nothing other than the uttering, as and in act, *entelecheia*, of its own self-constituting Word, is that very relation. In that consists the right to the appellation of

“person” as the transcendence of substance in universality. This is what reason is, it is the form of non-abstract or “concrete” individuality, unity in plurality and contrariwise. “And yet there are not three gods but one.” “It is useless to count.” All this is represented in Scripture by the saying, of the Word and mediator, represented as humanly and truly personified, “I saw Satan falling from heaven”. Truth, we may add, would not be truth if it could not, in principle, truly *represent* itself, just as there is, necessarily, a right order of representation, as the world, a world, is as having to be rational. Such *right* representation becomes, has the office of, disclosure.

In fact, however, good is evil and evil good. They flow into one another, in a liquidisation that is not liquidation, to use a phrase of Heidegger’s. What we call evil is a moment of this flow, reflected in the saying, “He will not be angry for ever”. Hegel thus finds expression of this moment of good as evil in the ancient notion, included in *fate*, of “the wrath of God”. We find it equally or more expressly in the saying, “Whom the gods wish to destroy they first make mad” or in Hobbes’s “tough” notion that no law “binds” God in his dealings with his creatures. The later notion of providence is interpretation in fulfilment of this truth and not its mere opposite. Only a principle of *faith* here, as an ultimately superior knowledge, can escape the impression of binding the unbounded. This is the truth of the late-medieval voluntarism often seen simply as philosophically degenerate although it is virtually the essence of Cartesianism as founding that “modern” philosophy perfected in Hegel. This includes, in *Aufhebung*, a critique of law itself as an abstract and finite concept.

The case of good and evil, therefore, is the same as that of being and nothing. Corresponding to *Dasein* there is, has to be, also a “being there” or individualisation of good. It retains a priority over evil, comes first inasmuch as, in its notion, *malum est semper in subjecto*.⁶ There cannot be an absolute evil, it cannot be posited. Rather, the absolute good includes evil as actual possibility, known in absolute knowing. Similarly, nothing, as actually non-being, is negation of what is already posited. There cannot be an absolute non-being and Hegel does not fall into this mere contradiction. This answers the question why there is not, rather, nothing. This is the ultimate necessity Hegel identifies with freedom, the priority of being, which itself is being, namely, as God is his goodness. This is what appears at the end of the dialectic as realised all along.

In this dialectic, therefore, the negative becomes positive, the bitter sweet, sweet bitter, but only “for a moment”. This universal flow, itself

⁶ Cf. Aquinas, *QD de malo*.

absolute, lies at the origin of all play, of which Wisdom is herself prototype. It is premised to and itself embodies universal reconciliation, that is to say the universal itself. It is the true universal, the Church of being, which is indeed the Church finally in absolute religion, the ultimate “assembly” of “all in all” which is itself, quite plainly, the Idea. Such a church, therefore, transcends all and every kind of temple short of the Idea itself. In “the new Jerusalem”, accordingly, which represents the “final” reality or thought, now, then and always, the seer, revelation itself, sees, proposes, no temple. Revelation is thought thinking itself, called in religion glory. All else is nothing and as itself being nothing it thus rejoins being, renouncing the otherness which it otherwise would be or, rather, not-be. Nothing is, *das Nichts nichtet* (Heidegger). Thus in arithmetic nothing, though not yet positive, is one more than minus-one.

The role of evil in wisdom’s absolute play or game, which wisdom itself sets up as constitutive reflection of its eternal and unwavering self-knowing, itself not distinct from self, is that of an initial horror, or terror, the “beginning of wisdom” or “fear of the Lord”, in traditional religious terms. As spirit this can dominate the mind, becoming, however, in wisdom’s progress, that “holy fear of the Lord” denominated the first of the (seven) “gifts of the spirit”, which together, it is said of “perfect love”, “cast out fear”. Hegel, again, refers to this complex under what he calls the difficult notion of “the wrath of God”. He in fact denominates this as something evil. One recalls *King Lear*, “the gods kill us for their sport”. This evil, however, is relativised, made momentary, in the understanding of life, of what killing kills, as merely the first blueprint for the Idea, “the Idea immediate”, which only rejoins or first becomes Spirit in its own self-surmounting or death, otherwise viewed as itself the greatest evil. Religion represents this, the truth, as drama, *Ereignis*, happening, self-actualised act, though it is this also for philosophy, as unique because infinite act. Drama, indeed, occurs in “acts”, as music in “movements”. The proposition, *Satz*, would represent such eternal discrimination, which, all the same, disappears in its utterance, resisting objectification, as a text is destroyed in its reading or apprehension, where its end is in its beginning and so not “set out”. Just in this way is spirit *no thing*. “This also is thou, neither is this thou.”

Already in the notion of an absolute knowledge of “good and evil” their intertwined unity is premised. There is not, nor can there be, in the absolute, either either/or or both/and, since it is one and the Idea. Christianity, in its grasp of this, becomes absolute, religion itself rather than a religion, and first of all in the sphere of praxis. It turned ancient ethics on its head, replacing virtue with joy, or, rather, absorbing the

former into the latter, as major “fruit of the spirit”. So Aquinas, after distinguishing, in classical vein, the honourable good from the substantive good as such, good as End, that is to say (*bonum habet rationem finis*), remarks that the honourable good that is virtue is only denominated good inasmuch as it, virtuous habits, leads to the Good itself, which is God and nothing or none other, as well as our final end (*finis ultimus*) and sole seat of happiness (*beatitudo*). Happiness is indeed, he shows, the ultimate aim of anything whatever that we do. It is the good and very essence of reason, spirit, and is not found outside of reason’s self-constituting identity with the absolute. It is noteworthy that Aristotle, like Hegel, nowhere separates individual from universal mind. This, however, is by no means the abstract “common intellect” of medieval disputation. Rather, the universal has no reality but with and in the individual and conversely.

The supreme example of this advance is the Augustinian *felix culpa*, quite apart from his tying this in the first instance to a naïve reading of “the Fall of Man” in *Genesis*. This happy fault coincides with Hegel’s ultimate doctrine that “the factual is normative”, which is itself identical with the teaching of Natural Law, whereby good behaviour is ultimately that proceeding from what we are and, more ultimately, from our being there (*Dasein*) at all. Self-preservation, whether or not identified with the total love of God, in Aquinas as in Hobbes (*Leviathan* I, 15), is the constitutive precept of natural law. Thus Hegel’s asserts, as is often found strange, that the criminal desires his punishment as fulfilling or preserving him or her. Nor should we assume, perhaps maliciously, that such a view leads to ethical or moral passivity and degeneration. Our finite ethical effort is included in the very matter of the formula of such natural law, freedom’s own natural “setting”, while it remains true that *virtus est ad ardua*, inclusive of the arduousness of sorting out these difficult matters. This highlights the importance of the doctrine of the intellectual virtues, themselves superior to or more noble than the moral virtues. The intellectual virtues are such as prudence (this is also moral), art, science, understanding and wisdom, as defined originally by Aristotle. One can include here *synderesis*, specifically knowledge of the first practical or moral principles. Significantly, Aquinas argues firmly that conscience is an act not of practical but of theoretical intellect.

This then is the background to showing that, even granted that Hegel exhibits Logic as based upon Trinity and Incarnation, as form, with them, of a reasonable world, or of reason itself, yet the Christian dogmas, however or wherever defined, in themselves present and represent, after the manner of religion as imperfect form of absolute spirit, the perennial teaching of philosophy. They thus, in history, act as midwife or mother to

the nascent daughter which is *philosophia consolatrix*. Like any decent midwife, however, religion remains to share in and find its fulfilment in the joy and blessedness of the newborn word, in a future age where all shall “know the Lord” (Jeremiah) and where absolute spirit is, in the nature of the case, “poured out”, pours itself out, “upon all flesh” (Joel).

*

That is to say, the esoteric, property of the few, is in process of becoming exoteric, as each finds the narrow way, letting in one at a time. A Christian society is formed, germ of the later democracy, become anti-Christ when maintained as finite and in that sense totalitarian, as offered to one class or race or, even, as offered only to the true, so to say card-carrying believers. Hegel’s characterisation of just religion as exoteric, as against esoteric philosophy, is here a little misleading, if one ignores his qualification that although religion is for all it divides up of itself, due to its finitude, into the particular religions. Each one of those might then be called esoteric, in a sense. It was among the people of Israel that the notion, the expectation rather, of a transition, arose. This led them to call themselves chosen or elect. “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” This representation of a seed, in which of course mind or spirit was included, from the beginning elicited its prophetic interpretation, most fully developed in Christianity, of “the promise once made to Abraham”, as sung in the *requiem* liturgy for the dead and so stressed in Mozart’s setting of this, *quam olim Abrahae promisisti*. Yet their view was anticipated, or “surpassed”, by that aboriginal Australian tribe that believed (believes?) that its ancestors created the world. Both grasped truly the universal in the particular, themselves.

So there is, anyhow, an esoteric hope of the exoteric. The esoteric is *for* the exoteric, as philosophy is for society, as are the arts in general. Logic, traditionally, for its part, the *ars logica*, was taught to children in schools (*trivium*). It is in that sense *trivial* that “logic is the form of the world”! We all should know it, do know it. It is after all presupposed to science, “chaos *theory*” being the confirming instance. Schools themselves looked forward to statutory universal education and literacy. Today, in consequence, one cannot ask people, the *laos* (laity), to remain at the level of religion, with its tales and wonders. Those who are once faithful will demand truth and seriousness, enshrined by the body of their fellow-citizens, ultimately brothers and sisters, as a natural right.

What, under these conditions, tends more or less forcibly to take the form of a universal or “popular” (and the idea of a falling short is

enshrined in this very word) philosophy, instead of religion, is *ideology* in the negative or finite sense of a tool of domination, as most clearly expounded in Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. "Many are called but few are chosen". The rest lose themselves in thoughtless ideology, again, in ape-like slogans. But they are called and this is the democratic insight, where philosophy recognises this truth of religion. Thus St. Thomas wrote his encyclopaedic *Summa theologica* as a teaching tool for all, while McTaggart wrote his *Some Dogmas of Religion* (1916) with the intention of comforting indiscriminately all those families bereaved during the Great War. Hegel himself first, or earlier at least, began to offer his system to the pupils of a school where he happened to be rector, as a "Propaedeutic".

This philosophical dialectic runs through the whole of Christian religion, where a unique death is, precisely as unique, applied, even imputed to all and literally predicated of them all, as was the "original" death of Adam "in sin". The aristocracy or rule of the best (*aristoi*) becomes universal self-rule or will where all are commanded to "be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect", in itself an extraordinary formulation, religion inviting its own demise. That is its perfection.

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At one place in his excellent Commentary on Aristotle's *De anima* (2012) Eugene Gendlin remarks that the authorities "had to" kill Al Hallaj, could not allow someone to go around saying he was God. Well, they might have rather locked him up in an asylum, like a film-character once played by Fernandel, who, however, had found just one elderly female disciple whom he himself had not even chosen.

C.S. Lewis, in his *Broadcast Talks* (incorporated later into *Mere Christianity*) speaks of one "turning up" among the Jews in historical time and claiming to be God. He stresses that this differs entirely from such a claim as made in the Indian and related worlds, as "I am that", for example. It does, but there remains an identity beneath the difference, of the claim itself. In the one tradition "God has visited his people", in the other he has never left them, while the Old Testament contains remarks such as that men have often "entertained angels unawares".

Hegel, anyhow, prefaces his "The Science of Logic", the version of it in *The Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (20, 24 add.), by saying that I, who am just anyone indifferently, am the Absolute Idea and "universal of universals", in my very individuality, whoever else I am. Conversely, the Absolute Idea is "absolute subjectivity", than which there

is no other. This is not so much the precipitate of the foregoing as something that wisdom (*sophia*) has always known and that *philo-sophia* has loved from the beginning, as and because wisdom, as being itself and infinite, has loved the philosophers, revealing herself to them. She is, shows Hegel, self-revelation as revelation itself, not of this or that. If it were of this or that it would not be one with wisdom. Wisdom, as shows itself, is the knowing of knowing. Hence the Oracle did not wish to limit Socrates in telling him to know himself but to expand his self-consciousness infinitely as itself, *qua* reason, divinity's self-proclaiming. Reason himself told him or itself to become what it or he is, this speculative or broken-backed sentence thus revealing itself as the constitutive precept of natural law, later defined as "a reflected divine light" (Thomas Aquinas).

Thought, in fact, thinks itself and nothing else, again not a restriction but this same constitutive self-knowing. Thus it is happiness as consisting in the very stuff and, as act, cognitive will of consciousness. "Be happy", in the words of the song, is self's self-directive. It is indeed a decision or *Ereignis*, but not a finite one, not initiating a change. Rather, in becoming conscious of it, in a logical or dialectical process, we cast abstract time away, acknowledging the non-successive unique *Now*. Mind frees itself from the miasma of the object or, rather, of objectification (N. Berdyaev), a word that could have served Hegel rather better than "objectivity".

The "philosopher's stone" is thus, finally, self-consciousness, fugitively glimpsed by Descartes. It is equivalent to religion's directive to "cast all your care upon the Lord who cares for you", as rendering it finally transparent as it indeed turns all to gold or, which is the same by Hegel's logic, annihilates it. This is what is premised to St. Paul's or his successors' "All things are yours", as "in having nothing having all things". *Deus meus et omnia*, my God and all things (Francis of Assisi), mistranslated reductively, destructively, as "My God and my all", which would indeed suggest that insipid urge to edification, as if the speaker merely said he wanted nothing else but God as preferred object, against which Hegel warns. This utterance is hard metaphysics, rather. It includes also those "hard" directives, natural to our contemplation, however, placed near the beginning of *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* (John "of the Cross"). "In order to have all, seek to have nothing", *praxis*, as with Hegel, being placed at the forefront of mind's drive or act. The dichotomy of theory and practice is overcome, as Aristotle himself had already said that theory is itself the highest *praxis*. This is only because *praxis*, act, is itself the highest theory or knowledge, Hegel makes further clear, as Aquinas had shown that God's knowing must be causative and the highest cause (not

determined by some object), while Scotus later declared the highest science (theology in his view) to be practical rather than theoretical merely.

The Spanish “mystic” adds, “In order to come to that which you are not you must go through what you are not”, which might seem less purely philosophical. For in not being or attaining that goal I am, as finite, nothing and the going through that other is nothing’s death as entry into life in the death or surpassing of the seed, otherwise “abiding by itself alone” as unregarded because unregardable, “in the ground”, inasmuch as pure potentiality is non-being.

Then am I dead to all the world
And all the world is dead to me.

For the hymn-writer here it is “surveying the wondrous Cross” that causes this and not some other efficient causality. That’s philosophy (absorbing or transposing causality itself), the adventure of thought and the adventure of prayer being one and the same, *viz.* “the raising of the heart and mind to God”. Now “God”, of course, is not a properly philosophical term and hence the Jews, as a people of reason and “nation of philosophers” (Porphyry), strove not to name him. “Father” is even less such and he is named on every page, but in religion rather. Philosophy identifies these representations as the Idea, as it identifies the Idea as the substance of these representations. The Idea, Aristotle taught, is Act and *actus actuum*, act of acts, *forma formarum*. As pure and highest act, again, it is not firstly or immediately being but self-knowing. Mediation itself, Hegel shows, cancels itself in both directions, in speculative abolition of this dilemma itself, as outside is inside or as “light is nature’s first ideality” (EN, version of 1816).

The question of the content of happiness is often dismissed as equivalent to trying to assess the value of a blank cheque. This would be so only if the content were not itself the form, the form the content. The name of this second equivalence is consciousness, self-consciousness as not a consciousness of anything else, even self. For it is rather self that is conscious, is consciousness, knowledge as spirit and a spirit, as the angels, who are denominatively spirits, are yet spoken of as virtues and powers, principalities and dominations. How can one miss how soaked in the Bible Hegel’s thought and choice of notions is? It is implicit to Hegel’s thought in being its own method of self-revelation, a “Bacchanalian whirl” indeed.

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In annexing Judaea, therefore, the Romans shot themselves in the foot, becoming eventually what they had not been. This also plays its part in “the fullness of time”, a phrase Hegel quotes from the apostolic *Letter to the Galatians* in his account of Christ as God incarnate, to whom he refers, however, as a *gemeinten*, we might say posited or presumed, “individual historical figure”.⁷ He would have read with consent St. Paul saying “Even have we known Christ after the flesh, yet we know him so no more”, but after the spirit. Spirit in fact proceeds most immediately from this Son and Mediator, Hegel had affirmed, just inasmuch as the “fullness of time” is here concretely individualised as universal spirit dispelling or invalidating the mirage of time itself and thus leading, both backward and forward, to philosophy. This, however, must now be philosophy as *praxis*. So this mediator, as himself time’s fullness (*alpha et omega*, as he is represented in *The Apocalypse*) refuses access to those Greeks who wanted merely, abstractly, to “see” him, pointing rather to self-immolation, to transition to otherness of self itself, in the blind thrust of love finding, in Shakespeare’s words, “without eyes... pathways to its will” not found in objectifying vision. Truth is something one must do and be. This, after all, is what we want, as frog or the beast would be prince and beauty or, in a word, free spirit. Denial of life, death to it, as the “idea immediate” only, is the opening out upon this spirit, freedom. Religion and philosophy both teach this, as art shows it in placing dream above “reality”, the other than self as self.

The movement of the notion is as it were to be looked upon merely as play: thus the other which it sets up is in reality not an other. Or, as it is expressed in the teaching of Christianity: not merely has God created a world which

⁷ Cf. *The Phenomenology of Mind*, Baillie, p.765, also 780, bottom, to 782. Here the account of that “immediately preceding element of figurative thinking... here affirmed as transcended” is referable, as Hegel’s *Philosophy of History* (especially the Preface, omitted in the online “Marxists.org” version) further indicates, to history, to historical accounts, as a whole. The vision here, as identifying the two last-named, history and the accounts thereof, is more radical than would be a mere excision of “miracles” (the “Enlightenment” approach). Thus when research or discoveries lead us to alter the account we know a different history, more correct, maybe, but not more true, inasmuch as history is finite, changeable therefore and redeemable, inasmuch as open to a multiplicity of viewpoints, none of which is its own, none absolute knowledge, which is not therefore historical. History is dependent upon that shifting “now”, but also “here”, as Hegel analyses these at the start of *The Phenomenology of Mind*.

confronts Him as an other; he has also from all eternity begotten a Son in whom He, a Spirit, is at home with Himself.⁸

Hegel appears to say here both that the other that is set up is “not an other” and that the created world confronts God as “an other”. One reason why it is not “an other” is that it is nothing, this being the other of being, though nothing is not other of anything but is just nothing. Thus and for the same reason it is then being’s other, or nothing, like the noughts opposed to the ones in binary computation. It would be misunderstanding to think that it is only of abstract being, the empty concept, that the other is nothing, since there this nothing is rather the same.

The crime miscalled “holocaust”, for example, was thus willed by eternal wisdom, once granted there is such a thing, and all is reconciled in the “realised end”, the rages of novelistic characters notwithstanding. This means, again, that the Good is both other than and the same as our representation of it, as Life is the Idea but not absolutely.⁹ Nor is or was this event, individual after all, an absolute evil, as Hannah Arendt, again, at one time had wanted to make out. There can be no such thing, as even our temporal qualification “or was” indicates, and no one in say, Cambodia, would think that it was that. This, incidentally, can be referred back to the “infinite offence” that one version of “the sin paradigm” tries to put upon people. Sin, like everything else, is explicable and disobedience is just one of many varieties of it. Infinite, rather, is our own nothingness (*penitus nihil*), not to be restricted forever to some such moralistic or ritual notion and its moment. The nothingness of creation is thus one in concept with the creator, one with the Concept, since creation as a “constituent function” is “the very total which the notion is, and is put as indissolubly one with it” (*Enc.* 160). Mind, therefore, can never be abstractly individual, just as there is no “private language”.

What is willed, in this way, or willed absolutely as actual, is not thereby objectualised. Object is itself a finite category, becoming other of itself in what is, in effect, the unity in the continually altering “method” that is

⁸ Hegel, *Enc.* 161, add.

⁹ We might compare here the Biblical representations of *Romans* 9 to 11, upon which Hegel will have often meditated, reflecting as they do the earlier tragedy of King Saul as itself starkly and primitively represented in the *Book of the Kings of Israel*, alt. *Samuel*. This appearance of wantonness in the gods, however, is precisely that. So Hobbes misses this in declaring that God can by right do whatever he wills with his creatures, this being merely the Biblical “picture” corrected or supplemented by such sayings as that “my thoughts are not your thoughts” (*Isaiah*).

principle of the dialectic as a whole, the absorption of all substance and being in progressive identifications into the Absolute Idea. Abstracted from our deaths we are each ourselves “pictorial ideas”. The death of the mediator, *equally*, “means the sublation of his factuality, of his particular independent existence”. In this sense Hegel finds existence, as a finite moment of the Idea in “the doctrine of essence”, unworthy of predication of the divine. So in this sense, consequently, the “death of this pictorial idea implies... the death of the abstraction of Divine Being”, always rather self and *a* self, as “the individual is the universal”. Substance is lost over against consciousness in attaining, however, the “pure subjectivity” that is the truth of the pictorial or finite idea of substance. The pictorial and finite are the same inasmuch as the moment of individuality, as abstracted in space and time, is not yet that “concrete individuality”, which is the universal, named as “I”. In this sense “I am the way”, the way or “method” of the dialectic first of all. By this spiritualization “Spirit is Spirit knowing its own self”. This is “not merely object *for* self-consciousness”, this clinging reversion to ground covered, but “actual Spirit”. It is this movement, method or way, passing through the “three elements”, logic, nature, spirit itself, posited also as good, evil and their reconciliation (pardon, in the phenomenological consideration), that “constitutes” spirit’s “actual reality”. The “subject of the movement” is “the moving process itself”. “I am the way” and this is “the truth”.¹⁰

¹⁰ Cf. Note 137 above.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

REASON AS REVELATION, REVELATION AS REASON: MAN THE MYSTERY

It lies in the nature of time that every age, every moment, should appear to itself as a completed trajectory, what we call “now” or “nowadays”. So this too is appearance only, and we might as well, thus far, tell ourselves that we know nothing. The puzzle, in fact, lies in generation, each new generation being the totally issuing “word” or other of the old that is yet the old over again, in whom all of the new is effected. This “in”, all the same, can only mean that as itself Ground it is itself the effect in its totality. The effect is the cause, cause effect.

None of this is in any way anterior to thought, since thought is what being is. This has already become clear. Any being, therefore, again, is thinking, Idea, or is, as we might say, “a thinking”. But “a thinking” too is thinking, in its concrete universality, not as finitely abstract, that is to say. So I am thinking, in the “truth of substance”, just as thinking, as thought, is act, is I. In general this is why St. Thomas says “immateriality is the root of cognition” as pure being, free (not “freed”) of matter and its universal alienation as “parts outside parts”, itself becomes cognised as cognition, self as having its other within itself as other, that is, as the same as or one with self. As (pure or purely) act this transcends finite motion (imperfect act) as having in itself all and each moment in reciprocal identity “with the divine essence”.¹ Hence we, or anything, “live and move and have our being” there. Hence, again, we are each more than our immediate or phenomenal selves, are the Idea as “closer to self than self” (*intimior me mihi*: Augustine), as is, Hegel also teaches, the speculative itself, proper to sage or child indifferently, the “true reason-world”.²

¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Ia 15.

² *Enc.82*. See also the addition there on Speculative Truth and Mysticism, “the highest truth”, in which “there is mystery... only for the Understanding”

So there is no mystery about any particular contingent I, or self, finding itself in existence as if by divine whim, i.e. as if it “might not have been” or even cannot possibly be. That is, there just is “no such animal”. We speak of it, of ourselves, as “born to live” as if living antecedently. Yet it could not be thus “born”. “O cursed spite, that ever I was born to set it right”, laments Hamlet. Yet the “I” the poet there refers to is precisely the Anaxagorean *nous*, setting all in order or “right”. The words speak, that is, independently of whatever he might have wished to mean. In fact this meaning, a living intention, occurs as a kind of accompanying shadow, an appearance in short, psychological as we say. Contingency, considered abstractly or apart from its absorption into the necessary, is psychological. It is the same with I, universal of universals and not “this individual” except insofar as this phrase yields to the same analysis, all that is universal being found alone in the particular or concretely, and contrariwise. This, that is, is this-ness, *haecceitas*, and hence universal, as the part is the whole (*Enc.*135).

In this way the opacity, which is to say the immediacy, of consciousness, first appearing as appearance, is unravelled or, rather, mediated. Immediacy is mediated, as mediation is immediate. The absolutely immediate is, again, abstraction. God, the Absolute, is mediated as the Word that he is, “only one word” (John of the Cross). God is revelation itself as his own self-revelation.³ This is not, therefore, of anything particular but is the intrinsic “glory” known to religion. As religion, however, is a transient form or moment of Absolute Spirit, the final or perfect form of which is philosophy, so, conversely, philosophy is to be seen and exercised, Hegel says, as *Gottesdienst*, at once accomplishment and help-mate (*ancilla, consolatrix*) of “religion”.

Such “self-consciousness” (distinguished from consciousness merely) comes upon one subsequent to a process of living experience. It has been represented as “the sense of sin”, as sin, “knowing good and evil”, but it is equally a question. Why me?⁴ The question is universal or self-positing, and not merely common to a finite host of supposedly finite individuals. It has been represented under the figure of Satan or Lucifer, bringer of light (*lux, luci-*), nature’s “first ideality” (*Enc.*, “Philosophy of Nature”, 1816 version), a light seen as or become darkness or self-imprisonment, from

(*Verstand*), not for Reason (*Vernunft*), itself divine or spirit. “It is the lesson of Christianity that God is spirit”.

³ See Hegel’s *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, penultimate chapter, “Revealed Religion”.

⁴ See Hegel’s analysis of “the Mosaic legend” of the Fall of Man at *Enc.*24, last four pages of the long “addition”.

which another bearer of light, who might as well be the same as “reflected”, liberates the first and all his children, as it is expressed⁵. In the Idea, however, in absolute knowledge, all these distinctions merge. “It is useless to count” (Hegel). *Numeri non ponuntur in divinis* (Aquinas). Narrative, understood as symphonic, sounding together, is itself necessarily absorbed, as indeed happens not at the end of a worthy story merely, but within every moment of it.⁶

The generated moments, that is, with which we began this “stock-taking”, are themselves superior to the form of the temporal, of the passing, in this very perishability, each being but a cognitional window upon all else in ontic self-denial, therefore. They are, as thus transcending alienated matter, spirit. What is composed becomes, once composed, simple. So it is “no longer” composite, since only the “soul” as form (*energeia*) composes. The finite concept works to its own dissolution. The moments are not merely “immaterial” as meaning a superior, hence partial and finite category. Their positing transcends, absorbs and irretrievably suspends the material and finite, the natural and immediate. The Idea is absolute and the absolute. What is done to each individually is done to each one universally. One might say that everyone knows this, it knows itself. It is in this sense that the parable (of The Good Samaritan, say) sufficed, suffices, for the truth, that what is done, or even what merely happens, to the poorest, or to anyone, but thus seen as poor, is done to all. So too the parable of the Unjust Steward whom his master commended (that was the point) is also a moment in this sense. Hence we find, can find, the Ethiopian Church canonising Judas, the betrayer, as among the

⁵ See the place cited earlier for Hegel’s angelology and views on Good and Evil in general as not abstractly separable. The absolutely good is not the abstractly good and this is also the true understanding of the Platonic form, which Aristotle elevated to *energeia* or Act. Supremely concrete, it draws all to itself as having all. This is expressed in religion as universal forgiveness, from which in fact Hegel draws all his thought on God and religion in the *Phenomenology* (VI C c 3, “Evil and Forgiveness”). The Infinite, that is, both absorbs and “nullifies” (*Enc.50*) the finite. Calling this pantheism, therefore, is simply crass or, worse, tendentious.

⁶ F. Inciarte (see note below) expounds “an intrinsic connection between Heidegger’s *Ereignis* and the Aristotelian comparison (analogy) of substance with the identical ‘now’ of time, which only abstractly has different ‘nows’. Hence, says Heidegger, the word ‘happening’ (*Ereignis*) does not refer here to some kind of repetition or succession. It is singular only. Its meaning is that it happens only once (*ereignet sich nur in der Einzahl*) and is in fact one (*in einer Zahl*) and unique (beyond number)”. See Heidegger’s “*Der Satz der Identität*”, 1957, cited by Inciarte, *Tiempo, sustancia, lenguaje: Ensayos de metafísica* (ed. Flamarique), Eunsa, Pamplona 2004, ch. 8.

saints, bearing his “cursed spite”, his *Schicksal*, to the end or forever in final hatred of his “life in this world”. This hatred is that final denial of its object that murder tries, mistakenly, to effect. What we hate, including our own phenomenal vitality, in *ex-“sistentia”*, is not and has never been. It is, so to say, a Ground from which to arise, or which is in itself to be taken up. For it is nothing more than this enabling ladder, to be drawn up to eternity in the Idea so that none can follow, no repercussions, no memory, since the finite is *ipso facto* falsity. Eurydice must return to Hades whence she came while Orpheus, in music’s next or final, resolving moment, continues, must continue, as never having known her, a phantom, “fair creature of an hour”, after all, as, conversely, she had become self of his self and so no longer *herself* merely. It is of course the same for her, as living now wholly in the spirit. So, similarly in difference, Dido, seen (misperceived) by Aeneas as a shadow in a world of shadows, passes him in the Underworld without recognition as he too “puts away childish things”, leaving all memory behind. “Forget, oh daughter, thy father’s house” (if you know what’s good for you). The infinite, anyhow, could declare nothing else than this and remain infinite. It has no relation, therefore, to what it of itself makes nought, and this truth, too, St. Thomas had anticipated. God has no real relation to his creatures as, he adds, they have to him. Likewise the evening sun does not itself relate to us as west, as do we, as does our sky. This relation, however, entails self-annihilation as entry into spiritual life. Hence God’s love, love itself, rather, in religion, is figured as “consuming fire”. Equally, however, fire, as consuming principle, is figured as love, learned first as a particular relation, as someone loves us and we thereafter them, before it reveals itself as a or the universal principle, as continuous in its raging and dialectical de-struction as the flux of water. The further implication, St. Thomas finds⁷, is that friends as such are not absolutely required for blessedness as the community itself, as perfected, is “all one person in Jesus Christ”, in absolute subjectivity, for as such it is always known to the one knowing.

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The above reflection can seem to underpin totalitarian communism, remembered chiefly as a “reign of terror”. Yet murder, we noted above, is a mistaken response to the ideal hatred of the finitude we call life. Murder intends, that is, to exclude the other consciousness as such, in which alone,

⁷ Further, at least, in that he saves it for later, for the Second Part of his *Summa*, where he treats of the final End or Good, final since realised in itself, as Hegel will stress.

however, self lives or is exerted. It is the principle of class-distinction, in abstract theory or as drawn by one class against another indifferently. But no one is purely a member of a class and material poverty can warp the spirit as much as riches or any other finite thing or condition. Without the spirit, without purity of heart “willing one thing”, without abandonment to the other as self, we “can do nothing”. Self, however, names universal subject, names, that is, the universal that, as infinite, transcends substance. Murder, then, is abstract individualism. As reason’s negation, however, it has no reality. Murder is not a possibility, is abstract. This is why those doing it “know not what they do”. That saying was not reductive merely, either of the particular action then and there or of deviant acts in general, but characterises all who murder or would murder. Thus the deviant Docetic denial of the truth of Christ’s flesh in particular truly applies, rather, as it were undeviatingly, to all flesh indifferently, such that it, or *alle Menschen*⁸, is or are “as grass”. In that way, applied as a happening (*Ereignis*) rather than as being a mere phenomenal perspective, the crooked or deviant is *made* straight, rectified, as Isaiah or another had expressed it. *Das Unzulängliches ist getan*.⁹ They, your killers, are not merely misled by forces more evil than themselves, the so to say positive murderers, who would be yet more truly set against God as rendering him, impossibly, finite. This not knowing what they do is rather itself the fault, the nature of evil itself, as “sham-being”, which thus attracts forgiveness. If “only God can forgive sins” then reason, as divine¹⁰, continually forgives, is, when known, “a rainbow after long storms” (Nietzsche). Hegel is here, on the *privatio boni*, at his most Thomistic, while yet beginning to answer the question Thomas can seem unable to answer, as to evil’s origin. Hegel answers it in terms of the “play” of the Concept, also called “method”, that Reason sets up so as to know itself as resulting from it. This answer in fact was always known, and is expressed equally by St. Paul (the potter and the clay) as by Hobbes, who defends God’s unrestricted “right” to do and to will. So the poet truly says the gods kill us like flies for their sport. Mention of sport here, however, lacks or should

⁸ The pain-filled vibration Johannes Brahms gave to this text depends upon the more specific reading, *Menschen*, as foil to immortality, necessary but “no sooner known than enjoyed”, in Hobbes’ masterly phrase. Yet the “sooner” cannot be temporal. Immortality is intrinsic to thinking as being’s ultimate determination in indetermination or as indeterminate, *ad opposita*, therefore transcending mortal nature as *determinata ad unum*.

⁹ Cf. Goethe, at the end of *Faust*.

¹⁰ Cf. Cicero, *De legibus*. For St. Thomas “natural law” names “the reflection of the divine light in us” and nothing else.

lack all implication of the finitely wanton. It is Wisdom itself that is play, as we can read in the *Proverbs of Solomon*. She “plays fair”, too.¹¹ This, it may seem, is hardly an argument. Yet reflection shows that if wisdom were not finally free play, as we say, then it would be finite, would have its limits and so not be what the term signifies. It would be “a serious matter”. By the same token, of signification, however, we may and should trust it unreservedly. Such a mind, however, such trust, is only to be mediated by the “logically” prior realisation of this Hobbesian “right”, of fate as understood by the ancients, just as religion too, in general, must and does “come first” in consciousness or history. In loving fate (Nietzsche) we in effect transform it into wisdom, whatever abstraction we might be wishing to *mean*.¹²

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Yet this is no mere account of cultural history. Already in an earlier time, as we noted, King Saul was deprived of his kingship through not respecting this prior moment of lordship not yet revealed as benevolence, except in promise. Saul remained, like Lucifer, within his own finite and therefore false light, commendably sparing his enemies, as a later sensibility sees it, just as it sees Abraham’s raising of the knife in his hand in readiness to slay Isaac, at God’s command, with disgust. This readiness, however, elicits the universal promise of happiness in which such nightmares will be swallowed up. As Hegel sums it up, “The factual is

¹¹ Compare Peter Geach on “The Ordainer of the Lottery” in his *Providence and Evil*, CUP 1976. In this play each must play his role, bear his burden as bearing those of all others while, to vary the lottery *à la* Borges, there is one book that is key to all the rest, one redeeming or winning ticket. “I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.” The universal is essentially particularised, each I is that.

¹² In this sense, again, the wantonness of wisdom’s play is itself a figure of such play, as the play is not, precisely as wisdom’s play. Hobbes or Calvin, perhaps, rather miss this difference, that wisdom, from above or below, is intrinsically divine or absolute. It is in this sense that Aquinas defines law, of any kind, as essentially belonging to reason and not to abstract will alone, *alioquin voluntas principis magis esset iniquitas quam lex* (would be more iniquity than law: *Summa theol.* Ia-IIae 90, 1, especially *ad 3um*). Since the play of the lottery is “fair” all win in the end and one must, cannot but, love the lottery, not, after all, “cursed spite”, since anyone can truly say “I am come to make the crooked straight” etc., in “the imitation of Christ”. Yet Hamlet is indeed a Christ-figure, as we figure one another without end, this being unique to personality’s universality, as especially McTaggart brings out (*Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology*, CUP 1901, ch. 2, “Immortality”).

normative”, remembering that by the same token, according to the above analysis, that which is contrary to the norm would not be factual, would be sham-being, again or, in temporal practice, a cancelled moment. Thus life itself, the whole panorama, is “only the idea immediate”, where things may seem to happen but “happen as in a figure” (St. Paul), as a story told.¹³ It “vanishes away” as “ruined”, like the individual, Hegel says, in inception.

To be murdered, then, or to die in the Absolute Idea, this being what dying is, is to arise from life, to see it as “no life at all”. Hence, we die daily, are in fact led to this, “like sheep to the slaughter”. We, hating and despising our life, and yet, again, “immediately” loving it, are the last who become first in our very last-ness, for that and nothing else can be the meaning of the saying. So the Idea is itself called “the first and the last”, *alpha et omega*. Teilhard’s omega-point is ever-present as faith, Hegel effectively insists, inasmuch as faith is a form of knowledge and not its abstract opposite, as Hume, say, had rather tended to represent it.

In this sense too one might want to say that the *authority*, the positing of faith, had to come before the Hegelian philosophy, thus, unexpectedly making authority itself the culmination or final expression of religion, as trust would be the final sacrifice, of which Hegel wrote that it must “come first”, though first relatively as after art on Hegel’s scheme but before philosophy, so that this, as express form of Absolute Spirit, can take it, along with art or spirit immediate, to itself. The priority, however, is more logical or anthro-logical than temporal. This is the exact Boethian trajectory. It belatedly explains how Boethius, San Severino of Mantua in all probability and death-cell author of *The Consolation of Philosophy*, could indeed have been a martyr and Church Father, witnessing to religious truth by word and “passion”.¹⁴

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The Papacy has declared itself, or has been so declared in earlier church councils, as having “the fullness of jurisdiction”, to which or whom, therefore, all must, ideally or, as it was first declared, really, be subject. The final, if finite, conclusion from this, first on the part of the papacy

¹³ This is the reality underlying the comically paradoxical phrase, “universe of discourse”. The pre-colonial headhunters in and around New Guinea found their (finite) happiness in headhunting, enduring the contradiction, as Pat Barker’s novel, *The Ghost Road*, illustrates. They lived “in a figure” as life itself is, as immediate, a figure.

¹⁴ His full name was Manlius Severinus Boethius.

itself, is or was that it is in some sense or other “infallible”. It, he, is even, yet more finally, as things are successively particularised, the “vicar” or vicariate as “in the place of” Christ. The papacy seems to make, or rest in, this claim with Christ’s own confidence in self-consciousness. This, not to appal, eventually means, must mean, that if Christ is unique then all and each are unique. The papacy, even the Pope, is, in this capacity, a walking ideal or idea, an icon of this eternal truth, as was his own template, Christ “pantocrator”, as infinity is self-multiplying to an infinite “power” and has to be. Christ, even, or Spirit proceeding, has made, as revealing, the spirits thus, individual or in “articulated groups”¹⁵ indifferently, choosing, in his spirit or the “thoughts of his heart”, to die for each one. Yet in demonstrating in act a possibility of abdication from office the popes, the papacy, sink back into mere iconic phenomenality, indeed a “walking” of the Idea, a separation of office and person, precisely what Christ, in figure and Idea as become Spirit, annihilates. There is therefore, as Newman claimed, necessarily an internal papacy or “vicar of Christ” that is, he said, “aboriginal”, whether we, with him, equate this with conscience or, with Hegel, rather see the latter as a primary principle of wickedness.

It has been pointed out, as we noted, that the theologians give no account of how any efficient causality might operate here.¹⁶ But perhaps we should not be looking for that, if we are religious, spiritual. Sacrifice, *as a mode of thought*, self becoming its other, has its worth, rather, as not tied to, as free from, all considerations of effectiveness. Just therefore does it effect and bring forth what it has in, so to say, loving audacity, conceived. Reason, that is, the Concept, is practical as theology too, Scotus claimed (in seeming opposition to Aquinas), is a practical science. Thus wisdom as such brings forth “things new and old”.

The Papacy, that is, elicited Lutheran “private” judgment, which yet is not truly thus denominated. No thought or language is private, since each, as Reason, “legislates for the universe”. What goes forth must return,

¹⁵ Cf. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind* (also translated “Spirit”), tr. Baillie, Harper Torchbooks, New York 1966, p.451-452: “Spiritual reality (*das geistige Wesen*)... The distinction, then, of self-consciousness... the distinctions found within that nature itself are not accidental characteristics. On the contrary, because of the unity of the essence with self-consciousness... they are articulated groups (*Massen*) of the unity permeated by its own life, unsundered spirits... shapes of heaven”. Cp. p. 693: “spirit... produces... shapes *qua* spirits, which together constitute all that it can reveal when it is completely manifested”. We have seen that it is this manifestation.

¹⁶ On this point see again Philip L. Reynold’s essay in *Contemplating Aquinas* (ed. Fergus Kerr), SCM 2010.

however, as is the nature of these concepts. Put as essential to this is that other individually figured unity of office and person, Mary, *theotokos*, mothering God and preserved, as it is defined, by her yet unseen offspring (his “foreseen merits”), from all “stain of sin”. Here, however, in divinely absolute conceptual circle, the whole cataphatic or pictorial paradigm of redemption by sacrifice is quietly or “behind the scenes” dropped, just as it is when St. Thomas says one drop of Christ’s blood would have sufficed for this, which is as much as to say that no blood is needed. In this drop the paradigm is itself dropped. Alternatively, the finite notion of payment is subsumed into its other, is no longer itself. Nor, therefore, can the imagined Shylockean deity get the pound of flesh we falsely imagined he wanted. His heart is rather with his dear daughter Jessica (Mary) and not vengeful at all. One name, one girl, does as well as another, is as all, we see, as the misperceived “cursed spite”, of being born to serve or “set right” (*Hamlet*), falls upon all. We *misperceive* all life’s immediacies, McTaggart rigorously argues, expounding Hegel. What we actually perceive, and the perception of this is essentially mediated (by philosophy pure or as religion or art), is one another perceiving one another unrestrictedly and *ad infinitum* in a way that only persons, whose principle in their particularity is universality, can and essentially do support. This is “as we like it” indeed, since that principle, of personality as universal in its concrete particularity, is at least as worthy and hence, apodictically, as effective as we have found sacrifice, of same in place of other, to be. “For your sakes (my sake) I consecrate myself”. The Idea clings, is not to be shaken off, as might be the blood. Its names are concentration, consecration even, distillation, discrimination, a sword, “arrow of desire” and, surely, “mental fight”, building Jerusalem, the City. No fragment of what was dispersed is lost to it.

The papacy and Mary, then, those Catholic bugaboos, are first presages of the universality of reason itself as expressed in unrestricted ecumenism, seeking to “gather together into one” all of God’s children, all and every constituent of the notion or Concept in what is finally the initial and last Absolute Idea, taking form and flesh first as that for which they variously stand (*supponunt pro*) as itself being their predicate and universal subject in one, while they are variously vicar or mother of the self-conceiving concept (*Begriff*) in the play or sport of dialectic, as it were a series of jokes. In this way the paradigmatic “standing for” is rescued from its Wittgensteinian refusal (*Philosophical Investigations*, the opening pages) as depending upon abstract isolation of the immediate idea (“standing for”) thus represented.

As each is Christ so each is “pope”, *papa*, father of all fathers, and mother, bringing forth what spirit has conceived within (as thus already put forth). It is in this sense that we are told to call no man father. As self is other, so this other is self, as absolute will is our will, both transcending “the general will”. Hence “I shall not die but live”, as “in dying we live”. The missionary principle itself is this ground-urge to expression of the Idea which is itself such revelation, going forth in freedom “as nature” and so itself second, third or fourth nature forever. The very turning of the earth, in its phenomenality, is but figure for this eternal movement, as indeed is the circularity of all the fundamental or heavenly bodies, itself, the “form”, issuing in universal circular movement, not however abstractly so much as elliptically, with two or more centres being but one. “It is useless to count”.

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The whole subject matter of philosophy is religion, Hegel says more than once. This gives us the cultural clue for reconciling in our minds, in reality that is, in “globalisation”, our Western, Christian and secular culture with the ancient Semitic wisdom taken, however first offered, as sacred and variously canonised. This task is obligatory since “spiritually we are all Semites” (Pope Paul VI). “Religion must come first” and hence did so. Still, we may note, that part of Isaiah in Hebrew scripture known as “The Book of the Consolation of Israel” (chapters 40 to 55), dated around two centuries later than Isaiah’s own prophetic activity, is roughly contemporary with the thinking of Thales close by, while much of the adjacent “wisdom” literature is more or less contemporary with Plato. Any and all Islamic contributions are indeed later. The “coming first” is necessarily particularised to finite regions and epochs. Thus the thought of illiterate peoples is still or ever being generated. The “coming first” of religion, that is, when put as a necessity in this way, refers more immediately to something else, to the foundations of self-consciousness, namely.

So, among such illiterate peoples, again, the members of a certain aboriginal Australian tribe declare that their ancestors created the world.¹⁷ That is, they possess absolute idealism in germ, a little reflection will confirm. But why do we call this religion except, merely, because certain

¹⁷ Cp. the anthropological articles by Axel Randrup on the Internet relating this and similar phenomena to philosophical idealism, argued by him to be implied by our paradigm of emergent evolution. The Lewis/Anscombe controversy at Oxford (1947) on “validity” is closely related to this.

habitual or ritual practices are performed as due in conjunction with the tribe's notions as a people. The notion of a people itself, however, is a phenomenal construct, not the notion proper, and hence Hegel treats religion, as exoteric, as an essentially transitional and imperfect form (hence there is necessarily a plurality of religions) of Absolute Spirit, of philosophy, in a word. For philosophy, as highest or finally differentiating form of spirit, gives all spirit, of art or religion, its absolute quality. Thus, although apparently esoteric, in a contrast Hegel draws with religion, this can only be a time-bound appearance (of philosophy). All shall "know the Lord" as religion itself, in its perfected and pre-perfect forms, itself announces. Yet "whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away" in love. The meaning, though, here is that knowledge itself is perfected in love (cp. Hegel, *Encyclopaedia* 159); "without eyes" love "finds pathways to its will" as this is already found in the identity of all with all in all, overcoming the finitude of distanced or dualist sight, the myth of the object. Hence knowledge is absolute as in essence and totality self-knowledge. Nor can this be posited as a mere first effect of being. It is being knowing itself no longer as being but as knowledge thus knowing. Spirit, *immaterialitas*, is thus the root, *radix cognitionis*, which is the whole flower as self-developed, the Concept.

Conversely, philosophy is not forbidden its own rites and devotions, as came to light in certain forms of Neo-Platonism or as is practiced among certain at least would-be philosophical groups, like the masons or the communists and socialists. The placing of a young woman as, by implication, a goddess of reason, in one of its representations at least, upon the altar of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, during the Revolution, was not merely a joke or mockery but a highly significant act. Hegel, for his part, speaks of thinking proper, philosophising, as *Gottesdienst* or, it follows, prayer, the raising of the mind or heart to the Absolute.

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Ecce homo, behold the man. These words of the Roman procurator, leading out to public view the scourged Christ, have taken on a universal significance, finally identifiable with the Aristotelian "thought thinking itself", that universal circle we mentioned above of which the centre is everywhere, the mediating term in this syllogism being the double-centred ellipses we mentioned, like God and Christ, Christ and the Pope or Mary *theotokos*, Hegel's plurification of the Trinitarian persons in *The Phenomenology of Mind* and so on. These are all the first or immediate representations of a perfect and absolute unity represented in historical

religion as a universal “gathering together into one”, originally by sacrifice as culminating in the death of the mediator, of mediation itself. This idea has echoed latterly, under Islam chiefly, as would-be universal military or, in “the West”, cultural and, in deep association therewith, “technical” conquest. This is but the old imperial idea previously idealised in substance under the notion of *Christos pantocrator* as representing philosophy’s Absolute Idea, *solutio omnium quaestionum*, as the twelfth century Victorine saw it and him. Yet the captivity involved is originally itself “led captive”, as reason itself is never anything but free, and this is not forgotten in the often deceitful rhetoric of such derivative movements.

The absolute idea, *nous*, Aristotle finally concluded, thinks nothing but itself or, rather, thinks itself absolutely or according to its own substantive mode. This is equally true, however, of religious notions of blessedness or glory, of a manifestation that manifests nothing else because it is manifestation itself. This is the essential religious idea. It is manifested at every celebration of the Catholic Mass, never in itself a celebration of this or that, unless of itself, or in the notion of happiness treated absolutely, as in the thought of Thomas Aquinas or Augustine (*non aliquo modo est, sed est, est...*) or, prophetically again, in the declaration of Julian of Norwich that all shall be well and all manner of thing, not merely for all, quantitatively, but in itself. In this way the religious notion of sacrifice transcends itself into the unity of all with all, as is witnessed to already in the religious sources themselves. “I will have mercy and not sacrifice”. In Islam, self-styled the “modern” religion, there is no place for sacrifice, something Mohammed had presumably learned during his stay in Byzantium, while the Jews abandoned it with loss of the Temple, that temple that Christ had or was said to have identified with his body and which gave the ground, almost immediately, for his proclaimer, Paul, to say to all, in principle, that they, their bodies, were such temples, of the Spirit, “living sacrifices”, therefore, a phrase eliciting thought of the “death of death”:

O tree of beauty, tree of light,
 O tree with royal beauty dight,
 Whereon the death of death was wrought
 And conquering grace’s battle fought.¹⁸

At the heart of the “Book of Consolation” mentioned above lie the “Suffering Servant” passages, especially Chapter 53 (of *Isaiah*). What is

¹⁸ Part of the *vexilla Regis prodeunt* hymn for Passiontide by Venantius Fortunatus, an early Gallic bishop, in Tractarian translation.

stressed there is precisely universality, as the core of sacrifice, the servant being “burdened with the sins of us all”, but also as the quality of the servant himself, whereby he becomes, within these cultural limits, thought itself, once again. “There was no beauty in him that we should desire him”, i.e. personally. He was “despised and rejected of men”, those bound to particular interests, nothing to attract, no sensation, “in arid ground”.

The representations of paradisaical happiness offered in the Koranic tradition, for example, are just that, representations, in terms of what a typical male might imagine as the happy state. The feminine mind is more spiritual, in a definable sense of this word, and so, in Scripture and tradition, wisdom, even spirit, is feminine, a great example of this idea being Boethius’s book *On the Consolation of Philosophy*, the latter herself *consolatrix*, feminine, like the mysterious woman in brown clothing who prepares the Prince of the Sicilian novel, *The Leopard*, for impending death. For death, Hegel tells us, is the necessary gate, in the ending of life’s illusions (life is the immediate idea, only), into the Spirit. Death, however, he further shows, and Heidegger has developed this, is the very warp and woof of time as each moment dies into the next, as each moment, abstracted, is indeed “outside of itself”, unlike the true moment or eternal Now that is, like Blake’s grain of sand, one with the notion as, Aquinas develops the theme, any (divine) idea whatever is “identical with the divine essence”, this being the true knowledge of things as a self-knowledge identical with knowing’s own self-knowing.

So the point of all this is practical, as preparing, evoking and effecting that globalisation mentioned, where the interest of each is that of all.¹⁹ Only this explains the strong stress on negativity in Hegel, fully in harmony with the mystical tradition. Knowing in absolute mode transcends knowing itself, becomes “unknowing”.

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Here we have minted a kind of key. Hegel says both that each constituent of the notion is the whole notion, in imperfect form, and that each such moment is “outside itself”, which is to say that it is nothing. This seems contradictory before we recall that the whole of the logic not merely rests upon but is encapsulated in the identity of being and non-being.

The I, we might miss Hegel’s saying, is not a subject or an individual at all, not even an individual subject that is universal, but subjectivity. The

¹⁹ Cf. G. Rinaldi, *Absolute Idealism and Contemporary Philosophy*, Verlag Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 2012, “Hegel’s Absolute Idealism in the Age of Globalisation”, pp.133-138.

individual is, as he puts it, truly “ruined” in this process, deconstructed as never having been. This is the insight, though ever one-sided, of Marxism. For it does not mean that any individual is expendable but that there are no individuals. The two positions will surely have opposed ethical consequences. Thus the genuinely philosophical or sapiential, spiritual standpoint is one from which murder naturally feels excluded, in the first place because I am you. Each is “the man” or Adam, begetter of all.

From this perspective the truth of the ancient ideal of the freeing of spirit from sense is reinstated as being the integral grasp of spirit upon spirit. Sense, matter, is nothing, illusion, appearance. Where we “see the world in a grain of sand” the grain of sand vanishes, is eclipsed. Where we see it in our own or another spirit or mind the world vanishes, that cosmos through which, as *signum formale*, the Idea is grasped in thought, not then as object but inasmuch as thought is this grasping of its own thinking, a grasping of grasping. This in fact is the only way one might conceive of the blessed spirits having their very being in a grasping of one another grasping this grasping, exercised by themselves or others, over and over again, as in a hall of mirrors where the perspective is so fully realised that none need to walk or could be thought of as walking to vary it. This is the *agilitas* of the resurrection body, “reaped” as spiritual. Nor can one dance without the whole hall, which each one is, dancing.

The smallest portions of this edifice,
Cornice or frieze, or balustrade, or stair,
The very pavement is made up of life – (J.H. Newman).

Here, as Thomas Aquinas saw, non-spirited plants or animals or rocks or free-standing works of art will have, can have no place, were never anything in themselves but signs of the other of themselves and hence beautiful. The cessation of this beauty, St. Thomas briefly declares, is “compensated for by the beauty of the bodies of the redeemed”. He uses the future tense but one can surely say, the dialectic shows, that the “forerunners” of this future are indeed identical with it, not merely in idea, restrictively, but as being the ideas that they in essence and notion are. We don’t lose them, but see that they are not, are formalities in sign, irreducibly “that by which” (*id quo*). Or, in Platonic vein, they are what they are not and are not what they are. Hegel and we, however, now have the discourse to surmount this seeming paradox. So, after Hegel, we have the “eternal return” of all things²⁰, as eternal not merely at the end of a life,

²⁰ One is not here immediately concerned, in first philosophy, with how much or how little of this Nietzsche saw as implicit in his conception. It is the concept, not

or of a day and its night, but in their very momentariness, as in their Concept they “gather up the fragments so that nothing be lost”. Philosophy, after all, must be the elimination of paradox, its instigator.

This, what we have said about beauty, is what the prophet intends in saying, for example, “There is no beauty in him that we should desire him”, or, reflexively, it is like the Swiss pastor who said, when asked, that Hitler, whom he had met, had “looked like” Christ, Christ who looked like no one or everyone. And so Hitler too looked like no one particular, was the universal, but necessarily concretised. He was not, therefore, entirely evil as the predicative mode, if abstracted from that of judgment’s subject, impossibly suggests. So, incidentally, he was not entirely he, either. This too is surely what is meant by “the banality of evil”, viz. that there is nothing to see. It is equally, however, the banality of beauty, if abstractly individualised or universalised. Beauty itself, the beautiful, is neither of these, Hegel’s “concrete universal” reviving the Platonic insight. “Oh how I hate the human race, especially with its silly face”, runs a jingle, but there is no face and no race either, no Hitler even²¹, but self in other, other in self. The thrust of the dialectic is that all the modalities of life, which is the idea immediate (Hegel), the soul and fullest essence of their beauty and variety or that of their opposites, are one with the Absolute, the supreme excellence or goodness and indeed truth, which alone is or is one with being. St. Thomas saw, and it is the final implication of Hegelianism, that truth alone is and is “alone” indifferently, “the essential being is inherently and from the start reconciled with itself”²². *Non aliquo modo est, sed est, est* (Augustine). And yet of (this) being too one can say that it, indifferently, reduces or expands to “I will be what I will be”. Here too we surely come closest to resolving Heidegger’s critique, his saying we have talked about being without saying what being is, have not answered the

a putative conceiver, that is active, Hegel teaches. In its conception that of Nietzsche and, indeed, of subjectivity as such lies enfolded, of which philosophy is the methodical objectivisation (*objektiviert*). Cf. WL, Vol. 2 (ed. Suhrkamp), pp.462-469: *Die Philosophie ist das Wissen, das das System der wesentlichen (d.h. ideellen, apriorischen) Formen entfaltet, in denen sich die unendliche schöpferische Tätigkeit des Ich=Ich objektiviert.*

²¹ Firstly, though, there are no names at all. The name is absorbed, superseded, in the dialectic as the Word is given “the name above all names”, sublating words. Alternatively, each receives, in dialectical conclusion, the secret name on “a white stone”, that of self in other. A basis for this view of things is afforded by Hegel’s account of thought as relating to language (*Enc.* 459).

²² Cf. Hegel: *The Phenomenology of Mind*, pp.778-9. “Spiritual reality”, however, it is here said, with special reference to good and evil, is unity in otherness, all the way through.

question why being is at all. There was, just to start with, no what and no question, and that seems to have been his final position too.²³

The puzzles about personal identity, about “resurrection”, all result from a clinging to the initial “moderate realism” of common-sense as if this finite spectrum, at odds with the universality of intellect but in terms of which truth not so much declares itself as it is apprehended by all, were the absolute mode itself, as if such a mode were dictated forever by the first stirrings of faith under its wing. Such stirrings, however, belong to the phenomenal world, to the shadow, as it indeed is, of a past which faith itself will annihilate. “Have we known Christ after the flesh we know him so no longer.” So the last Apostle, come (or “born”) “late in time”, stakes his claim before the original band of “witnesses”. They, indeed, apart from the pieties of communal commemoration, vanish into the middle ground of pious imagining (*Vorstellung*), more or less, while he, in person or in his school indifferently, lives on, present in his thought, *via* his writings, as St. Peter, as founding-rock or ground, is projected as ever-present in the succession of Popes. The line may be broken, suspended, the writings lost, but the thought, once thought, remains, eternal, like rock indeed. All thought is in a sense there, present, before it is thought, as *Dasein* is one with *Sein* and contrariwise. We call this Spirit and God, the Absolute, who has, religion teaches, no need of his creatures. Thought thinking itself, the ultimate difference among differences, absorbs and encapsulates all, all unity or all variety indifferently, as indeed it annihilates all imagination, a faculty not owned by the Absolute except as in the self-transcendence of a total reflection of self in other, whereby the externalised yet full or total image in otherness is the very being of the Absolute, without which it remains abstract.

This, in fact, is the answer to that fear, that suspicion, that as found to be thought thinking thought the Absolute shrinks to a lifeless formality, a formal *Kontrollant* or logical law. Law it indeed is, but law personalised, where person, as *hypostasis*, substance, infinite *subsistentia*, is itself the very “principle of universality” actualised (Hegel), since universality is its own principle, contrariwise, as rational. In line with this Aquinas declared that the final or divine law, that of the “New Covenant”, is not something enunciated or written down at all but spirit “poured forth” in its constitutive self-manifestation.²⁴ This, however, by Hegel’s analysis, is

²³ Cf. F. Inciarte, “*Heidegger, Hegel y Aristoteles: una linea directa?*” Chapter Eight of his *Tiempo, sustancia, lenguaje, Ensayos de metafísica*, ed. L. Flamarique, Eunsa, Pamplona 2004.

²⁴ This is the “liquidising” of thought without “liquidating” it, of which Heidegger, evoking Heraclitus, speaks.

what it always was and is, while it is grasp of this truth alone that can have given birth to the routinely mystical or anagogical interpretation of earlier Scripture that characterises orthodoxy to such an extent that, in Newman's words, the latter stands or falls by it as regards its possibility and actuality. The ancient document, its veiled teaching (*documentum*), yields to the perpetually new rite, the Mass, or *sacramentum* as continual enactment in "liturgical" mode of philosophy, of *sophia*, in what is essentially the same mystical or speculative penetration, *the* dogma of philosophy, says Hegel, absolute idealism namely as constituting it. This is the religious mode, corresponding as far as it can to philosophical *Gottesdienst*, itself enabling the vision by which it is itself set aside or re-ordered in the docile (*documentum*) consciousness as remaining an outward representation. The transition, that is, the inward savouring in apprehension, is dictated, necessitated as ever ordained, by the sacramental principle itself. Hence absolute idealism fulfils and absorbs (*aufhebt*) sacramental theology, as the modern, as time itself, itself absorbs what then becomes seen as the middle or medi-aeval moment. It is the moment's inner orientation towards this return upon itself in thought's perpetual upward spring in self-result or free self-constitution that makes for time's representational illusion, employable only as long as spirit should need it, Hegel says, in benignly performative self-contradiction.

To such wisdom, holy as absolute rather than apart or "sacred", as if that which it were parted from would yet remain (this is the finitude of "the idea of the holy"), the main basilica of "new Rome", *Sancta Sophia*, was dedicated though, as events would confirm, spirit, wisdom, "dwells not in temples made with hands" and not "in" anything at all (it is not even guaranteed in academies). "In", the most frequent New Testament codeword, in John or Paul, is metonymy, metaphor even, for identity, an identity as close as that of body, the first "temple", with soul or spirit.

The "last man", St. Paul declares, *became* "a living spirit". This, in narrative mode, denotes man as idea, as, ultimately self-consciousness as such. It is of such spirit, of spirit, which God is, that "it is useless to count", whether to count the Trinitarian persons or any other persons. The triadicity is not an arithmetical quantity, any more than unity is the abstract first number of many, of more. All this is included, in veiled form, in the ancient adage that body is for spirit, not spirit for body. All ultimately serve what empties itself into the "form of a servant". This is the doctrine, the representation, of one of Hegel's prime, even preliminary dialectical figures, that of "a man" (man represents, and *hence* does not absorb, *Dasein*), the first sex representing both itself and its opposite, the unity of attraction and repulsion as Hegel outlines.

*

The mystical or the speculative, however, is not as a topic divorcible from that of realms or “universes” of discourse specifically. Discourse about atoms does not invalidate discourse about elephants *qua* discourse, any more than the mystical significance of Israel’s exodus from Egypt or of the Flood and the Ark (Biblical typology) of themselves invalidate a putative historicity of the narratives, though they may to some extent render them irrelevant to the speculative reader.²⁵ One might or might not wish to say the same about the Resurrection accounts. Some see there the question of a truth able to be characterised as historical to be at its most irrelevant, in view of the essential outpouring of spirit involved. This may well have been Hegel’s view, as some would say it explains the lost ending of Mark’s Gospel (no “appearances”) as not lost at all but non-existent rather, stemming from a Christian group or faction opposed to giving any essential role to “appearances” though not, as the rest of this Gospel shows, to miracles as such. In this dialectic, then, miracles would play a finite role, superseded at some point before the final fulfilment. Mark’s narrative does in fact record such a progressive falling away in its chief protagonist himself, in favour of a “power made perfect in weakness”.

²⁵ Such discourse plurality applies validly upwards and downwards, so to say, but not from side to side. Within the hierarchy, as of representation and concept, there can be no clashes, as between Dorian Gray and his picture. Thus Peter Winch’s attempt, in his “On Understanding a Primitive Society”, to suggest the Spaniards blundered illegitimately into another realm of discourse when they tried to stop human sacrifice among the Aztecs has an air of the ridiculous about it, or worse. They blundered into a primitive society of people like themselves, simply. So the discourse of science, for example, may eventually extend its claim all the way down to the nursery, though there is no sign yet of our ceasing to speak of the sun rising. The higher view exerts and must exert pressure all the same, though both would represent truth. We mostly rather make the wrong equivalences, identifying perceptions or misperceptions indifferently with perceptible brain-states, for example. A misperception can be a mistaken perception (of something) or a hallucination, where the distinction becomes harder to draw. But it is not evident at all that a dream should be identified with a “brain-state”, drawing as it does upon experience. It is not translatable into brain-language, of synapses etc. Similar problems arise with gene-talk, unless we one day consent to see every will as a gene writ large, rather than speaking consciously in the reverse direction. Yet the two are one; the gene is called selfish as explaining all selfishness, just because it is primitive (like Winch’s society). We do, however, attempt to modify or eliminate “bad” genes and thus, here too, may be seen as *set* to take leave of the biological altogether as never having known it in its abstract finitude.

In just this way we find that religion is not finally invalidated or superseded by philosophy but absorbed into it, just as the miracles were themselves always more signs than wonders. They were never wanton, in Scripture. We may well have passed out of the cultural period in which such signification functioned, as those earlier signs have in a measure effected what they first signified. So it is, anyhow, that the Philosophy of Spirit in no way takes away from anyone the smallest jot of what has been proclaimed to them in picture and symbol, in law and precept. Rather, in order to be itself, it absorbs entirely both these believers and their beliefs which, again, it shares as accomplishing, as do those holding themselves aloof as “theologians”. Theology is philosophy, itself owning the same sacredness, *Gottesdienst*. A moment’s thought should show it could not do less.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

ASPECTS OF RINALDI'S REVIEW OF A VOLUME OF ESSAYS BY KEN FOLDES IN *HEGELSTUDIEN* 2006

Hegel's idealism presents a systematic understanding of religion and of Christianity in particular. As such it is theology, as it is equally epistemology and logic. Each absorbs the other two in differentiated identity. Yet this philosophy, says Rinaldi, "peremptorily denies its (*sc.* Christianity's) fundamental ontological presupposition", namely "God's absolute objectivity and transcendence". This means that for this theology, if it intends to be such, such objectivity and transcendence is not Christianity's "fundamental ontological presupposition". It is rather an illusion of the naively realist consciousness, such as theology is well accustomed to unmasking. Hegel thus shows, logically, that objectivity itself is but a finite moment of thought, a finally dispensable category, while infinite transcendence must absorb what it transcends to the point of its no longer being there to be transcended. There can be no positing of an "ontological discontinuity" in doublethink, so to say. To petrify thought in this moment is called, often, "objectivism", the corresponding act "objectification", while thought's intention, its misdirection, upon, precisely, objects it itself constructs in self-alienation, comes to be called objectivity. It is only after transcending the three or more "attitudes to objectivity" that one arrives at "the philosophical point of view, the necessity of that view being proved by the process".¹

¹ Cf. Hegel, *Enc.* 25 and the immediately succeeding three chapters (*Enc.* 26-76) outlining and refuting of these "attitudes" in preface as prior to the next, properly introductory chapter, "Logic further defined and Divided". The *first* Introduction in Wallace's translation of "The Science of Logic" from the *Encyclopaedia*, is actually an introduction to the whole *Encyclopaedia*, as J.Kockelmans used to point out when giving courses based on this English text. Nonetheless, Hegel says here in *Enc.* 25, his "Phenomenology of the Spirit", referring here to the matter of

Instead we have, in the Hegelian system, “the originary absolute identity of man and God” (Ken Foldes). Still, the finite, man, must be “expressly stated to be absorbed” (*Enc.* 95), to “suffer some change... when identified with the infinite”, while the infinite or God, being infinite and in no way therefore potential to anything further, does not thus change.² Hegel’s account of the identity thus interprets the Athanasian “taking of the manhood into God”, signalled in religion by the resurrection to unseen life in the Spirit of the subject, Christ, as indeed premised to that subject’s “incarnation” or, more fundamentally, appearing. Thus that any subject appears, in and as consciousness, to himself at least, in logical priority to any reference to actual carnality³, was the prime teaching of modern philosophy.

There is no final place for man in Absolute Idealism. Rather, we there transcend ourselves towards infinite mind, with and in which every human sensation, perception or act, inner or outer indifferently, is identical, as is every word, grain of sand or atom. That is to say, such entities would be thus identical if they were not rather mere phenomena.⁴ Yet non-being, even so, is identified with being, in Hegel’s system. This is often misinterpreted as a mere consequence of the abstractness of “immediate” concepts such as being as first posited. Difference in unity, however, and that total, determines the whole system.

Man has created the world “from himself”, our authors note. Just therefore, though, it is wrong to add that the Logic “abstracts from the contingency of immediate being”. Logic rather begins when abstraction has been renounced, as the preliminaries to the Doctrine of Being⁵ make clear. Just therefore, too, the justification of the “transition to Nature” cannot depend upon the positing of this original abstraction from it at Logic’s beginning. Rather, the mutual identification, in the Doctrine of Essence, of possibility and necessity in actuality, both becoming Necessity with a big N, makes necessary whatever can be thought, and this is Nature

the corresponding book, is “the introduction”, the proto-introduction, to this Introduction here (*Enc.* 1-18) prefaced, so to say, to the entire *Encyclopaedia*.

² Hegel’s reference here to an “abstract one-sided infinite of understanding”, which “really” has its “edge taken off on the other”, scarcely seems to have needed mention.

³ The error of Docetism was to attribute such fleshlessness, or flesh as relegated, to Christ alone, denying his solidarity with all men thereby as “the man”. Augustine, all the same, later questioned whether man is purely soul or a union of soul and “body”.

⁴ Cf. *Enc.* 573 for how this view is the *opposite* of pantheism.

⁵ See note 163.

or a world and world of worlds, whether viewed as one or as an assemblage of parts, depending again on what can be thought.

The celebrated "taste of being" is thus no more and no less than the thinking, love, blessedness or feeling (Hegel's terms at *Enc.* 159) of this trinity of the actual, the possible and the necessary, identically actuality, possibility and necessity as such, as the particular is the universal.

So Foldes and Rinaldi themselves speak of "logic... constituting itself as the science of the ultimate foundation of truth." Here there is suddenly no "residue" of, in my view, unthinkable contingency, viewed absolutely as, for Hegel or Aristotle, contingency cannot be viewed. Logic is "without residue" identified with metaphysics and, ultimately, with an epistemology of "absolute knowledge".

It is an old principle that, given infinite time (and as an *a priori* form time will certainly be in that respect infinite), "what can happen at some time does happen". We may be certain that Nature is infinite in that sense, even if we are not certain what is possible and what is not for there to be worlds at all. Just thereby must Nature lose all aspect of contingency, being not merely possibility but actuality itself, its end marked out and determining its beginning as one with it, in closed circle or, rather, circuit. This is rather what is "pan-logistic", not dependent on some prime material from which to "abstract".

So, Rinaldi tells us, Foldes goes on to give away yet another of Hegel's speculative positions. His assertion of the "identity of subject and object, of man and God", "cannot and must not be misconstrued in the sense of an absurd immediate identification of the particular, empirical, natural and finite I with the Absolute itself." We remarked on this above.

There is, however, only one I, both in any one I and in all I's. Is this "a radical egoistic solipsism", as Rinaldi and Foldes charge? Not if each recognises himself/herself as all and hence as each and every other which are thus his own other within himself. This recognition, followed through, leads to the conclusion that we beget one another, mutually. Here we have the Hegelian inversion and reciprocity in one, as indeed they are conceived. There is no abstractly separate cause, all being cause of all, i.e. of itself, *causa sui*, insofar as "cause" is retained at all. There is thus no exception to "the *Aufhebung* of any otherness into self-consciousness", least of all that of "the reality of the alter-Ego". Our authors seem here to lapse back into abstract banality, suddenly forgetting ground already gained. Similarly there is no "plurality of absolutes". So Foldes himself says that "in the pure level we are One", but then we are not we, but "members one of another" (to take a leaf out of Scripture).

Rinaldi is most critical of Foldes, however, in regarding the latter's view of the State. I give, in the chapter following this, my view of Rinaldi's and Winfield's respective accounts of the state in relation to Absolute Spirit. Here, anyhow, on the State, Foldes maintains the consistency he surrenders with regard to "discrete individuals" which, he says, we "remain and function as" "on the empirical level", as if this were after all of philosophical significance. Rinaldi, for his part, claims that a phenomenalisation of the State, as if it were on a par with Nature, such as we can seem to find in Hegel's "Objective Spirit", sabotages "ethicality". Well it does, in a way, since moralism, to which here Rinaldi assimilates ethics, is a less than philosophical attitude. Hence Aquinas's account of "natural law" too is an effective, teleological subversion (*Aufhebung*) of such moralism.

No doubt the idea of the State (*Begriffsbestimmung*) "is the embodiment of absolute freedom", but this is precisely the thesis of Augustine's *Civitas Dei*, whole and entire, as instanced in the latter's statement that, where divorced from ethics or absolute law, what appears as the State, *civitas terrena*, or states are "no more than bands of robbers". This in fact confirms Hegel's account of the State, both implicit and explicit, as found immediately *before* the concluding section on Absolute Mind in the *Encyclopaedia*. That is, this account (of the State) is both "taken up" (*aufgehoben*) into and "put by" (*aufgehoben* again) or away from Absolute Spirit. It is the purest Augustinianism in the sense that one might say that of Thomism or indeed Platonism.

For when Augustine says he found everything in Plato except the self-humiliation of the Son of God this should not be abstractly viewed as a purely moral judgment, though it can well have a moral aspect or consequence. This much Hegel, even Scripture itself, should help us to see. If it were merely moral then Augustine would be executing a shift downward of perspective similar to that of Rinaldi (but not Foldes) here and, worse, making everything hang upon it. The Christian event, however, is a *representation*⁶ at the core of history (*pace* Jaspers), which is, all the same, dialectical.⁷ Like Nature it is itself ever anticipated in the

⁶ As are all events. Cp. St. Paul's "Now these things happened in a figure" (*Galatians* 4,24, an inspired translation, closer to the original *hatina estin allegoroumena* than the Latin *quae sunt per allegoriam dicta*, which unwarrantedly introduces *dicta*).

⁷ See our earlier remarks concerning Hegel's lectures on the philosophy of history, especially the Preface omitted from the main Internet version, which stresses the *phenomenal* character of such events. On Heidegger's final view there is just one *Ereignis* (event).

necessity of Absolute Spirit, i.e. of philosophy itself eliciting this event. The latter "accomplishes" the truth of it in the Spirit, the "all truth" into which the Apostles had still to be "led" by this same Spirit, in spiritual perception of course, as when St. Peter says "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons", helped on or not by his dream. Not merely does God not respect this person as against that one. He does not distinguish between person and personality as concrete universal or idea in which all are one and God "all in all" (and not merely in each). Unity, finally, is not apolitical but trans-political.

Yet philosophy, and thus far Plato, is, all the same, humility itself, since this is the specific "virtue of truth", we find Aquinas writing in his *Summa theologiae*, IIa-IIae, 161, 5: "after the theological and intellectual virtues, which apply to reason itself, and after justice, especially as regarding law (*justitia legalis*)⁸, humility is more excellent (*potior*) than all the other or 'moral' virtues". Hegel concurs, seeing humility, of self, as the philosopher's actual application to his task, putting all individual self-assertion behind him. No doubt Augustine simply meant that the Platonists of his time should now take note of this event thus represented, as he himself (and later Hegel) had done. The ideal, we may say, is obvious to itself.

Without "the spiritual power" (*potestas spiritualis*), intrinsic or extrinsic indifferently, the State is finite and temporal, as indeed is the Church materially or phenomenally viewed. This spiritual power is all that *The Philosophy of Right*, at 257-260, refers to, the "*infinitum actu* in the form of the will" (Rinaldi). Hence the Church, as this spiritual power in society, has always the good (defining object of Will) of and for the State at heart. Ideally State and Church concur to the point of mutual absorption, *civitas Dei* in Augustine's titular phrase, in that "kingdom not of this world" whose King is humiliation itself, "made sin for us" in the inverted world, transcending but not forsaking ethical preoccupation, of Essence or Idea. Here I remark that though rhetoric and style abstracted from content are nothing, yet content without them, as Logic without Nature, is itself

⁸ See our "Justice: Legal and Moral Debt in Aquinas", *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 78, No. 4, 2004, pp.559-571, for elucidation of this standpoint on the priority of "legal justice" in Aquinas's "table of the virtues". Cp. also Mark D. Jordan, "The *Summa's* Reform of Moral Teaching – and its Failures", in *Contemplating Aquinas* (ed. Fergus Kerr), SCM London 2003 (Notre Dame 2006), pp. 41-55. In the time of Kant or Hegel not much good was found to say on the virtues. Philippa Foot and others have changed all that, returning morality to its Aristotelian sublation in ethics, as Aquinas had attempted in the interest of cultural continuity.

nothing. Thus Nature is the “word” of the Absolute, which is “revelation itself” (the Biblical covenant with Noah after the “Sin-Flood”, pledged by the rainbow, God’s “bow in the sky”), as the particular ideas, in a style of rhetorical beauty, “imitate” the Idea in which alone they have their being.

Talk of morality, as distinct from ethics, and its “dialectic” (upon which Rinaldi would absolutely ground the need for the State) is thus out of place, since “theory is the highest praxis” (Aristotle, NE). *Theoria*, however, is the subversion of abstraction, Hegel shows, as will (to good, necessarily) crowns cognition. The State is not needed *as something other* for this “actual infinite”, since this is self-realising. We have rather to identify the State, in its *Begriffsbestimmung*, with just this latter, as Augustine and Hegel do, with the *civitas Dei* as being its mere representation, a *vestigium* of divine order. This is what the courts, the laws of property etc., as guaranteeing freedom, represent and what conscience, if posited as abstract contrariety to these, subverts or rather separates itself from, no longer “infinite in act” as containing or absorbing them. Simply, “the powers that be are ordained of God”, as medieval coronation rites without exception represented. God, however, cannot be “on earth” if there is no earth to be on (Hegel’s ultimate position, having said that the state is “God on earth”). Thus before God and eternity (the “last” generation, viewed under the figure of time) the State “withers away” (Marx), is absorbed into as dialectically resulting in the eternal *civitas Dei*. Speculative reason thus elucidates dialectic itself.

Absolute idealism, in universalising Docetism and monophysitism, so that they cease to be particularist heresies, finds the fault of them and of all heresies in their not having gone far enough in their own direction.⁹ All are of one infinite Nature, of which the second, the finite, is mere figure.

The supreme example of “objectification of the will” (I am speaking in the style of *The Phenomenology of Mind*) as having the “dignity of the *infinitum actu*” is, of course, the represented *vita Christi* (a “*gemeinten* individual historical figure”, Hegel writes) as representing, again, Absolute Spirit and, not quite incidentally, the miserable failure of the phenomenal or visible State as “of this world”. This is the inversion, the “bringing of the things which are to nought” in essence and notion.

After this Rinaldi takes up without disapproval Foldes’ startling claim that with Hegel philosophy ends. I don’t think this was Hegel’s own view. He said, rather, that no writer, as representing or setting forth his thought, is able to transcend his own time in the phenomenal world. One might add

⁹ On all this Rinaldi refers us to *Wissenschaft der Logik*, Suhrkamp, I, pp. 149-171, II, pp. 548-549, as well as to *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, Suhrkamp, 7, parag. 4, *Zus.*

to this, equally, that *every* philosopher worthy of the name ends or completes philosophy, as it is said that philosophy is Plato. It is though the part that is the whole. And so that judgment would not have stopped Aristotle and I would prefer to regard Hegel as the great instigator and inspirer of later philosophical writing, from Marx to McTaggart to Wittgenstein to Foldes himself or to this present little effort, as well as of much “scientific” thought for which people are awarded “doctorates of philosophy” precisely¹⁰. But the two approaches may not be incompatible, as an end can be a beginning. Thus even those furious reactionaries of eighty years ago found Schönberg and his “atonalism” concealed but fully fledged in the earlier Wagner, as ending music, presumably. They would!¹¹ But I have no wish to smear Foldes by association, having just agreed with him rather than with Rinaldi about the state. A little of such enthusiasm is needed in life to get things moving, rhetoric and style in a word (or two).

¹⁰ Cf. our “The Position of Philosophy in a University Curriculum”, *The South African Journal of Philosophy*, 1991, 10(4), pp. 111-114.

¹¹ Yet for Schönberg himself it was a case of “Brahms the progressive one” (his lecture-title of 1933).

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

RINALDI ON WINFIELD ON HEGEL'S ACCOUNT OF RELIGION: HEGEL A TRUE PHILOSOPHER OF RELIGION

I refer throughout here to G. Rinaldi's article on "The Question of Religion in Richard Winfield's 'Systematic Philosophy'"¹, examining Winfield's *Modernity, Religion and the War on Terror*². I want to make here one or two points contrasting with the Rinaldi-Winfield view on religion, with which I otherwise broadly agree.

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The basic question treated here, says Rinaldi, is "the relation of religion to politics". Between pre-Modern and post-Modern accounts Winfield defends the Modern, as aiming to overcome the immediately heteronomous apprehension of "revelation" as being even a "saving" heteronomy essentially. One might, I add, view this project as having been launched by Newman's *The Development of Christian Doctrine* (1845), though inclusive, quite logically, of a development of this proto-doctrine of development, which was in itself still fairly and squarely heteronomous, in immediate appearance at least, as of course are the canonical texts themselves. This "modern" project itself, viewed as finally Hegelian, in inception of course pre-dates Newman, who may be regarded as building upon, if not directly developing, Hegel's (1770-1831) epoch-making and, I claim, theological system. To deny this one would have, as is hardly

¹ This appeared first in Italian in *Magazzino di filosofia* XVIII, 2005-10, pp. 147-164. In German translation it forms a chapter of Rinaldi's *Absolute Idealism and Contemporary Philosophy*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt 2012, pp. 229-256, along with chapters on E. Harris, W. Desmond, Croce, Gentili and other interpreters of Hegel. I am referring here to this German text of the article, whence I have translated the title.

² Ashgate, Aldershot 2007.

possible, to judge Newman relatively ignorant of the Catholic "ontologists", whose base was Augustinian, Malebranchian and Hegelian and to whom, like Rosmini in this, his thought was close and long considered, like theirs, as "not safe for teaching" (Holy Office, 1860).

As regards heteronomy now, the Hegelian view, broadly, is that "the outside is the inside" and *vice versa*, to which we might relate St. Thomas's ultimately Aristotelian view, if we take time to meditate on it, that the soul is only known in its knowing of things other (*hetera*) than itself.

This immediately heteronomous view of revelation, that it is the absolute other and not the "self closer than self" (Augustine) that or who "un-veils", remains culturally dominant in "oriental and Islamic countries", writes Winfield. It is the view that the ultimate truth of things can be grasped or held neither by the "finite" reason of man nor by his weak and corrupted will. By contrast Hegel treats reason, and still more will, in logical dialectic, as infinite, as moments of the Idea Absolute. Neither reason nor will (reason's inclination, says St. Thomas) are an individual's property since, for one thing, there is no absolute individual. Like the universal or the particular it is, though we fail to notice this, an unreal abstraction. On this ground Hegel criticises Rousseau's atomistic account of "the general will" in politics, referring to an absolute and ever-active if "cunning" End or *nous*. This End is as such eternally realised and of this eternity time is but the "moving image". One ancestor, at least, of this view is, again, the Thomist *premotio physica*, here further refined and freed of what Hegel calls the representations (*Vorstellungen*) of the immediately phenomenal or of how things seem to us, as not taking earnestly the divinity of the Infinite, its absolute transcendence necessarily including absolute immanence, from which there can be no "ontological discontinuity" or rendering vacuous the knowledge that "in God we live and move and have our being".

Man's business, according to Hegel, is to become Spirit. The second Adam, we read in Scripture, "became a living spirit", in virtue of having always been that, I add. Hegel is a theologian, to whom the categories of natural versus sacred or supernatural can no longer be applied with a view to a judgment, since his whole system supersedes (*aufhebt*) this dichotomy. Karl Rahner buried his head in the sand when he declared, in *Sacramentum Mundi* (c.1968), that no work had been done on the Trinity since 1400 or so. That would be to say that the intellectual republic to which he wished to belong was as extinct as the Venetian. Again, Hegel's thoroughgoing and well worked out Trinitarianism can help to explain why Newman was not more motivated to write upon it. The Trinity has

passed into philosophy along with living theology itself with which, as in Aristotle, after a first negative differentiation or antithesis, it remains identical as “first philosophy”, the specific difference determining the whole, here too. The idea of philosophy as “theology’s servant”, *ancilla*, could never be more than a passing moment of mind’s constitutive dialectic. Rather, the “wisdom from above” is indeed the true wisdom and man of himself transcends himself towards “living spirit”. He is, so to say, in himself above himself, whence therefore he “comes” to himself. Above, in fact, is below and contrariwise, and we must stop laying self-flattering unctions to our lazy souls, for, as Hegel says, the fear of the Lord is only the beginning of wisdom, in that “religion must come first”. It is through religion that we become philosophers, our culture philosophical and scientific. But this development “comes not to destroy” even one “jot or tittle” of “the law”. Hence Newman says that orthodoxy stands or falls with the mystical interpretation of Scripture. Hegel, for his part, identifies mysticism with philosophy (*Encyclopaedia* 82. add.).

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Both our authors are keen to expose contradictions in religious assumptions that are really pre-Hegelian. From this they wish to deduce that he himself puts Reason in place of religion. It does not follow. Hegel meets the objection in declaring that Christianity is “the absolute religion”, even though this contrasts with his finding, writing on Absolute Spirit, that the two first forms of such spirit are not, so to say, absolutely absolute, as is philosophy. A forerunner here, once again, was Boethius of Mantua. His *On the Consolation of Philosophy* is often misinterpreted as a falling away from faith *in extremis*. Yet his book expresses the highest faith. Manlius Severinus Boethius is, we have noted, in all probability the martyr venerated locally at Mantua as San Severino.³

For Hegel nothing can be higher than Reason (*Geist*), for it is Spirit, holy or otherwise. This is its autonomy. Religion represents this in narrative and picture as embodied in one man, appearing “in the fullness of time”, a phrase not itself immediately denoting a temporal moment. This representation is indeed true, inasmuch as reason, speculative or less than so, is only real as individualised. But since, as Hegel shows, there is an identity between individuals anyhow, “the proof of the pudding is in the eating”. Success, in fact, establishes authenticity, that the phenomenon is

³ I owe this information and the corresponding assessment to Professor Peter Geach.

“from God”, as a wise Pharisee is said in *The Acts of the Apostles* to have told his assembled colleagues. This is built into Hegel's philosophy, that “the factual is normative”, i.e. at the final count. This qualification is conveniently forgotten when cries of scandal are raised. There would be no future, for example, in an appeal to an unverifiable “virgin birth” minus the good and mighty works of the life following or minus the extension into a devoted following in mystical identification down the centuries. This man alone, one individual, “appeared” “in the fullness of time” and was destined to appear and must be looked for where not known, “the mediator”. This is Hegel's spirit. He does not give an account of reconciliation in terms of an inexplicable efficient causality or “atonement” but rather in terms of “the imitation of Christ” though, in terms of his philosophy, this latter is saved from being a reductively extrinsic interpretation. The like is the identical, and this is the final sense of the “Christ living in you” *Leitmotif* as we have received it. It is not then a figure for the ethical merely.

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The infallibility of sacred texts gives the motive for continually deeper penetration beyond, ultimately, what an earlier, finite style of thought would have been able to recognise. All philosophy is such an interpretation, a ground principle of which, however, is that “the letter kills”, i.e. the text as text kills, since it is nothing, is finite, is no different from the spots on a leopard's back without that spirit or mind has been brought to bear upon it (an example from a story by J.-L. Borges). We do indeed, we must, attempt to read these signs, of leopards or lavender, which may or may not lead us to read or write books indifferently, as did the mentally ill Prince Myshkin in Dostoyevsky's novel. Hegel's own text too is thus finite. Hence he says, more radically than Wittgenstein at *Tractatus* 7, “All judgments are false”. That is, really there is nothing of which we can speak, a position he shares with ancient scepticism. We have to look beneath the contradictory surface or “film” to the “deep water” (Wittgenstein) where camels do indeed go through the eyes of needles. Hegel was soaked in Scripture and those not thus soaked have not recognised it, naturally enough.

Rinaldi, now, rejects “religious irrationalism”, as of Tertullian, Pascal or Kierkegaard. He agrees with Winfield on reason's autonomy, subject to no criterion extrinsic to it. That is, “The spiritual man judges all things”. Thus far this Pauline statement might be as well applied to Aristotle as to the mature Christian, who has to “interpret spiritual things spiritually”, i.e.

not literally or immediately or in representation (*Vorstellung*). So the Apostle adds, I repeat, that “even if we have known Christ after the flesh”, as did his fellow-apostles but not he, “we know him so no more”. The parallel with the Hegelian thesis of the accomplishment of religion by and into philosophy, even its natural passing into it as having become, in immediate contradiction of Hegel’s thesis of the three ascending forms of Absolute Spirit, Art, Religion, Philosophy, “the absolute religion”, that is, the religion that is not merely a religion, is clear. Conversely, philosophy is itself the perfect or accomplished *Gottesdienst*. Not so differently the medievals situated logic, inclusive of its highest metaphysical reaches as *logica docens*, as supreme among the arts, as *ars logica*.⁴ Theology, however, was set apart from this and it was not typically stressed that Aristotle had coined this term *theologia*, or himself taken it over, as descriptive of his own metaphysics, which thus might itself be regarded as ancillary to that. This “that”, therefore, might well itself be seen as that final speculative knowledge which cannot be written down, as a “thing spiritual” wherein it is seen that “all judgments are false” or that, in equal self-contradiction, “the letter kills”, even, that means, this “letter” saying this⁵, but “the spirit gives life”, an assessment echoed by Hegel, writing that thinking necessity (the dialectical passing over of momentary or finite concepts into their other or opposites) “means a liberation... having itself... in the other...” This liberation”, passing from individual existential form to developed totality (I am you) to feeling to enjoyment (which is thus put as transcending life and existence, the “poorest” categories), is called correspondingly “I... free Spirit... Love... Blessedness”,⁶ these universals being realised only in particularised individuals. These individuals, conversely, are nothing as considered in abstract separation from this passing over or conceptual “flow”. The logician must consider and systematise all this in and as the final truth and this was the hidden meaning of the older, only seemingly restrictive principle that *logicus non considerat existentiam rei*, namely that the existence, as a finite category, of the thing is the least “real” thing about it and as such unknown, because unknowable, to or by this free necessity

⁴ This is the title of John “of St. Thomas” Poinso’s two volume philosophical work, contemporary with Descartes.

⁵ This might be the error of certain forms of early Protestantism, making of the “inner light”, by letter, so to say, an external principle. Thus it is only by keeping a grasp on this that Hegelianism can develop, as it should, or that philosophy as such can be held separate from routine or finite scholasticism, that exegesis can rise to the mystical or speculative interpretation.

⁶ *Enc* 159.

become truth. We might say the logician bypasses the immediate, flawed notion of “the thing in itself”! Again, this is the hidden or mediated sense of the identification of essence and existence, as it is of the Ontological Argument, namely that the Idea transcends each of these in one (pure) act, *energeia*, represented by Hegel in Trinitarian fashion as the only “rational” conception (of God). Thus the Father is (we have to say) the speaking, as his own relation thereto, of the Word, just as both, but more immediately this Word or Son, in Hegel's view of it, are the “spirating” of Spirit, whereof, as ourselves spiritual, we know of the three as precisely the reasonable *one*, in what Hegel calls a “leap into the super-sensible”, an “upward spring” and “elevation” specifically of or *qua* mind (*Enc.* 50), which for him too might be called, in a given context, a “leap of faith”, though not of faith as abstracted from mind as the Idea and placed, say, in some abstracted “faculty” of will, choice, or whatever it might be, as seems the case in Kierkegaard's account. “Word” and “Son” are of course both representational terms, this quality of *Vorstellung*, however, remaining in final analysis as one clinging to language itself, whatever we may choose to say. Hegel develops his philosophy of language principally in *Encyclopaedia III: The Philosophy of Spirit*, under Memory, a notion rooted, like language, in the category of Mechanism. All this is involved in “understanding spiritual things spiritually”.

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In the service of such heteronomy, widened here to include all pre-modern, i.e. pre-Protestant religion, only an “analytic, reproductive reflection” upon “revelation”, is used and this is identified with “human reason” and hence with “theology”, correspondingly become “sacred”. “My thoughts are not your thoughts” (*Isaiah*) was the favourite proof-text for the truth of this heteronomous view of revelation, while the regress entailed in one of our two authors here saying or thinking that is not noticed. It is put as God's saying it. Here already we have the contradiction in this immediate notion of revelation. Self reveals self only in another, in re-production, where subject is made object and hence object subject. This very text, accordingly, concedes a property identical to God and man, that of thinking. So if man *qua* man is essentially summoned to think the absolute, to become himself Spirit as Hegel describes, then the duality is a mere moment in the shadow-world of phenomena. But, like Hegel (in “With What Must Science Begin?”), I am beginning at the end, as one must, since science, which is philosophy (*scientia* develops into *sapientia*, as, for example, in the Aristotelian dialectic of the virtues,

whether intellectual or moral virtues indifferently), is an absolute discipline, a language from which, once learned, one can never depart except as entering into the ineffable. It therefore includes play, for “The concept is *pure play*” (Hegel, my stress). The time, time, is short, as itself merely, and intelligence must submit itself to itself to remain in place at all. There is no knowing without knowing that one knows, *ad infinitum*. This is the “mirror” principle, which only the monads, as universal in particularity, that is to say as intelligent or personal, only persons or spirits, can sustain, standing against the totality as identical with it. This is Hegel’s angelology, which in philosophy becomes a doctrine of absolute spirit, concerning which “it is useless to count”, even to count the persons from out of the generality of spirit. It thus fulfils the *allegorical* principle, where virtues and graces rub shoulders with those individual self-representations with which we start.

The... distinctions... are not accidental characteristics... they are articulated groups 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.⁷

So it is not so much that *only* persons can sustain this identity of individuality and universality, as McTaggart would stress, but that all is personal, simply, such universality being “the principle of personality”, as Hegel says. Faith, by contrast, in angels perhaps, precisely as “immediate knowing”, according to Rinaldi, is an immediate *misapprehension* of, for example, the above described, since, as Hegel shows, no knowing can be immediate. It is rather the case, however, one might reply, that absolute knowing transcends the dialectically dualist moment of mediacy or immediacy. One knows as one is known.⁸

Rinaldi, however, sweepingly dubs such reasoning “typically scholastic”. Meanwhile “Rosa Liechtenstein”, as featured on the Internet, claims, rightly enough, to show how Hegel’s own logic is rooted in the thought of the scholastic logicians, whom she calls “Roman Catholic”, forgetting the large Islamic (the *loquentes* or *mutakallim*) and Jewish components of that bygone intellectual republic. Since Hegel’s main detractors have been the Catholics it is significant to find, here and there, assimilation of him to

⁷ Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, Baillie version, p. 452.

⁸ See our “Faith as Thinking with Assent”, in *New Blackfriars* 2005, also revised as a chapter in our *From Narrative to Necessity*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle, 2012.

them as a further move within such detraction. This thought is in fact as Roman Catholic, or not, as that gem of Austrian literature, *Mein Kampf*.

Not all scholastics, anyhow, saw reason as mere handmaid to heteronomy. Consider the Averroists, such as Boethius of Sweden, consider Abelard, or even, again, the first or pre-scholastic Manlius Severinus Boethius of Mantua, mentioned above as probably the Christian martyr venerated as San Severino around Mantua even today. Boethius' entire consolation was "the lady philosophy", pictured in his book as visiting him in his prison-cell. Consider Scotus Eriugena. The philosophical tradition is constant and therefore, Hegel himself often reminds us, Platonic. He recalls to us the original, non-reductive sense of "form", often dubbed "Platonic" precisely in reduction. But "it is upon the trunk that the gentleman works" (Confucius) and work he does!

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These considerations enable me now to pass to Rinaldi's critique of those right-wingers (*sic*) who identify Hegelianism with "Christian philosophy". There can indeed be no such thing, since philosophy absorbs and transcends religion. Rather, Christianity, as "the absolute religion" (Hegel), opens out upon philosophy as such, as truth. It is the smallest seed become universal. Indications of this, often dismissed as "problematic" despite the grounds given, lie scattered throughout Hegel's works but the view is set forth principally in the final section of the *Encyclopaedia*, on "Absolute Spirit" and its three forms. It is not incompatible with, say, Jaspers finding the "*caesura* of history" six centuries earlier than the era of "the mediator", of mediation, viewed as absorbing its immediate time of preparation, as religion itself "must come first" before Spirit's unfettered hegemony, the freedom of "sons", even within religion itself, as Judaism comes before Christianity as then fulfilling and hence absorbing it, as philosophy absorbs religion as a whole. Nothing, therefore, is abstractly a religion, as no art is "purely" art, innocent of philosophy.⁹ Memory, in fact, must only gather up all history in one and in that one way negate all "pastness". It must also gather up all past gatherings up, as when we read a writer from this negated past himself voicing his own estimate of what was, before his memory coming to transform it, past for him. Death is for each one the final *caesura*, the "until now" of accomplishment or, at least, cessation. Hegel's thought shows us that what immortality really means is

⁹ In support of this, see Hegel's somewhat whimsical but not entirely ambivalent remarks on the name and essence of philosophy at *Enc.* 7 and following.

annihilation of phenomenal life as “only the Idea immediate”. The dead, whom we may recall, venerate and talk to, are what we are. We are the dead whose true life is “hidden”. Thus it is not only monks and nuns who are “eschatological icons”. They rather reveal and declare our true being in external show or even mime. Death, its true face, is entry into spirit, Hegel asserts, the mortal coil shuffled off indeed. What Hegel is then in effect saying is that any concrete immortality, as no mere abstraction, must mean the life hidden in God now and always. Only what is hidden is just thereby revealed. Hence, to be revealed as such it must, in openness, retain its character of hiddenness. Such characterisations are finite merely, that is to say, outward being inward and *vice versa*.¹⁰

The intrinsic validity of logic, of reason, cannot be heteronomously separated from reason’s own free self-confirmation, as if able to depend passively upon an external given, the truth of which is thus made simultaneously unknowable, whether as to being or to essence. This we might say (thinking of the Anscombe-Lewis controversy of 1947 at Oxford) is the only true “naturalism”, absorbing “supernaturalism”, while Lewis was wrong to demand an external guarantee for reason’s self-reliance. Reason, this comes down to saying, already is God. Fideism, opposing faith to knowledge, is not an option. Faith is rather “victory over the world”, over phenomena, as founding absolute knowledge. “Religion must come first”, so to say culturally or as cult, before that *Gottesdienst* which is philosophy, the confession of “acosmism”.

Reason, and this is (its) rationality, is its own “immanent process of self-determination”, writes Rinaldi. This is not reducible to extrinsic legislation, and Natural Law theorists will ever urge that law in Aquinas or in sane jurisprudence (*epieicheia*) was ever an analogical term, just as an absolute pre-motion (*praemotio*) does not deny but grounds phenomenal, that is to say human, freedom. Our freedom, it is thus concluded, is our very rationality (Hegel), is will, as practical orientation to the Good, succeeding upon abstract or “proper” cognition as itself “practical truth”, “the truth of the Good” (*Enc.* 235), meaning that it is “radically and really achieved”, as, Hegel’s wording in these two paragraphs (*Enc.* 234 and 235) implies. It is pure Act, which at once “eternally lays itself down as End, and by action brings about its actuality”. This, which Hegel here calls “life”, but clearly now a mediated life, is the “Absolute Idea”. It follows that freedom is not abstractly ours, but entails in its or the Idea the “ruin” of the abstract individual, as something we no longer or never could, in any true sense of knowing, know. In religious terms, again, “Have we

¹⁰ *Enc.* 138.

known Christ after the flesh we know him so no longer". This is the point at which those drawn to contemplation, speculative and yet practical, knowing as unknowing, in the Catholic and doubtless other traditions, are advised to cease meditating, in their "interior" being at least, upon the mediator's "sacred humanity", but to "beat" rather upon the point of their ignorance, be they literate or illiterate, philosophical initiates or poets and singers, lords or serfs.

Who is this mediator, we might ask? The term is adopted by Hegel and the identification, in all consistency, should therefore be in terms of Hegel's account, within logic, as to who or what any person as such, and supremely a "Trinitarian" person, is. The leap required of orthodoxy here is not all that different, or more radical, from when it was asked to accept papal "infallibility", or an "immaculate conception" (both dogmas now beginning to appear at least two-faced) or transubstantiation (leading to the supersession of the concept of substance) or the Trinity itself (transforming or subverting current concepts of both God and person). It is the same with *extra ecclesia nulla salus*, this formulation's coming irresistibly to mean that no one is finally excluded. This insight subverts dogma itself, however, in the sense that nothing is new except as revealing, unveiling, things old. By "old", however, if we are to avoid the "bad infinite", we can only mean the eternal, the logical, as spirit inseparable from self-consciousness, as, in every case, I who "shall not die but live". This is the Hegelian optimism Rinaldi (and Winfield) dream of moderating. It cannot be without significance, however, that the imperative to abandon childish representations is common to both worldly philosophers (are there any?) and mystics (who is not that?). Hegel makes clear, however, that this position is not a philosophical endorsement of the cry, common to enthusiasm and the proponents of "immediate knowledge", that *securus judicat orbis terrarum*, which would dispense with any need for proof if one failed to take strictly the term *judicat*. Nor, therefore, is it an endorsement of the classic, only seemingly more specific translation of this Augustinian insight as "The Church judges without fear of contradiction" (used by Newman in *Apologia pro vita sua*).¹¹ All the same, Hegel's own dialectic leads to modification of abstract strictness in favour of realised concrete identity, of the many with the one, of all with and in all. It is the strictness of absolute consistency, excluding nothing and, *ipso facto*, no one.

Thus the freedom of rationality is *ad opposita* (guilty or not guilty, true or false, etc.), while Nature, in contrast, is *determinata ad unum*. This

¹¹ For Hegel's view of the argument from *consensus gentium*, cf. *Enc.* 71.

opposition itself, however, is relative in the light of Hegel's final identification of possibility with a higher, non-constrictive Necessity, the unique modality of the Idea itself, one with liberation, "called I", free Spirit, Love, Blessedness (*Enc.*159). The accents of Plato, of Socrates, are here heard again.

Heteronomy, however, as Rinaldi goes on to tell us, consists in "the subordination of the highest political institution", the State. To what, we here ask, noting first that the state is not even in Hegel a "form of Absolute Spirit", the three of which are Art, Religion and Philosophy. The state, serving freedom and justice in one, as Hegel presents it, is yet, in typically "religious" thinking, subordinated to the Church as God's own community, heteronomously instituted for human "salvation" or happiness. This is Rinaldi's complaint against religion. It is reflected in Islam's absorption of state into church, he says, understanding church, correctly enough, as God's assembly (Hebrew *qahal*) or "the people of God". He rather ignores Augustine's classic conception of the state or city (*civitas*) of God, the *Gottesstaat* not as "state within a state" (this is Hegel's fundamental objection, to a dividing of man's allegiance, typical, he tends to assume, of Catholicism) but as the eternal community of which the temporal is but a phenomenal reflection or immediate representation or appearance. This conception, however, is at one, in harmony with, the basic principles or insights of the Absolute Idealism common to Rinaldi and Hegel, in terms of which Rinaldi seeks to dispense with the church, i.e. with the religious community. Is this Hegel, however? It might be, if the question is not rhetorical? It seems to us though, that it is not, that Rinaldi, in speaking of a divided allegiance, is false to the absolute idealism he otherwise identifies with and defends. The dialectical reality of Objective Spirit, the state, history, is not yet absolute spirit, not yet the speculative Good Friday in the absolute infinity of which past and future are alike consumed. The religious analogue and representation of this is expressed when it is said that "By faith you sit with Christ in the heavenly places". Thus we "use the world as though we used it not". Religion can go no further, as art too can and has represented it, the Idea, to immediate intuition. For philosophy it is simple. The world is "annulled" in *esse et posse*, i.e. it is not and could never be, except as "in" and hence one with the Absolute in each and every particular as thought's own infinite act, many in one, one in many, while death ever present as life's realised end is birth or entry into Spirit. That is to say, "no birth no death", as equally, no cause no effect, no inside no outside, no whole no parts, and so for all the other finite categories, beginning with Being and Nothing. This is the explication of the spiritual tradition that those called to contemplation are "meant to

cease all thinking" (John of the Cross). This, namely, is the highest exercise of thought, the camel going through a needle.

The Augustinian conception is reflected, or inversely rooted, in Hegel's account of the phenomenal as finite and hence false, as compared (in thought) to the true Infinite. This may seem not too well integrated with his account of the State as "God on earth" but this itself is appearance only, as is the earth itself and as is, of course, the Church. For the Church as such is not the Kingdom of God it represents (of God, of ends, says Kant) but a sacrament or chosen sign of it, built, it itself claims, upon the witness of one man, called Rock (*petrus*), the temporal representation of eternity as "true home", though this was represented more comprehensively than as this signifying function in older theology as the Church "militant, expectant and finally triumphant", a figure for earth, purgatory and heaven as the soul's three "stages" of life. That is, the Church and the "kingdom of heaven", to whom its embodiment and ground (rock) was promised "the keys" are viewed as one, the Church there being in the world while not of the world, like the Hegelian Idea or thought itself, except that in the latter the nullity of the world is so brought out that nothing can truly be "in" it.¹²

¹² This older conception, as I have called it, was probably last uncritically laid before the community in Pius XII's encyclical *Mystici Corporis* of 1943. What this language mystically encapsulated was that the Church, appearing immediately as an anomaly and scandal in "the light of common day", yet stands for what is greater than and even opposite to itself, hence as a variant upon the "strength made perfect in weakness" or even "made sin for us". The speculative language favoured by Hegel runs riot here. But by the same token this is why the Church, for believers, is never really in essence "corrupt":

The Church's one foundation, is Jesus Christ our Lord.
 She is his new creation, by water and the word.
 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.

Here the un-Hegelian "water and the word" reflects the inability of religion to account for the efficient causality she proclaims of Christ's humanity. The truth is that the word and example of this intended (*gemeinten*) individual are of themselves as effective as the sacraments recalling them, or the documents housing them, in the atoning mediation of salvation or happiness, all being unstopably housed and at work in the trans-generational memory and recall of this continuous community of the spirit which stands for each and all, those without being within and *vice versa*, before and after sacraments and documents, in philosophical *Gottesdienst*, where all theory and praxis are equally "at home". Still, as long as

The Church as appearing will disappear, along with all temples, all appearance. Thus it is that the State itself, the “temporal power” in the old phrase, itself a figure if time is a figure (of eternity), needs “the spiritual power” until it itself disappears, “withers away” in Marx’s representation. He and his colleagues mutated here and there, or in a measure always were, a gang of more or less criminal ideologues. No matter! This “spiritual power” even in its first or “exemplary” instance can appear as conspiring in the cruel burning, no less, of its detractors by the then “temporal power” or, in our day, as the home of pedophiles, now pursued by the temporal power, but this is not in either case its essence, its idea. This idea is needed. This phrase, “the spiritual power”, was used in some countries for the assembly of bishops or “lords spiritual” (hence “House of Lords”), the original pre-Christian *pontifices*, hence naturally represented as one “body” or even “person”, in the “legal” and associated senses, until finally this unity itself is represented, made concrete, as perfectly one, as kings had foreshadowed, in the *pontifex maximus*, later Pope or “father of fathers”. *L’église c’est moi* (Pius IX), I am the Church. Can we speak of a subterranean influence, *via* perhaps the more or less suppressed (1860) Hegelian, largely Catholic movement of “ontologism” (Gioberti, Rosmini)? This papal statement, c.1870, after all, is post-Hegelian and is Hegelian in spirit (I as universal of universals), though also evangelical and Johannine especially.

So such a concrete representation of the universal of universals, in the highest place, but echoes what is said in Hegel’s thought of the person as such, of every I or *ego* as embodying, incarnating (these expressions figuring identity) self-consciousness as such, the absolute, and as therefore set towards its own antecedent perfection. It is in perfect harmony with this that the Pope himself, knowing himself as representation, titles and entitles himself as “the vicar of Christ”, just as every *alter Christus* is himself Christus, “made sin for us”, like, *gleich*, one with Christ, as, we should not forget, the lifeless corpse is also “like” the deceased (or us all)

we use language we must ever return to these primal representations and corresponding practices, just as we must never lose touch with music, poetry and art in general. Regarding restriction of membership, it is taught that “sinners” remain members as long as they have faith, while the further doctrine of implicit faith, *fides implicita* is being continuously extended, the limbo for pagans and unbaptised infants having been renounced by ecclesial authority itself recently. So at what point does the faith of “the sinner” become entirely implicit? Rather, is it ever extinguished? *Dum spiro spero* or where there’s life there’s hope, which itself includes faith implicitly or otherwise as absorbed, as love, as abiding, includes both. That’s the story, that’s the message, which Hegel fully takes over.

and thus called *lik* or *Leiche* in Germanic languages, for example. Time or fire makes the likeness more remote, yet, generally, "in the midst of life we are in death", only a question of time, as we say.

This development, whether of doctrine or of "pontifical" language, which may well itself come to be abandoned, illustrates the need of the then Roman state, *civitas*, by an ingrained antecedent belief, for a sacrificing priesthood for the good, precisely, of the temporal state, as is reflected in the canon of the Roman Church's mass-rite. This need, once the whole society got baptised into the Church, a need less than Christian, can be claimed to have in a measure, for good or ill, affected traditional thinking about the eucharist or "mass" as a sacrifice¹³, while also putting a brake on the revolutionary emergence (despite initial Pauline patriarchal reservations) of the equal dignity of women, represented in the official writings as always defended warmly by the Mediator, in the community. This was never denied or gone back on, but the stress was placed rather, for the moment at least, on an indubitable difference of function, as later reflected in Hegel's own writings. He even refers to "woman", but not, note, women, as "that ironical figure". Irony in the figure of the man is not, however, here denied. All these positions, stations, are moments of the flow, the "Bacchanalian whirl".

As Aquinas later put it, and we are still considering the state, *civitas*, the health of society requires that some devote their time and energy wholly and directly to an end transcending such finite needs. One may think of philosophers or monks and apostles, or poets, painters and musicians, meaning the best in each "category" (of absolute spirit), in some sense of "best". Plato's requirement that philosophers be the ultimate kings indicates, again, this representational character of the one, temporal order, against the other, spiritual order as falsely representing as two what we are here claiming, as the correct interpretation of Augustine's political theology, is in fact one order, as reason itself. So Judas, chosen for a certain function after all, might without contradiction have remained while "on earth" an apostle if he had not hanged himself (*sic*), just as Peter had all reason to feel equally suicidal at times and no doubt did so. So "judge not", we are advised. So Judas is reckoned a saint in the Ethiopian Church! These considerations relate to and recall Hegel's thinking on good and evil in *The Phenomenology of Mind* ("Revealed Religion") and elsewhere. Plato is in harmony with this active transcendence of the temporal in urging, again, in the first instance ideally, that "philosophers should be

¹³ Cf. work by Damon Casey and associates at Macauley University, Australia, placed on the Internet (article, "*The fractio panis...*").

kings”, since that is what they are. Philosophy “nullifies” the world, Hegel says often enough. So, at least, kings, as ruling the world, should be philosophical and so “not... of this world” they rule and lead, at least *secundum praeparationem animae* (Augustine’s spiritual interpretation of turning the other cheek and related matters). More shortly, *noblesse oblige*, they have an inherent duty as regal. To this corresponds the Hegelian State as “God on earth”, an otherwise seemingly over-optimistic transformation of the earlier dualism, if we forget the nullity of “earth”, “dust”. It is what this representation, the state, represents. Dualism, as between finite and infinite, thus appears as a mere negative mood or moment consequent upon the failure of a naively realist or immediate “philosophy”, which is all that was earlier to hand in the course of time and nature.

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After this preamble Rinaldi proceeds to closer examination of Winfield’s philosophy of religion, its *Grundriss*, he says. What emerges, again, is an unwarranted cult of the State, while the role left for religion corresponds almost exactly to the view held by, for example, Hitler or communists tolerating religious praxis as a still widespread illusion, in Freud’s words. The “privileged given” is rather reason itself and its constitutive, self-determinative freedom, as philosophical reflection makes manifest. In fact this is not, cannot be “given”, but only give itself as already present. “The modern”, modern thought, that is, is thus “a normative project”, “striving to ground a civilisation in which autonomous reason can be at home” (Winfield). It is against this project that Winfield seeks to grasp religion’s essence and meaning, Rinaldi tells us. Unlike Marx or Nietzsche he accepts the necessity and truth of religion’s essential content *qua* religion, as Aquinas had seen it as a virtue, a part, namely, of justice, bracketed with piety, *pietas*, towards parents.¹⁴

So through religion alone the human mind (*Geist*) becomes conscious that “the finite world” depends upon the infinite as *ipso facto* absolute. Art, the first or ground form of Absolute Spirit, is rather forgotten here (though Hegel himself speaks of the religion “of” art). Such consciousness, as immediate, has the form of representation first, as picture, story or symbol, for example, all of them phenomena merely, appearances,

¹⁴ See our “Justice: Legal and Moral Debt in Aquinas”, *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 2004, Vol. 78, No. 4, pp.559-571.

seemings, as in fact are all expressed finite or limited concepts or categories.

In religion's "highest" form one represents a radically transcendent person. With this divinity, in cult, the human is in progressive measure identified. Philosophy, all the same, can only appear at the end of this development. The view is clearly Christian rather than, say, Muslim, and, Winfield stresses, Protestant Christian. "Protestants worship a God encountered in conscience and not in positive edicts of revelation." If this is a WASP view it was also the view of that modern Catholic and quasi-father of "modern Catholicism", John Henry Newman, as expressed in his famous "Letter to the Duke of Norfolk" on conscience, to which, he says, and not to the Pope or any other external instance, he would offer his first after-dinner toast. It is conscience, in fact, which first prompts to action and commitment, if one is not a mere "beautiful soul" (Hegel, in irony). Winfield and Rinaldi seem none too conscious of such modern Catholicism, or don't want to be.

For what is coming to light in such modern religion is that Protestantism should be viewed as an abstracted essence of Catholicism, rather. This was its original intention, with which it is at bottom united, as the very term "protestant" indicates, signifying a negation in identification, as the common recitation of the historic Creeds witnesses. The view, meanwhile, that the infinite is either personal or transpersonal as beyond or absorbing personality is a clear logical conclusion merely, once given that the personal is a positive value, quality or relation, a form of (ontic) actuality, an "energy". That is, it is not peculiar to religion as a mere representation.

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Winfield proposes making changes in the canonical texts, a self-contradictory procedure also put forward recently by a certain Dr. Banana in Zimbabwe, who no doubt has made his own "private judgments", as they used to be called. Now it is, all the same, essential to Winfield's at bottom correct position that the judgment of reason is never private, but rather universal. But if one is not prepared to revere canonical texts as containing always finally a mystical meaning, as it is called, then why hold to them at all? Why not explain the seemingly heteronomous itself heteronomously, as in John Allegro's "sacred mushroom" thesis, giving up the attempt to "save" the texts' determinative rationality? We are here a thousand miles from Hegel, for whom the State, precisely as "God on earth", has a prime duty, on pain of abandoning its own reflected ("on earth") divinity, to uphold religious cult and faith. Thus it may, in

prescinding principle at least, embark on a *Kulturkampf*, as in the next generation in Hegel's homeland, or execute those religion has declared heretics, as in earlier times, in doubtless finite and defective recognition of the above duty. Hence Hegel knew nothing of the American principle, though also in a measure Napoleonic, of a separation of Church and State such as the U.S. Jesuit, Courtney Murray, tried unsuccessfully to promote at the last Genral Council of the Church (1962-4) as part of its "Declaration on Religious Freedom". Still, if the two are not separate and the one is not absorbable in the other then how is the relation, or non-relation, to be viewed?

To answer in preliminary, taking as cue the alternative of non-relation, the Church viewed formally is a sacrament or sign of absolute reality or intrinsically "realised end" (Hegel), within time an "eschatological icon" or sign of the "last" or, better, ultimate things. The buildings, therefore, are, thus far, no more than signs, optional, of a sign. It is not of this world, therefore, since sign as formally sign is contradistinguished against actualities. So what one sees is not the sign, which is rather the truth of what appears which hence does not itself appear since it is essentially mediated. One sees *through* to what is not seen but *perceived*. Seeing, in fact, or sensation in general, is spiritual, an act of mind, of consciousness. "The things which are seen are temporal", perishing while we see them. Sight reverses itself into ideality to be itself at all. The State, by contrast, is seen or it is nothing. It is precisely "God on earth" or, therefore, not God at all, but the first phenomenal pointer to the divine ideality, in which, however, it does not participate, as the Church participates in what it represents, this being precisely the sacramental principle. It, so to say, "signifies itself"¹⁵. So there is and can be no real relation between the real and the unreal. "The fashion of this world is passing away", in essence, that is to say. Thus philosophy, though not as presuming to change the sacred or essentially religious text, would interpret "is passing" as standing for the more timeless or static "passes", i.e. in essence, as we said, though here is meant the essence of fashion or figure, of what is not essence. Religion presents essence as narrative, thus gaining immediacy at the cost of absoluteness of form.

Rinaldi and Winfield, however, seem unaware that Absolute Idealism develops the classical analogy of Natural Law. They consequently attack a straw man of their own construction. Within the fold of "Israel" old and new, the Church or the divine assembly (*qahal*), one finds a whole

¹⁵ For exposition of such self-signifying as a logical and hence theological possibility see Dom Ansgar Vonier's *A Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist* (London, 1920s).

spectrum of more or less spiritual understandings of law, as one does among philosophers. There is no necessary commitment to heteronomy, such as Kant too attacked. This is the whole thrust of Hegel's mediated theology of "revelation" as reason's own self-revelation. Similarly Aquinas had defined Natural Law as "a divine light reflected in human reason". One might put "as" for "in" here: thus in Descartes too reason is "a divine light", while Hegel names light "nature's first ideality" (1816). Aquinas also stressed that an erring conscience nonetheless obliges absolutely (in conscience!), though equally affirming our (moral) responsibility for our opinions, thus far in harmony with Hegel's calling conscience wickedness (something Winfield keeps rather quiet about).

Hegel favoured constitutional monarchy as embodying the personal character of the state, God on earth after all. The monarch is crowned according to the rites of a particular religion, most probably "established". Republicans, or those of a different religion, need not despair. They have their presidents, while the Poles used to elect their kings (no "royal blood"). The Pope is an elected monarch, both of Vatican City since 1929 and, but only analogously, of the Church where he is "servant of the servants of God" and where all are and hence should be kings in equality of infinite dignity, however, which is precisely Winfield's point. For him, though, they should be kings but are actually slaves, a valid viewpoint thus far. However, religion continues to employ terms such as "servants" or "slaves" in full consciousness of their analogical or even anagogical transformation in the development of thought or "revelation", of theology as "the science of this faith" (*Enc.* 36 add.).

By natural law theory the seemingly heteronomous "human" laws (third kind of law), down to traffic regulations, are only valid as laws if they do not contradict natural law. This is the principle upon which the Nuremberg prosecutions were instigated and conducted, and not a mere agreement among the so disparate victors. Jurisprudence in the main still resists this theory, as not knowing itself, but this need not concern philosophical Mind. Positive law, e.g. the Mosaic, was, rather, one of the first active human representations, in "the fear of the Lord", of divine wisdom in the phenomenal world, not its opposite, except dialectically. The autonomous grows out of the heteronomous. Similarly Reason, as *ad opposita* or free, is not opposite to Nature as *determinata ad unum* or necessary, since Nature too is the Word of God, as thought in and with that Word. Absolute freedom is put as accomplished or "realised", God "speaks only one word".

This doctrine of Natural Law, however, is nothing if not virtue under the aspect of necessity, since virtue is necessary for the End, in which it

participates, as is summed up in Kant's notion of a Kingdom of Ends, despite his scorning virtue-language. Aquinas in fact wrote his long treatise on virtue (*Summa theol.* IIa-IIae), his moral theology, in order to harmonise Hebrew-Christian piety and Greco-Aristotelian virtue, after the long legalist reaction to the latter (still dominant in Islam).¹⁶ Revisionism, like resurrection, is an established Christian tradition.

Rinaldi presents Church and State as mutually contradictory. This is false, since spirit itself acknowledges the state as natural. One is born to belong to a state, says the non-contractualist tradition, without thereby insinuating any biological or genetic basis for such cohesion. One shares a culture rather than a community of physical type or tribe. In this Athens "left the rest of mankind so far behind", wrote Isocrates, that "the name of Greek" no longer signifies "a stock... but a type of mind".¹⁷ It is quite in line with this that there should be, on occasion at least, an established Church or spiritual community, whether in England, Vatican City or Israel. This, for that matter, is what is represented by the American confession "In God we trust" or, for that matter, the declarations of human rights in a union of nations (United Nations). We are referred again to a philosophic *Gottesdienst* or community of reason as the absolute, finally and concretely ideal (Absolute Idea). Philosophy is, in this perspective, the service of reason, of God, in and by God or reason. It is worship "in spirit and truth", as the Christian charter has it. "The hour is coming, and now is, when they that worship shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth"¹⁸. Not only so but the Father, in the actuality without limit of the Concept, "seeks such worshippers", wills them to be, rather, as Hegel indicates. Spirit, namely, "is God", and therefore worshippers of spirit should worship rationally, as Winfield stresses, but tendentially as implying that they generally don't unless they have read philosophy. This is against Hegel's account of speculative reason, however. Man "becomes aware of the reasonable order, when he knows of God, and knows Him to be the completely self-determined". This is similarly what is known in the perceiving of the state as an unconditioned and universal power, he adds, making no contradiction between the rights of Caesar and those of God, of reason as inward spirit.¹⁹ That man, as Hegel shows here, has this spirit concretely within him is his guarantee against external state tyranny, and it

¹⁶ Cf. Mark D. Jordan, "The *Summa's* Reform of Moral Teaching – and its Failures", *Contemplating Aquinas* (ed. Fergus Kerr, OP), Notre Dame 2003, pp. 41-54.

¹⁷ Isocrates, *Panegyricus* (380 BC).

¹⁸ *Gospel according to John* 4, 23.

¹⁹ *Enc.* 82 and add.

is this spirit that the Church exists to make known in the power of that same free spirit, as sacrament of unity in, again, the Idea. This account shows Hegel as belonging to those theologians who explain the mystical, as he defines it, as the normal development of religious life, of life, the *vita humana*, or in particular of the Christian life of grace (gifts of the Spirit) and not a vocation for the few, such as clergy and the cloistered, much as these states of life may help it along. Philosophy may be esoteric, as in Hegel's view it is, yet the mystical is not and so in affirming the unity of the two he modifies or moderates this claim, again witnessing to the flow of all finite conceptions into one another in the Concept in its final form, the Absolute Idea. Thus he says "the content of religion and philosophy is the same", philosophy's "doctrine is speculative and so religious".²⁰

Mysticism, rather, is the Way of human development "in spirit and in truth" as, to put it differently, self-transcendent aspiration is the most exoteric thing of all, the narrow gate admitting one at a time. This, in figure, is the essence of thought, of I as universal and "universal of universals". This is the essence of spirit, its primacy. It corresponds, as philosophically explaining it, to the universal call of the first and subsequent Christian preaching (*kerygma*). Animals, therefore, have no religion because, Hegel points out, they lack reason. They have no mind. Only man "feels his own universality" as "I", meaning a single person but *ipso facto* expressing "a thorough universal" in just this personal self-consciousness. The personal is the philosophical, has universality for its "principle". It is not abstractly individual merely.²¹ Our "immediate subjectivity" is laid aside in "learning to know God as our true and essential self". This is the universal as "principle of personality", the abstract individual's "ruin". Hegel relates this fate of the individual as such or *in abstracto* to the "doctrine, according to which God has willed that all men should be saved and all attain blessedness". The absolute Object has subjectivity for "its vital element".²² This "is a point which the philosophy of Spinoza never reached", that necessity, "the absolute Thing... is however no less the absolute Person", which he here relates to "the principle of individuality" as found in Leibniz.²³

So the state acknowledges "the spiritual power" or that it is good for the state, as a phenomenon (the world itself is a phenomenon, after all), that some be wholly concerned with what transcends it. Thus the Carthusian

²⁰ *Enc.* 573.

²¹ *Enc.* 24, add.

²² *Enc.* 194, add.

²³ *Enc.* 151, add.

Prior answered King Henry VIII's messenger, "The King's marriage is no concern of ours" who have left the world, in freedom of mind namely, as if in were anticipating their subsequent murder at the hands of the state, as if, in being "on earth", this God becomes fallible, "made sin", like conscience itself, supposedly God's "voice". Since they, these Carthusians or whoever *would* die then "all *have* died" and "dying we live". We die to and in self when we first know the death of the other, any other, of the beloved. Absolute Idealism in fact shows this, as does the rational example of this continual death of others, that all have died, that we are all dead, as we, according to Hegel, mistakenly call it (it is the "entry into spirit", he says), and, as Christians say, our life is "hid with Christ in God". Wordsworth applied this text specifically to lunatics and one need have no objection. How else are they not to be excluded from the universal fulfilment? Life, as the Idea Immediate, hides the Essence, the Notion, necessarily unseen. It cost aeons to conceive anything as actually invisible as an idea, upon which meaningful language itself depends in a three-part semantics, "how language refers". Augustine thus tells us of his difficulty of conceiving an immaterial substance. Hegel of course shared this, declaring that final truth is not substance but subject. This apparent subversion of ontology, however, is what first makes it systematically thinkable. "If God were not I would not be, and if I were not he would not be" (Eckhart). This, all the same, is no reduction but rather establishes the necessity, which is eternity, of all and any self-consciousness as "thoroughly universal".

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Religions, says Hegel, necessarily form a plurality as being only the immediate or a transitional form of Absolute Spirit. So when he says philosophy fulfils religion, or accomplishes it, he *ipso facto* allows for different representations of it. So one is within one's right as presenting one's philosophy as fulfilling one's specific religious tradition, Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, while including just this claim, that it fulfils all of them, including the claim of several religions to fulfil all the others. For in them all the Idea is at work as absolute, leading Hegel to denominate his own religion, the Christian, as absolute. Might Buddhists, say, want to do the same? Let them rather ask themselves that. In the measure that Zen, say, does that it clearly sees itself as philosophy, though not at all becoming thereby non-religious or a stranger to art. Thus Hegel begins his account (of religion) with "the religion of art" and ends it with "absolute knowing", where I "know as I am known" in St. Paul's terms, which Hegel precisely elucidates (in the final chapter of *The Phenomenology*

of *Mind* and elsewhere) while removing the implicit image of two distinct or separate individuals, knower and known, shaking hands or something.

It would be idiotic or worse to say that nothing transcends the state. Thus the state is not one of the three forms of Absolute Spirit Hegel lists at the end of the *Encyclopaedia*, but rather Objective Spirit, objectivity itself being a transitory and finite category, however. So "God on earth", again, is God among the shadows merely. God can never be on earth, all Gospels notwithstanding, presented as they are within a naively realist representation. Earth rather lives and moves and has its being within God, the Idea annulling its²⁴ abstract independence. Rather, like anything else, it is and is not the absolute idea, which is the absolute. So this is not something for God to be "on", the preposition necessarily coming to mean rather something like "in the guise of". Religion itself admits the paradox, saying, in the liturgy, that "he" came down from heaven without leaving it. "Where is Hell?" Faust asks Mephistopheles, who answers "Here, nor am I out of it." It's that simple, while Hell, in the tradition, is variously absorbed, as in Hegel's account of evil, Lewis's representation of it as a wormhole on the heavenly lawn or Geach's suggestion, in his *Providence and Evil* (1976) of a "time-fork". Hegel anyway treats the Scriptural "God wishes all men to be saved" as necessary decree and "absolute consolation", ignoring Augustine's contortions over this. For being "saved" represents finding fulfilment of one's own will (and losing it in the process).

Winfield effectively demands that there shall be no religious community within or, rather, alongside the state. This is absurd if the necessity for religion, as coming first, is maintained. For Hegel it is both a historical and an ideal necessity. This implies the truth of its content, as he says. But religion, Winfield says, shall acknowledge its legitimate subject in or as "the private conscience of the individual". Thus private, however, we should not allow it even there, as being wickedness indeed. There might seem a suggestion, a whiff, of a patronising bad faith in the sudden bald use of this phrase, just such as Hegel is often unjustifiably accused of.

It is, anyhow, false that the state "makes an absolute normative claim on conscience". Only absolute spirit or truth does that, of which the state is, again, not a form. The "liberal" state indeed claims to respect above all that conscience upon which it is itself founded. Put differently, the state, just as is the case with "God on earth", *is not*, is a figure (needing to be trans-figured) or representation, a phenomenon, for the simple reason, again, that God cannot be "on" earth, since Absolute Being annuls the

²⁴ *Enc.* 50.

cosmos, with all time and space, and hence place, as absorbing it within itself in this annulment. One would have to say the state subsists essentially “in” or as our minds, as it manifestly does not. Before Abraham was I am, so, just so, my kingdom is not of this world. This was one way of making the point, as positing the ultimate cosmology, which is cosmology’s negation. Thus speaks Spirit, anywhere and everywhere, however. Earth, rather, is in God, is idea, therefore, while flesh is not even “as grass”. That was metonymy, using next to nothing for nothing absolutely, pedagogically. The next to nothing is nothing simply, a variant upon that “sham-being” Hegel identifies with evil, while he simultaneously concurs in the saying that “There is none good but God”, a far more radical thesis than the Manicheans, denying creation as God’s own ordered self-manifestation, ever attained to. They, so to speak, viewed matter materially, the finite *sub specie finitudinis*. There is no such species, however, no absolute second principle.

So one may disobey the state and be prepared to take the consequences. Winfield makes nonsense of the era of the martyrs, in which we are in fact still living. Does he imagine his is Hegel’s mind? Philosophy too is a martyrdom, painful witness against the fashions of the day, any day, against the passing “fashion of this world” indeed, in “understanding spiritual things spiritually”, thus fulfilling or accomplishing religion. Of this philosophy Socrates, or later Al Hallaj, are founding or re-founding instances or “figures”. Or we might consider Giordano Bruno or even Saint, she is titled since the 1920s, Joan of Arc, listening, like any schizophrenic, to her inner voices as judging the immediacies of external representation. But no one is absolutely a schizophrenic, a postman or even a murderer. That is why “no murderer has eternal life dwelling within him”. We are men, but as named so for the highest in us, the specific difference, namely, of spirit, the ultimate and determining determination, absorbing all other or previous forms²⁵. Thus “the last man became a living spirit” or rather, as Hegel urges, God is not merely life but spirit.

To say that religious principles are as such heteronomous, the moral laws of the state as such grounded on reason’s immanent autonomy, has a touch of the arbitrary. It is certainly unhistorical. Everyone can know, if he wants, that the essential religious pedagogy, like pedagogy as such, is a progress, a return, from positive authority to deep “internalised” assent,

²⁵ See Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VIIIf, a doctrine adhered to by Aquinas, but apparently not understood or discounted by Scotus (his “bundle theory” of forms). Cf. F. Inciarte, “The Unity of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*” in *Substance and Action*, George Ohms, Hildesheim, 2002, or the original article in German in *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 1994, pp. 1-21.

such as we strive to develop in our children just in their following our lead. This founds and so grounds the State, now as then and forever, because in thought. Children will ever require piety, the virtue, and we begin, at any rate at the level of Objective Spirit, with which we are precisely concerned when we speak of the state, as children. Children, of course, have to mature, attaining again to that first harmoniousness, but as transposed from the naturally given to the product of our own spiritual labour, as Hegel reminds us. Recommending that we become as little children in that respect is “very far from telling us that we must always remain children”.²⁶

Winfield seems a stranger to these principles. Thus he uses the clumsily out of place term “allegorical” for the normal spiritual or mystical interpretation of Scripture, even, we noted, talking of altering it (*sic* Rinaldi), though he must know that an altered scripture according to ephemeral norms would be a superfluous caricature of development, as is movement, “act of a subject in potency insofar as it is in potency” (*actus imperfectus*), of pure act, where the part is the whole, outside inside and so on. Hegel himself, however, often uses the term “movement”, as in the movement of the notion, to designate precisely “perfect act”, in the sense of “pure” act, not the act or active form of this or that, of which we say “all times are his”. It is accomplished without ceasing, as if it had once been still to be accomplished.

It is Hegel who points out the main difficulty here, which, for all Rinaldi tells us, Winfield ignores. Philosophy, namely, is esoteric or for the few, religion is exoteric or for all, thus including those few as well, however. These two standards, all the same, flow into and feed one another. Democracy is the proof of this, as manipulative ideology is its corruption. No one voluntarily restricts himself to parables any more, and that goes for the whole world, the whole age rather. One reads the newspapers, or the Internet, of course first learning to read, no doubt heteronomously!²⁷ Otherwise there is radio and television. These are

²⁶ *Enc.* 24, add.

²⁷ This recalls Albert Camus, in the 1950s, imagining, in sardonic mood, a future judgment upon modern man in pejorative terms, “He fornicated and read the papers”, in that order namely. We now speak of a free or open sexuality, and this is exactly the connection Hegel identifies in the Mosaic legend of the “Fall” (of man) between knowledge and freedom, “knowing good and evil”. The connection once made, the rest has followed, helped along by the altered position of women (and hence of men) in the upheaval of modern war. In this and related senses (or developments) Hegel too “dates”, as he anticipated. His doctrine too requires development.

merely supplementary to the slumbering capacity, or duty, in all ages, of thinking for oneself, as we say. No one now excludes any reader or hearer from his philosophy, nor did Socrates. Whether or not himself illiterate, though we can see he was not, he wrote nothing unless, like Jesus, in the sand. No one now speaks, with the Pharisees, of “this accursed people, who know not the law”. The openness of the knowledge, any knowledge, is open to all, in principle. There are no *arcana*. Hence the holy itself is transformed, inverted, the last is first, workers, unemployed, increasingly women and even children. Maybe this was always so, in principle, or how was the proclamation of it ever *recognised* as truth. But now it is clear, though there be no precise point at which to fix the qualitative change. The name of this reconciliation is globalisation. Absolute Idealism is another name, of the cause rather than the effect and so not a mere tool or ideology of globalisation. This is its “contemporary historical relevance” (Rinaldi).

This is precisely why, however, in dialectic, quantity succeeds to quality, as merely naming its supersession, whatever qualifications are then introduced:

Quantity is pure being, where the mode or character is no longer taken as one with the being itself, but explicitly put as superseded or indifferent.²⁸

“Time like an ever-rolling stream bears all its sons away.” This insight is open now even to the writers of popular hymns. We might say, in Hegelian fashion, the esoteric is the exoteric and contrariwise, only turning him against himself in his own sense of self as other. So the individual, anywhere, scratches and shoves to get into the auditorium, find the book, waveband, Internet site, etc. Access to the esoteric is an exoteric right, while in this doctrine of right all is contained, “ought” become itself “is”, as was ever the doctrine of natural law, urging those conceiving it to “become what you are”, as, Hegel often notes (e.g. by analogy with the development of a plant from within, even or precisely as given soil and so on, this outside being inside as “essential”), we do and have done.

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So we come, again, to the ranking of religions, as did Hegel. Nothing is said here though, in Winfield and Rinaldi, about Christianity as “the absolute religion”, Hegel’s main emphasis. Again, while Winfield affirms Protestantism as condition for the emergence or revelation, as of itself to itself, of the modern era he does not similarly affirm pre-modern

²⁸ *Enc.* 99.

Christianity (Catholicism) as controlling condition for the emergence and continuance of Protestantism. Yet, for both, the remembered life or death, in *anamnesis*, of “the mediator” is ultimately determinative. Hence it is the insight of modern ecumenism, as confirmed in the latest self-definition (Second Vatican Council) of Catholicism, that Catholicism and Protestantism form one continuous religious movement, just as they do in history, as already follows from the one Concept as Hegel expounds it. The same is true of Christianity and Judaism, necessarily, as Hegel came increasingly to see. The distinctions that we make, or that make themselves with a view to language as a possibility, are themselves the sign of underlying non-abstract identity of the whole flux with itself. This is actually seen in the flow of, for example, Church history where the attempts of both sides, conservative Catholicism and its mirror, progressive Protestantism or mere protest, to define and establish themselves against the other, though more constitutively, at least at first, in the case of Protestantism, bring out the underlying unity.

It is no objection to this view that by Hegelian principles, it might seem, we would have to say the same of Islam or even its Donatist predecessor. Understanding this, independently probably of any discipleship of Hegel, Hilaire Belloc treated Islam, along with Protestantism, as the two great *Christian* heresies of later times, after the first mainly Christological ones. The whole matter is treated of in the New Testament writings themselves, under the case or figure of the new movement's relation to Judaism, whether contemporaneous or as applicable to a later period of the development of the latter.²⁹

By Hegelian principles, therefore, it is perverse to treat Catholicism and Protestantism as different religions, since there is clear dialectical flow based on identity of historical creed. The principles newly stressed by Protestantism are by and large confirmed by modern Catholicism, which finds their roots in itself as it has now officially found the roots of the revolution of 1789, “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity”, in the Gospel from which neither itself nor the (European) abolition of slavery can be abstractly separated. Winfield, however, states that earlier Christianity (Catholicism) made vain (*veritelt*, writes Rinaldi) “the affirmative meaning” of the unity of the divine and human natures (as perhaps defined at Chalcedon, 451), because of “feudal bondage” which “put off the recognition of the reconciliation of finite and infinite to an otherworldly beyond”. This, I claim, is blatantly specious and not the mind of Hegel in regard to religious development, despite his having lived and thought

²⁹ See *Romans* 9-11 especially.

before the ecumenical or “globalising” age he played a part in bringing about.

Hence studies such as R.W. Southern’s *The Making of the Middle Ages*, or C. Dawson’s *oeuvre*, from which I would select *Christianity and Culture*, though his *The Making of Europe* is more graphic, plus works by Pirenne and others, bring out rather how slavery, starting from the Pauline “slaves obey your masters” and *thus* shame them³⁰ into freeing you maybe, developed in Christendom into the contractual and thus mutual relation of serfdom and lordship, later into contractual labour generally, the guilds into unions, the underlying fraternity or equality, as figure for the last being first, into democracy³¹. The vassal or serf held land, as no slave had done. So rather than “putting off” reconciliation in liberty the Middle Ages, thus far truly named, should more justly or reasonably be viewed as beginning to effect this “affirmative meaning”, wheat and tares growing together as always, lest one “root out” the good with the bad, the permanent temptation of revolutionaries. This patient labour of spirit, directed and confirmed by such themselves medieval movements as Franciscanism or the progressivism of the Friars generally, inclusive of the circle around Joachim of Flora, in the tradition of the prophets of old Israel, is what bore fruit in 1789, as the Church documents of 1962-4 finally recognised, implicitly at least. They certainly did not want to “recognise” the persecution often accompanying this revolution or cancel the sheen of martyrdoms such as those depicted and celebrated in Poulenc’s *The Carmelites*, the ninefold or more crash of the murderous blade being perhaps the most dramatic sound ever yet heard in a concert-hall or opera house. Protestantism, anyhow, is a different religion only in the sense that post-conciliar Catholicism is different, or Tuesday’s Catholicism different from Monday’s. That’s the crux and it is the plain reverse of Winfield’s “putting off” or “making vain”.

Talk of putting off is material reflection of Biblical imagery and representation not spiritually interpreted. Eschatology and apocalyptic speak in terms of a future, granted, as do the beatitudes as signalling transformation of pain as ever present pain, at least before these words are heard, namely, “Happy are you who weep now” and the rest, heard, understood and felt, namely. These though are common patrimony between Catholics and Protestants. The Bible uses the future tense, as in “You *shall be* comforted”, only putting aside the present, though, in the

³⁰ This is precisely the theme Hegel develops in *The Phenomenology of Mind*.

³¹ See here, and on the sources of Revolution, Maritain’s *Christianity and Democracy* (1944) and earlier work. Maritain was part of the committee drawing up the UN charter of human rights after World War II.

sense of the phenomenal. This is what Hegel understood and why he makes absolute idealism constitutive of philosophy or reason (*Vernunft*). The naïve realist consciousness had first to fail, historically as it does dialectically. This found early expression in the iconic character of the first “resurrection crucifixes”, showing, as the hymn of “Dark Age” Venantius Fortunatus says, how Christ, there and then enthroned in robes of glory, “reigns in triumph from the tree” or in the earlier, Gospel utterance, “Now is my joy fulfilled”, “now is the Son of Man glorified”, spoken in response to Judas’ exit, on his mission of betrayal, from the “upper room”. The whole dialectic is here present implicitly, not surprisingly, since, as method, it constitutes Mind itself. It is there when Adam says, of the other, the woman, this is “flesh of my flesh”, bone of my bone. This is arguably a deeper strand than the narrative’s incidental patriarchalism. There never was a father without a mother, here “of all the living”, while both find place indissolubly together in the final Idea, ever-present as realised and self-accomplishing.

This is the sense and substance of what Hegel delivers to us in professorial manner. If he did not do so he would not be a professor of philosophy. Religious or philosophical inwardness continually escapes the immediate or foundational realist consciousness from which, however, heroic virtue first emerges, in martyrdoms and crusades or even the will to contemplation of or contact with the spiritual, “as having nothing yet having all things”, or as having all things as having nothing (Marx’s correct intuition concerning “the proletariat” or as was said, in earlier discourse, of “the poor”). Christianity, as fulfilling and therefore at root one with nascent Judaism, was bound to go through this half-half or “middle” period of unspiritual common-sense “realism”, as the background against which “mystics” stood out, though they were the authentically knowing spirits. The authorities could see, namely, that mysticism was esoteric. They rather neglected to stress, perhaps, or prudently soft-pedalled, that the Gospel preaching, as counselling *all* to seek the narrow way or “gate” (*gata* is Norse for “street”), at the same time as it identifies a broad and peopled way leading to “destruction” for the many, had overcome the esoteric-exoteric divide, preaching aristocratic democracy. The broad way of destruction is simply the world annulled that Hegel speaks of. We are not ourselves.

So all periods are in fact middle(s), *media* or means to ever-realised end, as the finite ever represents its all-absorbing opposite. So at no time were the “Middle Ages” simply identifiable with Hegel’s “unhappy consciousness”, as is proved by this itself containing, by the theory, the seed of its development and supersession. Thus the term “middle” here

directly witnesses to the developmental character of what succeeded to Antiquity, as itself therefore a development (of this). Hegel himself did not finally identify the two, the Age and its incidental unhappiness. He was thus not above considering “turning Catholic” himself, as we learn from a letter to his wife from Louvain, where he was visiting.

I prescind, though, from Winfield’s not entirely negative treatment of Islam, as Rinaldi reports it. This movement is judged “fanatical” by Hegel himself, as was the North African Donatism that prepared the way for its spread. One stresses aggressiveness and, today, terrorism as against Sufism, though Hegel himself reserves highest praise at the end of his main work for the Islamic poet, Rumi “the excellent”.³² One ignores also the normal peaceableness of Islamic folk, as well as the medieval philosophical movement of the *loquentes* or *mutakallim* within the *dar-el-Islam* (house of Islam), as within medieval Judaism, without contact with both of which Thomas Aquinas would not have been the colossus we know. If Ghazali, like Descartes or Hume, stressed the dominance (*Vorrang*) or independence of the faith of one’s community over reason there were plenty there who didn’t, whether we take the “two truths” theory of Averroes in Spain, shared by Siger of Brabant, Boethius of Sweden and many others in the West or the more profound Avicenna (Ibn Sina) in Persia, from whom much of Aquinas’s philosophy of being, as in his *De ente et essentia*, can be found to derive, aiding a further elicitation from Aristotle’s text rather than a somehow extrinsic dominance of faith over free reason, whatever Avicenna’s personal loyalties and commitments. When Aquinas doesn’t know how to buttress faith with reason (it is not really a question of “harmonisation”), though not ceasing to believe in or confess the former, this shows pretty clearly and is admitted, as in his attempt to show how imposition of the sacramental system does not constrain (*arctare* is the verb used) spiritual freedom (in *Summa theol.* III) or in veritable assertion of this impotence in debate on a supposed temporal beginning of the world or of nature as a whole, rather (in *De aeternitate mundi*).

The upshot of this, again, is Hegel’s “Religion must come first” and, I maintain, not go away. Thus religion may be identified abstractly with the first naïve “realist consciousness” and its failure, but Hegel does not thus identify it. He speaks rather, we have noted, of philosophy itself as a *Gottesdienst*, and the final one. One cannot miss his finding Christianity, as the absolute religion, the chief enabling agent of such true philosophy

³² I was myself introduced to Rumi, having failed to give due weight to Hegel’s reference to him at the end of the *Encyclopaedia*, by Dr. Robert Wallace.

and that not merely philosophically, nor does this prevent his agreeing with Fichte that any subservience to an external "dark power" is superstitious idolatry. The spirit worshipped and served is "closer than self", as indeed we find in Augustine, Eckhart or indeed the "Psalms of David", inasmuch as all these, Hegel claims, instance speculative reason as found in all times and places. Enlightenment folly, for him, is just one more instance of this regrettable cult of "dark" because limited powers, of *Verstand* as of deity. He thus distances himself from "modernity" in the abstract, "the mere Enlightenment of understanding", in both of his major texts.

In philosophy itself its own esoteric character, which Hegel stresses, is overcome in the exoteric vision, as once in Jeremiah or Joel or Marxism even, of the union of all with all achieved by Messianic mediation, by Jesus, the proletariat, the "suffering servant" or by truth itself. "I am the truth", the absolute universal as Hegel parses this pronoun. That is to say, the abstract opposition of these two terms, as in all similar pairs or "dilemmas", serves in logic to cancel or overcome them both. With logic the spirit is "poured out upon all flesh" and "all know the "lord". We must at least respect this claim of Hegel's.

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We come to Rinaldi's respectful critique of Winfield's religious philosophy in the book cited above, much of it already anticipated in his first two sections, however. For Winfield, he says, philosophy is "systematic", its object not the manifold of empirical "facts", mental, material, natural or historical. In this way he resembles Rinaldi's other Anglo-Saxon mentor (he does not find many of these), Errol Harris, from whom he otherwise differs markedly. This object of philosophy, rather, is "the ideal unity of the Concept" from which alone the former, the "facts", "exist and can be thought". The true Concept, we add, is "the concrete universal" (*Enc.* 160, 161), with which each element is identical, as in Parmenides. The moments of particularity and individuality are not under it, as in Kant, but in it, says Rinaldi, no doubt referring to Hegel's analysis of the syllogism's, or of analytic reasoning's, self-supersession.

In Winfield's spirit Rinaldi wages war here on the explicitly Christian interpretation of Hegel called, somewhat tendentiously, "right wing", since this is manifestly not Hegel's own limitation upon what he is doing, least of all when declaring that religion and nothing but religion is the main or centring focus of philosophy, the cult of the Absolute and hence the absolute cult (*Gottesdienst*).

Thus Rinaldi wants to get rid of the Church, again, as an instance superior to the State. Still, that it is philosophy that perfects and “accomplishes” religion, whether as absorbing or as superseding it, is common ground.³³ Rinaldi refers to E.E. Harris, *The Spirit of Hegel*, as arguing for the above, but also to A. Vera (1864, 1871)³⁴, who concedes Hegel’s own verdict on the supremacy (or greater religiousness) of philosophy over religion as if of form over content. Vera argues, as we have done here, from the State’s being “an institution belonging to the finite sphere of Objective Spirit”, while the Church embodies a basic form of Absolute Spirit as religion, to the State’s theoretical subordination to it in doctrine and praxis. This is just the position, of subordination of the temporal to the spiritual, insistently worked out in the long medieval period and beyond. Marx retained this truth in the guise of “the withering away of the State” in the face of the absolute community of salvation, of the “poor” whose is “the kingdom of heaven”, of the age to come, rather (*venturi saeculi*). These, as last, as coming last, are first in Hegel’s system, which gives a supra-temporal sense to these paradoxical, hence ultimately speculative words of the mediating tradition, in this case Christianity. One might then enquire whether Marx’s apparent falling back to the “religious” level of immediate narrative is more than appearance, of metaphor, for an ideal state. The self-contradiction of just one “saved” generation³⁵ at the end of history is otherwise too glaring, unless it is truly “with us” comrades now that “the future lies”, in our true and eternal being, namely. Meanwhile each of us, phenomenally, along with our societies, is “for the moment” no better (or worse) than he should be. Leibniz’s insight holds, as developed by Hegel and as we further set it forth here, of “the best of all possible worlds” as in the nature of things, i.e. in Nature and history.

“The Church” is but the eschatological anticipation of this? It is the end, as realised, at once now or ideally rather than in that otherworldly

³³ Cf. Georges van Riet, “The Problem of God in Hegel”, Part II and III, *Philosophy Today*, Ohio, Summer 1967, originally published in French at Louvain.

³⁴ See Rinaldi, *Absolute Idealism and Contemporary Philosophy*, cited above, for bibliographical details.

³⁵ Or could there be many, after history has ended, just going on and on? Is this what Marx envisaged? Thus viewed, human history would turn out to be the latter part, essentially incomplete, of the evolution of true man from ape, not much different from Nietzsche’s Overman or what was later portrayed in Huxley’s *Brave New World*. According to Hegel, this will be what thought is presenting now and always as the Absolute. Marx is left with the unresolved problem of the “unfairness” of the sufferings without compensation of the “pioneer” generations, something already indicated in Kant when proposing immortality.

“beyond” of that popular imagination Winfield identifies with the “medieval” moment (of thought, not of time) of this Church as a whole, for which the blessedness of contemplation (Hegel, *Enc.* 159) belonged to heaven rather than to that “earth” or world Hegel declares annulled by logic or, more exactly, by the “ontological argument” (*Enc.* 50). Since it is annulled precisely by logic the “heaven” replacing it, ideality “at home with itself”, is not “another” world but the only true one, which immediate consciousness simply misidentifies or misrepresents. Thus his system is justly called “realised eschatology”.³⁶

Objectivity is thus, as it were, only a covering under which the notion lies concealed. 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 this 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.³⁷

The Church as she herself immediately appears, therefore, is not “the Kingdom of God” in unveiled “glory”, though pageantry and art rightly aim to stimulate an intuition of this in what is never merely abstractly external and visible only. Here too, “a fool sees not the same tree as a wise man sees”³⁸. “A great mind is great in its experience”³⁹. Hegel himself refers to “the believing community” which does not understand herself fully and of which he himself was a member and had no wish not to be, however shocked his wife may have been by writings found after his death, thoughts he had no doubt judged it better not to try to share with her directly while living. One should not give meat to “babes in Christ”, Paul had declared. This community, the Church (*ecclesia, qahal*), is rather the sign or sacrament of this kingdom (not of this world)⁴⁰, the body or “extension” of Christ in myriad identities which are thus one identity, as the first a and b are one, thus far unnameable, when and if identified. So E. Schillebeeckx refers rightly, as consistently, to this Christ as himself “the sacrament” (in *Christ the Sacrament*), namely of this “redeemed humanity”, as the theologians speak, the true one namely, which is in fact Absolute Reason or Mind, the Idea or way (method), truth and life. Thus

³⁶ I first learned of this phrase from Mr. John Bardis.

³⁷ *Enc.* 212, add.

³⁸ W. Blake, “The Marriage of Heaven and Hell”.

³⁹ Hegel, *Enc.* 24, add. (3).

⁴⁰ Compare Kant's “kingdom of ends”.

Adam, the second or new Adam, says Scripture, “became a living spirit”. Man transcends himself, i.e. the concept of man self-transcends.

Winfield, Rinaldi tells us, stipulates that religion, to be acceptable, must have a true content. One wonders whoever seriously denied that without taking distance from religion, as did the utilitarians even in their finding it useful. Kant also, in his account of the postulates of practical reason, clearly takes distance, is not a brother, as Hegel uncompromisingly brings out⁴¹. Religion, then, as true, is here identified with “normative reason”, with “home”. Thus Hegel speaks of thinking as a being “at home” (with oneself). This is, in effect, the Catholic claim that “the Church is the home of reason”, substituting “home” for “normative” here. Hence the further claim that the one thinking truly or in clear conscience, even in his “invincible ignorance”, of good will as it is said, is just thereby invisibly related to this “home”.

The nineteenth century term just cited can seem, its apparent arrogance apart, as a theological “having it both ways”. This claim, indeed, concerning invisible *membership*, is itself one of faith, viewing the Church as not merely phenomenal and visible, like tables or an assembly of those concerned, though it is that, but as finally invisible as regards the extent of its membership, “I in them and they in me” in effect, once again. Yet this leap of faith, so to say, is a prime example of what is perfected in philosophy, here as “absolute idealism”, philosophy’s dogma, says Hegel, and this again is achieved within the apostolic proclamation that “you are all members one of another”. Add to this that even the most “scientific” language always remains irredeemably metaphorical, while which of these metaphors, lying in that pit of memory that language represents (cp. *Enc.* 445, add.), are dead, which are still alive though we will it to die, is, as continuous flow, virtually undecidable.

Such membership is ideally universal, wheat and weeds together in terms of the parable, a simple description of agricultural praxis. There, though, the “and” itself signals abstract distinction referred to final analysis. “Let both grow together until harvest”. This admonition, however, looks forward to the Absolute Idea, which in its very notion (idea) yet annuls all but itself, and thus is indeed not synthetic unless insofar as there is an “external presupposition” of abstractly separate individuals, such as Hegel rejects. So the methods of analysis or synthesis, as opposed to the “Speculative Method” (*Enc.* 238), are “unserviceable for philosophical cognition” (*Enc.* 231), being in the “style... of understanding”.

⁴¹ Cf. Hegel, *Enc.* 40-60, considering “The Critical Philosophy”. Cf. Kant’s odd title, *Religion within the Bounds of Reason Alone*. With what reason does he bind reason?

Thus if and when or as I am not the Idea I am not I, am a "false brother", even ontologically, i.e. not a brother, am "lost" indeed in abstraction, requiring to be absorbed and "taken up". In Hegel, however, ontology itself merges with axiology and contrariwise. In this field weeds, tares, are thus dialectically self-cancelling. But one wouldn't want to be one all the same. Hence it is "our affair" (Hegel) to transcend or annihilate nature. So Hegel cites here, again, the text, "God wills that all men be saved", deliberately, surely, taking distance from Augustine's attempts, following the letter of Scripture as he sees it, to neutralise this willing as not finally God's will, but rather judgment recoiling upon itself. With this belongs the finitising of divine freedom (Molinism etc.), the error of which just Augustine normally exposes (*On Free Choice*), as if such freedom were subject in real relation to an abstractly other or "human" freedom. God, Aquinas argues, can have no real relation to his creatures, as they can to him! On the other hand the Calvinists affirm absolute or divine freedom while denying its content as stated in the text Hegel cites. God, rather, wills damnation upon some absolutely, instancing absolute freedom to treat his creatures "as he likes", which, Hobbes, taught by the late medieval "voluntarism" (liberty of indifference), had declared, is his right. There is here a will to absolutise immediate Biblical drama as against Aristotelian reservations, as they were felt to be. Hence Aquinas's efforts at reconciliation of reason and positive religion, misinterpreted as setting bounds, as Kant later wished to do, to religion, were initially met by the arche-episcopal condemnations of 1277 at Paris, from which his later canonisation (1323) presumably distanced him. Hegelianism is here the clear inheritor, even beyond the prejudices and limitations, whatever they were, of that *gemeinten* individual who died in 1831. "Greater things than I have done shall you do", a saying that in fact anyone can refer to his self, never merely his "own" self, namely.

Winfield's insistence on a reform adapting the Church to the modern project (his own, rather) flogs a dead horse, since this movement has been going on for some time, for all time even. It is precisely dialectical synthesis of differentiated unity in opposition, as resurrection unites in superseding both death and life, the "idea immediate", in Spirit, or is rather the true face of death, since this ends or is the end of life, is life realised. There is no equivocation here.

Here Winfield makes some decidedly un-Hegelian remarks about historical contingency, as Rinaldi concedes. Hegel argues "minutiously", Winfield says, for Trinity and Incarnation as alone religion's "absolutely reasonable content", while necessity, not contingent possibility, is the "only modality", Hegel asserts as against Kant. Rinaldi plays this down

though as “the letter of Hegel’s text”, an old ploy. It is not, however, legitimate where our subject, Hegel, philosophy rather, is this very transcendence of the letter by Spirit.

The specifically Catholic (this is of course a contradiction *in adjecto*) doctrine, in the sense of being a medieval development (of the ideas of Cicero and others) at least, of Natural Law or, more simply, of law, neutralises this whole tissue of reaction. For by it the whole doctrine of a law given from outside is progressively relativised, as external grace itself is declared the final interiority, only projected in abstract alienation, by a mere analogy with Nature and its growing processes. It is itself developing process, a figure of the Idea of which the Method is only the form as “specific consciousness of the value and currency of the ‘moments’” as developed in this “specific consciousness” (EL 237). This doctrine of grace, as in its transcendence yet making a man’s acts more “his own” (Aquinas), adumbrates an anthropology conformable to the general philosophical principle of the subsumption of the finite in the infinite.

For the accompanying doctrine of law, in the *Summa* 1a-2a, namely, there are four kinds of law, eternal, natural, human and divine. That the four are one is intimated in the clear identity of the first and the last, in that circle of exit and return congenial to the mind of Aquinas, expounding this doctrine (*Ibid.* q.90f.). Hegel’s philosophy too does no more than ring the changes upon them at the higher level of dialectical integration represented by five or six centuries of further temporal development, development, a finite concept, itself developing in the process.

Eternal law then is the rule of the divine government of the world, presupposed to “science” (cf. G. Frege, “What is the world without reason?”), a notion going back to Augustine, to Cicero, Plato and the Hebrew prophets (“number, weight and measure”). So Cicero identifies it with *ratio* wherever found. Reason is divine, “it originated simultaneously with the divine mind” and thus “began to be law” (*De legibus* II 4.10), the point being that without the divinity it would not be law specifically, the point G.E.M. Anscombe contested with C.S. Lewis at Oxford in 1947. Lewis had questioned the validity of validity for a non-absolute reason. Anscombe replied that reason was simply reason. It would be difficult to say who of the two was the more Hegelian, since her assertion might include reason’s self-discovered autonomy as Hegel expounds it, that it just is what we call, as it were outside philosophy, God.⁴² That is, law is yet more interiorised in her account thus viewed. Absolute validity cannot be something externally guaranteed, the religious narrative account

⁴² Alan Donagan took the same line in his *The Theory of Morality*, Chicago 1977.

wrongly absolutised by Lewis (in his book *Miracles*), but belongs to rational self-consciousness. The dilemma reappears constantly, not least among logicians, as when Lukasiewicz speaks of discovery of a new logical law as progress in knowledge of the mind of God.⁴³ This might coincide with saying “Man is the measure of all things”.⁴⁴

That reason is ultimate being is the key insight of the Ontological Proof of God, which, or who, might just therefore be dubbed non-ontological as placing (the) idea above being (*to on*). This “proof” governs and is governed by Hegel's logic, as Aristotle was by the principle of non-contradiction. The two laws or reasons (of being, which they thus dethrone) are in fact the same. *Ens* is the ultimate form as, precisely, the having of form since, as was medieval public property, *forma dat esse*.

Second, after the eternal law, comes Natural Law. Like the first it is, in the immediate sense, no law at all but “a divine light” reflected in human consciousness (Aquinas's definition of it). Its principle, speculative and yet practical (cf. Aristotle: “Theory is the highest practice”), is “Become what you are” or, a variant, “Do what you are doing” (*age quod agis*, Jesuit motto). In neither of these two laws, eternal and natural, is there any trace of heteronomy, but freedom rather. The light, the reflection, is ours, as “in thy light shall we see light” (*Psalms*). That is, I am not I, the particular, but universal and absolutely so (i.e. as nothing other). The second taken with the first proclaims that reason is its own law (the presupposition of logic as disclosed at its end). Thus the absolute follows no prescription in being reasonable, but is as light, Nature's “first ideality”, says Hegel. This is to say that physical light, from which we take the word, is itself named after this primal freedom.⁴⁵

So the third form, law taken univocally, is indeed heteronomy as human “positive” law, *Gesetz* as *gesetzt*. This, however, while the other three conceptions are indeed based upon it inasmuch as they are called law, just as the whole of language derives from and rests upon the first inarticulate grunts and cries, or so it is supposed, is itself heteronomous as both

⁴³ Cf. Coope, Geach, Potts, White, *A Wittgenstein Workbook*, 1971: p.7 (where the text of the Polish original of 1961 is translated).

⁴⁴ Later, in her “Modern Moral Philosophy”, *Philosophy* 1958, Anscombe appears to take the same line as Lewis had earlier done, denying reason's “authority” unless one identifies it with an absolute *decree*. She then looks to a doctrine of the virtues, non-legal, as being moral philosophy in a reductive sense as against “revelation”. This is ironical in the extreme, quite at odds with the project of Aquinas's moral philosophy (cf. Mark Jordan, cited above). Aquinas *explains* precepts as themselves *secundum rationem*.

⁴⁵ Cp. St. Paul on divine fatherhood, “from whom all fatherhood is named”.

projected and coming from without. Yet it is only valid as concurring with, not contradicting, the other three forms (of law), with natural law most immediately. Law is thus “an arrangement or ordering according to reason”, says Aquinas, the prototype of which is reason’s autonomous self-ordering, which is finally free or is not according to any principle other than itself.

This is itself Divine Law, the fourth and omni-determinative form or law. It is the law of the Idea, Spirit, at once itself and its self-revelation, with which it is identical as proceeding. In an early text Hegel suggests Spirit is most truly spoken of as proceeding, in Trinitarian theology, from the Son alone, since in the Son first the Father (like any father) is realised as the effect generates the cause *qua* cause. The Son, that is, is not begotten as by a human father or accidentally, but *in idea*. In him the Father “becomes” concrete or at first appears or is revealed as that revealing which is, first, the Father himself. So the living water, Spirit, flows from “believers”, one with the one mediating the Idea as, therefore, that one, concretising the universal Idea, is one with us (God with us, Emmanuel). It can be seen that this “spiritual” interpretation transcends the recent quarrel between theists and atheists, as does philosophy itself. Each can acknowledge the other, as is also implicit in some of the acts of the modern and earlier Church, especially in the pronouncements of its mystics and theologians as in those of other “spiritual” traditions, Buddhistic and so on. For the same reason, in Judaism, God is not to be named.

Canonically, in specifically Christian teaching, divine law has just two forms or moments, the second, however, entirely absorbing the first, the New the Old, thus instancing, or engendering, dialectic. The laws of Moslems, Mormons and others would, if divine or participant in the Idea, have to be situated within or along a spectrum determined by these two, the first of which is determined by the second, however, just as we have referred to the Son determining the Father as Father. If Israel had not brought forth Christ then Israel would have had no authority; it is entirely retrospective, a “trick of the light”.

The Old Law, Aquinas states, is dictated and hence written. It therefore requires a degree of cultural development, got for example from Egypt where one had first written on tablets not of stone (the “Ten Commandments”) but of clay. So, just as much as the New Law, this Old Law could not have been given “from the beginning of the world”, as objectors complained that also the New Law should have been if it is the true way. It is treated as pedagogic by commentators, Scriptural or other. Law teaches. This is true even of our human legislation. That law teaches

is indeed essential to this scheme. Thus law, like learning, one with it, rather, is this same process of interiorisation. It is thus senseless to set it against the interior or autonomous (self-law) itself. Regarding teaching, therefore, Aquinas proposes the question “whether one man can teach another” and answers with a qualified negative. As Plato had in his own way insisted, the learner has to have the “new” knowledge in him already, as the sick man’s healing must draw upon his own reserves of health. Teaching has thus an appearance of falsity, but only as appearance, its immediate aspect. One looks forward to the day, “Day of the Lord” as the Old Law has it, when no man shall say to another “Know the Lord” because all (shall) know him (Jeremiah), in Spirit “poured out”. “I shall pour out my Spirit upon all flesh” (Joel). This day in fact is eternal and what one looks forward to, rather, would be a better knowledge of it as religion is absorbed and fulfilled, accomplished, in philosophy, absolute spirit’s final or eternally valid form. The Father of Mankind (*homo erectus* as newly delineated) is the Last Man. In this sense Blake spoke truly of “the world in a grain of sand”, as all notions, says Hegel, are one in the Notion. For what is a grain “without reason” naming it, without which the world “would have no grain”?

Word-play aside, though it is a deep well of truth, the second or fourth and definitive instance of Divine Law is not written down at all, Aquinas declares, but “poured into the heart” or, the inner significance of these eloquent figures, reason perfected, named also (*Enc.* 159) love, blessedness, “flourishing”. The reduction of this by “the Bible says” brigade is thus illegitimate and perverse, unspiritual, a falsely abstract separation of the religious moment from philosophical eternity. Yet it is in itself all the same a legitimate because actual moment of mind’s apprehension of spirit, of mind’s progressive self-apprehension, self-consciousness. The divine pedagogy, like Goethe’s “eternal feminine” or the Socratic priestess of love, draws us all on (*zieht uns an*). It is in this sense, rather than as a humble self-limitation, that love, *philia*, is built into the very name of philosophy.

This disposes of the Winfield-Rinaldi objection to religion. It becomes, by natural process, “in the fullness of time”, this being the necessary gratuitousness immanent to infinity, the absolute religion and Absolute. “I shall not die but live and declare the works of the Lord”, declared the warrior-king (Psalm 117, Vulgate numbering), in a figure of resurrection, as this is taken.liturgically. Life, again, is the “Idea immediate” only. This is thus other, “more than life”. “Thy law is better to me than life” (Psalm 18). This is the zeal that Newman found necessarily consequent upon that true belief Winfield requires. Without this zeal, erotic as one with amatory

energy, philosophy cannot be pursued. The Platonic Socrates is unequivocal here (*Phaedrus*). Hence the Socratic contempt in *Phaedrus* for “the non-lover”, untouched by the “divine madness”, of reason as self-revealing or glory. “And in his temple all are saying ‘glory’” (Psalm 28).⁴⁶

When we see the glory
Of dreams coming true
The same old love-story
Sounds thrillingly new.

This, a ditty sung by Pattie Page in the early 1950s, illustrates Hegel’s view of speculative language as property of all. “Zeal for thy house has consumed me” (hath eaten me up, in the old English version), zeal, that is, for anything and everything as viewed in the Idea, the common chord sounded in music again and again, being, primal act of acts.

⁴⁶ These Davidic Psalms have inspired many, from the philosopher Augustine to lastly, in music, “a greater revelation that the whole of religion and philosophy” (Beethoven), the composer Bruckner, whose last completed composition is a setting, but how much more, of the last Psalm (150).

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

SELF, THE OTHER, INFINITY

Throughout this chapter I shall employ the word "finite", when used without qualification, to denote anything which has any reality outside it, whether its determination is merely external, or due to its own nature. Hegel himself speaks of the self-determined as infinite. But this is inconvenient in practice, though it is based on an important truth. For it leaves without a name the difference between the whole and a part of reality, while it gives the name of infinity to a quality which has already an appropriate name – self-determination (McTaggart, *Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology*, CUP 1901, End-note 1). Hegel's point, however, is that the self-determined is as such the infinite, that I, whoever I am, am the "universal of universals" and hence, it is but a corollary, one with, and not forming a part of something else, any other I as they all are with one another. So the self-determined subject has indeed *no* reality outside it. "I am that", as Hegel copiously illustrates at the end of the *Encyclopaedia* in the case of Krishna. None of this is the case with a flower, a book, a waterfall or educational system. These are finite and so, as he says, "ideal" (*Enc.* 95). They are *absorbed*, that is, into the infinite, where alone, in "idea", they are perfectly what they are and have reality. As Aquinas had said, every such idea is identical with the divine essence, including therefore the idea of existence. It is a further question whether every phenomenal mental formation *of* finite consciousness, itself ideal, such as tomorrow's breakfast, can amount to such an idea in which it would be perfectly what it is. If it cannot, it is nothing, has no truth, whether it be correct or incorrect as an expression. Thus "even finitude in the first instance is in the category of reality. But the truth of the finite is rather its ideality".

McTaggart's remark here expresses disapproval, of Hegel's *calling* all intellect infinite. The disapproval, all the same, is misplaced. McTaggart wants to call human reason, in an individual, finite as instancing something "which has any reality outside it", whereas Hegel calls it infinite as self-determined. But as self-determined it has indeed no reality outside it. Hence all intellects are identically one and what is outside mind

is the same as or is precisely what is inside mind (*Enc.* 138). This identity defines mind, thought.

Consequently there is, at this the relevant level, no “difference between the whole and a part of reality” (*Encyclopaedia* 160f.) and we don’t then need a name for this indifferent difference. I am, as are you, everywhere I, “universal of universals”. In other words, all these pronouns are “personal”, which is “the principle of personality” (Hegel). Indeed, the converse of this will follow, that personality is the principle of universality, of mind. Personality is self-consciousness, so logic is what each sees for himself. Hence it is not a body of objective knowledge, but action, movement, though this in fact is the final or absolute knowledge. Thus the whole and part relation, its study in mereology, is transcended in “The Doctrine of Essence”, as Hegel calls the second, middle part of his *Logic*.

Hegel, says McTaggart, gives the name “infinity” to self-determination, i.e. to something else with its own appropriate name. This though is to speak as if as if it were not possible to find self-determination infinite. Moreover, this view of Hegel’s means that even “self-determinate”, as a determination, is infinitely more than itself, call it Freedom, Necessity or whatever else. Infinity, namely, just is “that than which a greater cannot be conceived” and even, a consequence Anselm himself draws, though strictly as a consequence only, that which therefore itself cannot be conceived, inasmuch as such conception would mean setting a bound (*finis*) to it or making it finite. At the same time, however, we cannot deny to infinity the power to know, to conceive itself, as itself uniquely “absolute self-knowledge”, i.e. knowledge’s knowledge of itself. Hegel, anyhow, claims that the “Absolute Idea” is this precisely because of this self-determining character of Idea, i.e. of Mind or Spirit. We “know our own mind(s)”, as we say.

So the infinity of Mind or minds in identity, that this what infinity is, “deep calling to deep” (*cor ad cor*), is the Hegelian insight, “whatever the consequences”. It can also be ours, as indeed an insight. In general the infinite is only comprehended by itself. So God bestows on the blessed his own light, the *lumen gloriae*, in which alone they see him, this enjoyment of God being the fruition and final end or aim of human life, of experience as intrinsic to rationality, its “obediential potency” indeed. Thus far the accounts of Aquinas and Hegel coincide, as the recent “official” deletion of Limbo from the inward landscape may help to reveal. The older account is governed, or hampered, by a would-be realist account of time in its relation to eternity. However Aquinas elsewhere describes the *vita contemplativa* as an advance participation in eternal life. To this *vita*

“thinking”, I, feeling, love, blessedness, may be assumed¹. Our seeming not to have quite reached it belongs to our misperception in general, in the “land of unlikeness” and shadows from which we raise ourselves in any approach to “absolute spirit”. “How can the gods see us face to face until we have faces?” asks a character in C.S. Lewis’s novel, *Till we have Faces*. Phenomenal death itself is the proximate sign of or passage to this, its essence not as it appears, and as such philosophy takes it. It is itself the “swan-song” (owl’s flight) pictured as prefacing it. So the account we have of the death of David Hume, e.g. in Mossner’s biography (*The Forgotten Hume*), is here instructive and edifying. So J.R.R. Tolkien wrote of death as the special gift given to men but not to the other imaginary creatures peopling his pages. Yet “God made not death”. Rightly interpreted then, this text of *The Book of Wisdom* means that this appearance, fearsome to “nature”, conceals its opposite, as in general everything does, save the Idea, itself transcending definite being. Precisely this is what the later development of religious revelation and, hence, of philosophy made clear, fulfilling the scriptures, spirit leading into all truth. This is the whole weight of Hegel’s system of logic, rendering self-evident the great Deuteronomic command with which the second command, as “like unto it”, is, by the same logic, identical. I refer to love of God and neighbour. Religion, as necessarily coming first, presents these things in abstract separation from one another, as if love of God without that of neighbour were an abstractly moral instead of a metaphysico-logical impossibility. Later, at evening, the owl of wisdom gathers them under its wings in unity of vision, which is the formal “consolation of philosophy”, itself always honouring and perfecting (accomplishing) “religion”.

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This infinity, of persons as of personality, of minds or spirits, not in abstract singularity but in essential and total relation, just as we learn of it in the case of the Trinitarian persons in theology, is central to Hegel’s introduction to the section on “Lordship and Bondage” in the early part of *The Phenomenology of Mind*. Taken in isolation the target of the treatment of this theme is often missed.² It moves, after the manner of Plato in the *Philebus*, for example, on several levels at once, reconciling them in spiritual understanding (*intellectus*) such as we bring to the Bible, or to art and philosophy generally. Only the latter, however, is capable of thematising

¹ Cf. Hegel, *Enc.* 159.

² P. 229-235f. in Baillie’s translation.

this relation as such, in conscious reconciliation of reconciliation itself. This indeed is the theme of Hegel's logic as standing for philosophy as a unity, for the Idea.

The selves conscious of self in another self are, of course, distinct and separate from each other. The difference is, in the first instance, a question of degree of self-assertion and self-maintenance: one is stronger, higher, more independent than another, and capable of asserting this at the expense of the other. Still, even this distinction of primary and secondary rests ultimately on their identity of constitution; and the course of the analysis here gradually brings out this essential identity as the true fact. The equality of selves is the truth, or completer realisation, of self in another self; the affinity is higher and more ultimate than the disparity. Still the struggle and conflict of selves must be gone through in order to bring out this result. Hence the present section.³

The treatment thus illustrates the transition in dialectic from quality to "Being as Quantity", as "One, and many ones" as is brought out, not without figure, in the "vital stage" of philosophical Atomism.⁴ *The Phenomenology of Mind*, generally, "the first part of the System of Philosophy", is thus preliminary to the Logic⁵, in what is a passage from things to "terms". Hence it is that "the Concept", or ideas generally, are more fundamental than things, that God himself is the Idea, in a sense indifferent to crass questions about existence. Hegel never asks if God exists⁶. He asks what God is. He had after all begun his Logic by finding Being and Non-Being (a qualified Nothing) equivalent, a move the later Neo-scholastic manuals were to find convenient airily to dismiss. One can, however, relate it to Thomas Aquinas's finding that God can have no real relation to existent things, to *ens mobile*. The Idea is Act. For it nothing is merely possible, as if in antecedent hesitation before applying more absolute principles. It is Act that is absolute. It transcends as "sublating" mobility in neither beginning nor ceasing. In thus ascending "from shadows to reality" we negate the shadows, ungratefully but irretrievably, not in pantheism but in "acosmism", as Hegel will point out in defence of

³ J.B. Baillie, prefacing his translation of "Lordship and Bondage".

⁴ Cf. *Enc.* 98 and foregoing. Quantity differentiates quality as fulfilling and surpassing it. Quality "has its proper place in Nature, not in the world of Mind (*Enc.* 90, add.).

⁵ Cf. *Enc.* 25.

⁶ Even though he was not above lecturing on *The Proofs of the Existence of God* in his last days.

Spinoza⁷. Creation, Aquinas showed, can make no change in God. By the same token, Hegel will rather stress, God cannot be thought without it. In Biblical terms he is essentially Father, begetting his only Son or Word, into whom and in whom, as unity in identity, the same, creation is eternally gathered, each item⁸ reflecting, in its own reflexive being, all. “To what will you compare me?” Well this, or anything else, or nothing, will do:

Alas that love, whose view is muffled still,
Should without eyes find pathways to his will....
Here's much to do with love, but more with hate.
Why then, o hating love, o loving hate,
O anything of nothing first create... (*Romeo and Juliet*).

The poetry brings us to the nub, to Self and Other in their correlate mutuality, each inconceivable without the other, as the other must ever be other of the other in ceaseless multiplication of self. *Numeri non ponuntur in divinis* or, as Hegel will say, “it is useless to count”. *Sumit unus sumunt mille*.⁹ Quantity is itself “but a stage of the Idea”, progressively to be left behind.

Self-consciousness exists in itself and for itself, in that, and by the fact that it exists for another self-consciousness; that is to say, it *is* only by being acknowledged or “recognised”. The conception of this its unity in its

⁷ He will also say, at times, in accordance with his etymological aliveness, that just this acosmism is the true pan-theism, but one should not let oneself be confused by this, still less misuse such texts to declare Hegel, or Francis of Assisi (*Deus meus et omnia*), pantheists in the pejorative sense.

⁸ Or, in the developed doctrine, we might rather say “each person”. This is McTaggart’s interpretation. Hegel’s understanding of “person”, however, as is true too of the Pauline and Johannine writings (“You are all one person in Jesus Christ”, “I in them and they in me”), cannot be confused with our unreflective or “phenomenal” understanding. Person, as Idea, is subordinated to Spirit, blowing where it will in “absolute knowledge” (of itself, i.e. of knowledge). That God is Spirit, thus understood, is, says Hegel, the teaching of Christianity. This too is what lies behind Aquinas’s firmness in saying that natural things, he mentions “plants and animals”, do not form part of the “final” Resurrection. This is enough to make of them phenomena exclusively, manifesting the Idea in alienation from itself, to be brought back to itself in our creative contemplation (of Nature). “It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.”

⁹ From a liturgical sequence composed by Aquinas for the then new feast of *Corpus Christi*.

duplication, of infinitude *realising itself* in self-consciousness, has many sides to it...¹⁰

Note his saying infinitude realises itself in self-consciousness. I, he says, the “first person” of grammar, is “the universal of universals”. Grammar, like all the arts, is a form, as art is form, of absolute spirit, resistant therefore to the oft-attempted separation from the speculative¹¹. We may identify this infinitude, I, as “closer to me than I am to myself” (Augustine). It cannot be isolated as “the transcendental *ego*. Here is no debasement of doctrine in this sober assumption of the sacred into the secular. Indeed, it is rather the other way round. Where all is temple, “cleansed”, nothing is pro-fane. The depth lies at the surface.

This double meaning of what is distinguished lies in the nature of self-consciousness: - of its being infinite, or directly the opposite of the determinateness in which it is fixed.

Hegel’s thought here recalls Blake’s seeing “the world in a grain of sand”, or even the Johannine “He that has seen me has seen the Father”. Yet here it is the Subject, not the Object, which is in focus. As infinite, the subject too is opposite to its determinateness “in which it is fixed”. Just in this, in fact, do we have “infinitude realising itself”. The orthodox Christian needs to keep calm so as not to bristle and misunderstand Hegel here, whether he will finally find him orthodox or not. As always, in “the development of doctrine”, we fight, are concerned rather, on two fronts. Hegel, anyhow, is offering us a new or alternative way of seeing what we have ever contemplated, one of those turn-arounds of our daily meditation to which we ought anyhow to be accustomed, the “now I see” that is ever new, sailing “from glory into glory”, even if, for a season, into darkest night, all the old land gone, in what we have been taught to call a paradigm shift.

It is not a matter of God’s becoming conscious or self-conscious. Hegel is not so theologically crass, nor does his category of Becoming in his logic stand for any kind of temporal process. Rather, the temporal process of our immediate consciousness has to be read atemporally. Time itself does not move. Hegel expresses this by saying that the End is as such, as end, “realised end”. We live under the illusion that all is not yet accomplished. “This is the illusion under which we live”, life after all being itself less than the final category of categories, less than the Idea. It

¹⁰ Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, tr. Baillie, p.224, my stress.

¹¹ This is the significance, in the development of thought, of the late-medieval movement known as “speculative grammar”.

falls short of the necessity of the Absolute, sublating both movement and rest.

Incarnation then is not merely purposed from all eternity. It is, in the union with *caro*, the carnal, with flesh as with the false or immediate, the Idea's self-constituting moment, the truth, that is, of each moment, *qua* moment, as infinite, one with the Idea as self-realised. Thus it is in the incarnate one, called Christ or "anointed" in religion, in art the work or new world "at hand", whatever it may be, minitiarist or grandiose, that God finds full concrete self-expression, free of all the finite abstraction of the Understanding. The emptying is the self-actualising speaking of his (one) Word, is the manifestation that the Absolute, God, essentially is. This is not a manifestation of this or that, of some finitely determinate content, since all difference is absorbed in final identity, but is manifestation itself, glory as religion has it. Now Christ does not have two or three bodies, such as a natural or a "sacramental" body and a spiritual or mystical one. His body, as the reality, is mystical, is speculative truth, and the first two are phenomenal representations of that. That the sacramental is representational is contained in the very meaning of the term and so, as with "creation", which like "incarnation" is a theological and hence partly figurative term, there is contained in this final becoming for us an element of divine self-alienation. This, however, is merely consequent upon our own reality as representation or image, our "minds" therefore not entirely our own but, rather, abstractly individual. The finitude of life, its intrinsic setting towards death, is "the ruin of the individual", as mind's intrinsic "desire" and end is the universal, again, however, not to be abstracted from what is individual and particular. So if the divine were not thus self-alienating it would be alien to itself indeed, as merely finite, as false, in a word. This is the Hegelian "syllogistic", literally, as expounded in the "Science of Logic", third part ("The Doctrine of the Notion"), on "The Subjective Notion", developing finally into Objectivity, Actuality, Cognition, the Good and the Absolute Idea. All this however we can find already implicit in this early part of the *Phenomenology of Mind* we are considering:

Self-consciousness has before it another self-consciousness; it has come outside itself... lost its own self, since it finds itself as an other being; secondly, it has thereby sublated that other, for it... sees its own self in the other (Baillie translation, p.229).

Even this, we need to remember, and understand, while preliminary, is at the same time a moment in Hegel's realised eschatology. The consciousness of self in another self "rests ultimately on their identity... the true fact. The

equality of selves is the truth... of self in another self.” We “sit with Christ in the heavenly places”. Implied is the ultimate falsity, the “sham being”, of evil, into which the Idea, in the course of its eternal fulfilment as its “own result”, empties itself. “Offences must come”. In this sense, intrinsic to its own nothingness, Hegel finds Evil too in God and protests, as later will Oscar Wilde (through a character in *Lady Windermere’s Fan*), against the abstract classification of persons themselves as good or evil exclusively. Evil is a necessary moment in the discovery or self-manifestation of knowledge and *Jeder muss sein Schicksal tragen* (each must bear his fate), be he Jesus or Hitler, of course allowing for the differences *in* the identity. Difference itself is sublated, and thus made concrete, if, as Hegel affirms, “Self-consciousness exists in and for itself, *in that, and by the fact that* it exists for another self-consciousness; that is to say, it *is* only be being acknowledged or ‘recognised’”¹² or cognised again. It is what it is not and it is not what it is, its moments are not distinguished in their distinction, must be “understood in their opposite sense”. This “double meaning” of self-consciousness is due to its infinity, Hegel says here.

So the self “must cancel this its other”. But in setting “itself to sublimate (*aufheben*) the other independent being”, as still here appears, “it thereupon proceeds to sublimate its own self, for this other is itself” and all “in order thereby to become certain of itself as true being”. We have here, it can seem, the philosophical accomplishment of the injunction to “Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you”. This is no call to a final unhappy alienation in denial of all life’s impulses but a declaration of where beatitude lies hidden beneath and in contradiction of immediate appearance, Hegel’s very characterisation of his Doctrine of Essence as negation of appearance.

Inasmuch as creation is out of nothing the Idea becomes it, “goes forth freely as Nature”. This “as” signifies Nature as informed by Spirit, in the latter’s self-alienation. It does not signify Nature *materialiter spectata*, where the phenomenon is taken as a thing or collection of “things”. Without Spirit Nature, like Matter, is nothing.¹³

Just so does the Idea become “man”, take flesh, become visible and tangible, and so attain first to its own reality, as first manifesting what it essentially is, Spirit. Hence Hegel suggests that Spirit properly or concretely

¹² *Ibid.* p.229. The first of the two stresses is my own.

¹³ We might compare the Idea’s going forth freely as nature with Wittgenstein’s concluding his *Tractatus* by enjoining silence (is there any other way to stop?). Natural things, says the poet, “speak by silences”, i.e. they do not speak.

proceeds from the Son entirely, an idea not contradictive of but rather disclosing orthodoxy.

The mediation of figurative thought is necessary. The knowledge of nature as the untrue existence of spirit, and this universality of self which has arisen within the life of the self – these constitute implicitly the reconciliation of spirit with itself. This implicit state is apprehended by the self-consciousness, which does not comprehend (*begreifen*), in the form of an objective existence, and as something presented to it figuratively... a grasping (*Ergreifen*) of the imaginative idea (*Vorstellung*) that the Divine being is reconciled with its existence through an event... the process by which God's individual self-consciousness becomes the universal, becomes the religious communion... Death then ceases to signify what it means directly – the non-existence of this individual – and becomes transfigured into the universality of the spirit...¹⁴

What for us appears as becoming man, then, is actually the appearing or manifesting of God in the concrete, no longer as an abstract representation. This comes “in the fullness of time” as quite transcending time. To grasp this it is necessary to see that for Hegel history is itself dialectical, is itself the dialectic, time disappearing. This is best understood as the attempt to think things as Absolute Mind thinks, knows and wills and produces them. To have a mind, Hegel emphasises, is to be called to this, since it is truth as none of our finite representations are. Even if finite being is man's “proper object” it is yet more proper to the intellectual creature, as intellect and Subject, to transcend *itself*. Nothing in history, or anywhere else, can be thought of as surprising or “informing” the Absolute.

But will this not mean that this individual figure himself became the Son of God in the course of his life? This hardly seems orthodox. For Hegel, it is well known, “the factual is normative”. This, he points out, is the ultimate significance of Natural Law. The factual is not the contingent. Or, the contingent is only the contingent for us. Nothing is contingent or even merely possible for the Absolute. The question whether the mediator was held back beforehand from not fulfilling a destiny “fixed” in advance, lest he “dash his foot against a stone” (*Psalms* 91) or whether he was raised to the heights *post factum* is a pseudo-dilemma, just inasmuch as the notion of “beforehand” is not philosophical, is a product of the immediate consciousness merely. The factual, that is, is normative in that it declares itself to be the truth and so not merely factual, necessity as “the union of possibility and actuality” (*Enc.* 147). This, that the mediator, as “become”,

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p.780 and following.

as “anointed” to be this, the focus of the world’s hope and joy¹⁵, as Hegel declares him to be, is no accident or is normative, is not separable from the Becoming outlined in the *Logic*, viewed from the absolute standpoint pre-figured in the Trinitarian representations of “the absolute religion”, as Hegel expounds it.

Quantity, of course, is a stage of the Idea: and as such it must have its due, first as a logical category, and then in the world of objects, natural as well as spiritual... in Nature, where the form of the Idea is to be other than, and at the same time outside, itself, greater importance is for that reason attached to quantity than in the spiritual world, the world of free inwardness. No doubt we regard even spiritual facts under a quantitative point of view; but it is at once apparent that in speaking of God as a Trinity, the number three has by no means the same prominence...¹⁶

For nothing thus viewed is accidental, since the accidental is precisely the non-absolute (Cf. Aristotle’s *Physics* IV on chance and related topics). But to grasp this is to see that there is no need for miracle or special “interventions”, the very notion of which rests upon a defective conception of the Absolute, a seeing of Nature as something independent and added and therefore, impossibly, limiting the unlimited. This becomes in Nietzsche a belief that we are “in heaven” now or not at all, the finite “dying daily” or in the instant as such. This is the eternity of time as the eternity’s moving image only. Faith and knowledge are one, in the unity of virtue. To him that has shall be given. You would not seek me unless you had found me. There need be no presumption here. We are to hope that this is as true as philosophy seems to declare it, to hope, in a word, that we believe in and love God, also the “philosophical” *Gottesdienst*.

What is interesting here though, and to which I wish to draw attention, is this. The developed system of belief, is, for Hegel, a system rationally, i.e. divinely or absolutely, necessitated as the Absolute’s essential (as self-constituting) self-revelation and hence the “absolute religion”, thus in process away from religion. Religion, as falling short of philosophy’s *Gottesdienst*, is as such less than absolute. Nonetheless, all that this system declares Hegel himself finds implicitly declared in the simple, initial analysis of self-consciousness, necessarily breaking up into a plurality of consciousnesses loving or interchanging with one another in what is, all the same, “a life and death struggle”, of which Jean-Paul Sartre was surely

¹⁵ Just as such he “belongs to everyone”, Hannah Arendt concludes in her essay on Pope St. John XXIII, as he, G. Roncalli, has now “become”.

¹⁶ *Enc*, 99, add.

right to see marriage as the prime example. If woman is for man “that ironic figure” (*sic* Hegel) then what is man for woman? Here, anyhow, we may be enabled to see the naturalness of positing actual or phenomenal (immediate) marriage as a figure, being itself indeed figurative or representational, of the union of “Christ and his Church”, of, that is, the perfect unity in identity, transcending as spiritual any organic unity of parts, of the Concept or Absolute Idea (cf. Hegel, *Encyclopaedia* 160f.). “In heaven they neither marry nor are given in marriage.”

This process of self-consciousness in relation to another self-consciousness has in this manner been represented as the action of one alone. But this action on the part of the one has itself the double significance of being at once its own action and the action of that other as well.¹⁷

This is not now mere inter-subjectivity. This “action on the part of the one” has itself “double significance”. One’s own is itself the other as, truly, “I am you”¹⁸. What you do to another, you do to me, as I to you. This is a new facet of Hegel’s demonstration, in the *Logic*, that the Inside is the Outside and *vice versa* (consciousness’s specific secret), just as, considering force or power (*Kraft*), e.g. of intellect or Understanding (*Verstand*) in particular, in the preceding section of this *Phenomenology of Mind*, he finds it one with its exertion or “act”.

The process then is absolutely the double process of both self-consciousnesses... Action from one side only would be useless, because what is to happen can only be brought about by means of both... the act *simpliciter* is the act of the one as well as of the other regardless of their distinction. In this movement we see the process repeated which came before us as the play of forces; in the present case, however, it is found in consciousness. What in the former had effect only for us [contemplating experience], holds here for the terms themselves.

We have here, that is to say, the crucial philosophical move away from empiricism into speculative logic or metaphysics (*logica docens*). For “terms” we could read “concepts”, as finite passing into their opposites, though this feature, in freedom, is also the absolute negativity of the Absolute Idea which, itself negated, means that any finite thing whatever “imitates” God, is God’s self-imitation, as Aquinas explains things. The Idea, Reason, is what is active, Hegel stresses, though with “cunning” it

¹⁷ *Ibid.* p.230.

¹⁸ This is the title of a recent book (2002, Springer, New York) by Daniel Kolac. The instructive Preface to *I am You* can be read on the Internet.

lets us imagine that we decide things on our own (his version of universal divine pre-motion).

Commenting on the category he names “Development” Hegel adds, in summary of our account here:

The movement of the notion is as it were to be looked upon merely as play: the other which it sets up is in reality not an other. Or, as it is expressed in the teaching of Christianity: not merely has God created a world which confronts Him as an other; He has also from all eternity begotten a Son in whom He, a Spirit, is at home with Himself.¹⁹

Hegel’s account shares with the *atheist* account of the Absolute a refusal to treat as definitive any *representation* of it falling short, precisely as representation, of the philosophical or logical as true. The point to be argued here is that atheism too is a theology, as and when expounding the absolute. By the same token, however, the true theology, which is philosophy or wisdom, will be atheist in the non-abstract acceptance of ever seeking to go beyond theistic representation. Yet monotheism, when not merely worship of the sun, say, is, necessarily, for polytheists, masked atheism. “Where is thy God?” Thus the first thing a consistent atheism has to surmount is atheism itself as the original idolatry. Absolute idealism declares that in affirming that there is no object that is God one affirms God truly and that reason can do no other, since this is self-affirmation, ever the true sense of “god”. “If I did not exist, God would not exist” (Eckhart), from which it follows that “If God did not exist I would not exist”. This is correlation in identity. Neither statement can be asserted separately without being what Hegel calls “one-sided”.

For philosophy, in fact, and this is an interpretation of the two wisdoms mutually opposed in the Pauline texts, above is below and below is above. “Immediate existence”, that is, is, in general, “relativity or correlation”. Here “one and the same thing... is seen as the externality and antithesis of independent existences, and as their reduction to a relation of identity, in which identification alone the two things distinguished are what they are.”²⁰

Consciousness finds that it immediately is and is not another consciousness, as also that this other is for itself only when it cancels itself as existing for itself, and has self-existence only in the self-existence of the other. Each is the mediating term to the other, through which each mediates and unites itself with itself; and each is to itself and to the other an immediate self-

¹⁹ *Enc.* 161, add.

²⁰ *Enc.* 134.

existing reality, which, at the same time, exists thus for itself only through this mediation. They recognize themselves as mutually recognizing one another.²¹

We found him speaking, however, of “a life-and-death struggle”. Hegel, we should note here, insists on purging the narrative of the “Fall of Man” in *Genesis* of any suggestion of accident.²² Evil, he finds, is intrinsically related to knowledge, which is good, while innocence and goodness are not strictly the same. Absolute Being would be merely an empty name if in very truth there were any other being external to it, if there were a “fall” from it. The aspect of self-concentration really constitutes the essential moment of the self of Spirit.

Now by self-concentratedness Hegel means the knowledge necessary and natural to us, which yet “has straightway the character of becoming discordant with itself”. So “Evil appears as the first actual expression of the self-concentrated consciousness.” This means however that Evil is necessary to the world, a part of things, and Hegel carries that thought right back to the being of Lucifer. So “it was the very firstborn Son of Light who, by becoming self-concentrated, fell...” However,

Such a form of expression as “fallen”, belonging merely to figurative thought, and not to the notion, just like the term “Son”, 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.²³

So it is not so surprising that a life-and-death struggle should form part of the normal course of things, just as there is or was “war in heaven”. Here Hegel rejoins, or rather confirms, the ancient table of the virtues within which the virtue of Fortitude, defined as a readiness to risk or even endure death in pursuit of the End, is essential.

They must enter into this struggle, for they must bring their certainty of themselves... to the level of objective truth, and make this a fact both in the case of the other and in their own case as well. And it is solely by risking life that freedom is obtained; only thus is it tried and proved that the essential nature of self-consciousness is not bare existence, is not the merely immediate form in which it at first makes its appearance, is not its mere absorption in the expanse of life... The individual, who has not staked his life, may, no doubt, be recognized as a Person; but he has not attained the

²¹ *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 231.

²² Cf. *Encyclopaedia* 24 (addition).

²³ *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 771.

truth of this recognition as an independent self-consciousness. In the same way each must aim at the death of the other, as it risks its own life thereby; for that other is to it of no more worth than itself; the other's reality is presented to the former as an external other, as outside itself; it must cancel that externality.²⁴

Here is yet again implied, as we noted earlier on, the identity of self and other, of outside and inside, of which such general mortification is the equivalent practical expression, as the Logic includes Will under Cognition. Will, or the Good (in Hegel's "greater" Logic) is in fact itself the proximate category introductory to the Absolute Idea. So the other too, or equivalently, "must view its otherness as pure existence for itself or as absolute negation." What is thus negated, that is, is separate individuality. It is negated by self-consciousness itself. "Now you are the body of Christ", who yet "dwells in each one of you" and when it is added that you are "members one of another" the representation or picture of an organic body is transcended in speculative contradiction constituting the truth to which, Hegel often stresses, the self-contradictory form that is predication cannot attain.

In this "trial by death" the antagonists, who are really each protagonists, "cancel their consciousness which had its place in this alien element of natural existence; in other words, they cancel themselves and are sublated as terms or extremes seeking to have existence on their own account." Really there is just one protagonist, standing apart from this phenomenal and hence non-essential "play of change", leading now into the dialectic, as it will show itself to be, of Master and Bondsman, the one ever becoming the other in what is ultimately "a free self" and many selves, in self knowledge, in Mind's own knowing of itself. What we call death is shown ultimately to be life's natural self-transcendence, naturally exercised in all thinking and - it is the same, Hegel will say, at *Encyclopaedia* 159 - loving. He introduces this final paragraph of "The Doctrine of Essence" thus:

The passage from necessity to freedom, or from actuality to the notion, is the very hardest, because it proposes that independent actuality shall be thought as having all its substantiality in the passing over and identity with the other, independent actuality. The notion, too, is extremely hard, because it is itself just this very identity.

²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 233.

Does John of the Cross or *The Cloud of Unknowing* tell us anything different to this, or Jakob Boehme or Eckhart in whom Hegel found his inspiration, his Aristotelian call to mediate what modern philosophy had by and large merely stuttered over? The text continues:

But the actual substance as such, the cause, which in its exclusiveness resists all invasion, is *ipso facto* subjected to necessity or the destiny of passing into dependency; and it is this subjection rather where the chief hardness lies.

The category of Cause and Effect, that is, in this finite mutual exclusiveness is itself productive of untruth in the form of abstractness. In the very assertion of such exclusiveness, the either/or, it makes itself dependent upon what it excludes, upon the Effect which is really, in itself or as other than Cause, nothing. Each divine idea, Aquinas had taught, is identical with the divine essence *in toto*.

To think necessity, on the contrary, rather tends to melt that hardness. 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, - The great vision of substance in Spinoza is only a potential liberation from finite exclusiveness and egoism; but the notion itself realises for its own both the power of necessity and actual freedom.

It is only in relation to the finite category of Life that Death is the absolute negative. But Life is not the Absolute Idea. It falls short of it and is naturally bounded by death. Death, therefore, draws us on further, in itself or as the thought of it indifferently. "The death of merely immediate and individual vitality is the 'procession' of spirit" (*Enc.* 223). It is necessary to realise that Life as treated in Hegel's Logic is a category, to which he appropriates the name from what he steadfastly maintains is the realm of appearance. From this point of view Hegel could make the Buddhist conviction, "No birth no death", his own. The paragraphs on Life in the *Encyclopaedia* (216-222) need repeated reading and comparison with Hegel's other writings to yield up at least something of their secret and hopefully all.

Life, "in the dialectic of its corporeity... is essentially something alive", i.e. an individual. This does not mean the idea of Life is "abstracted" from individuals. It is itself rather productive of individuals but only as moments of (our or absolute) thought. There are no individuals. What

there is, ultimately or without qualification, is the Absolute Idea or, better, Being is itself eclipsed as an abstract universal, the most abstract indeed, in this Idea, which is Infinite. So of course in coming to this Idea individuality falls away, is dropped, drops itself, in favour of absolute relation with every other or with all otherness, of absolute Subjectivity, whole in each, who are yet each not exclusively or abstractly each.

It is then the “immediacy” of this idea, Life, that gives us, gives man or even spirit, in the immediate necessity of appearance, a separable body and soul as correlation of what are opposed. Yet it is just spirit’s having a body that is the negation in conceptual absorption of it. Thus also man does not do things “with” his body but is one whole, whether thinking or walking. We are not “found” *with* “our bodies” and “infusion” of soul therein is thus a further figurative representation. The soul itself “is the body’s particularisation” (cf. Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* VII). The body adds nothing to its notion as soul.

The process of life consists in getting the better of the immediacy with which it is still beset: and this process, which is itself threefold, results in the idea under the form of judgment, *i.e.* idea as Cognition.²⁵

We appear to begin life as sentient only. But this too is dialectical, or how soul, spirit, is logically built up. Child and grey eminence follow upon one another, back and forth, indifferently, “restlessly”. And so Cognition and the Idea, whatever may be true of Life, neither begin nor end. In fact, Hegel serenely concludes (217), “A living being is a syllogism”, *i.e.* is not a living being at all, though syllogism, the process, is. This illustrates Hegel’s rejection of propositional form as self-contradictory, like all the mere moments of the Concept’s advance towards itself. Our consciousness, our self-consciousness, is capable of and so makes this transition in universal sympathy. “The living being dies, because it is a contradiction.” That is, death is not death as we have learned to fear and avoid it, but this very contradiction rather, in passage or as passage, rather, to the Idea. Immortality is achieved truly in and by death, which is thus resurrection. It is, rather, the Idea, whereby all is well, that is to say rational, and so not immortality merely, as if reverting to the moment of life, the wheel of return. Yet in contemplating this wheel, this “again”, we transcend it, since if *the same* returns then all returning in repetition is cancelled. There is no reason that this should not apply likewise to each moment as to a whole life. Memory “immortalises” it, in perpetual recall of what has thus not gone away, in *anamnesis*. The life process yields

²⁵ *Enc.* 216, add. This triplicity is then outlined in 217 and 218.

daily to death as “entry into the spirit”, ungratefully denying its truth. In religious discourse, such as the Johannine, this remains at the paradox of “Now you see me, now you don’t”, itself though thus ceasing to be “religious”, becoming absolute at its culmination in “I came out... I return”. Now at last you speak *plainly*, exclaim the hearers. Yet the run up to this, as including it, is deemed necessary, as is our whole experience in the temporal trajectory of appearance, *representing* dialectical process. This is spiritual understanding of things spiritual, not their bare or abstract cancellation. The same applies to the patently paradoxical teachings about plucking out the eye, amputating the foot and so on. They are a call for their opposite, for oneness of mind, of offended and offending, for transcendence of negativity in its recognition.

The death of the Divine Man, *qua* death, is abstract negativity, the immediate result of the process terminating only in the universality belonging to nature. In spiritual self-consciousness death loses its natural significance; it passes into its true conception, the conception just mentioned. Death then ceases to signify what it means directly – the non-existence of *this* individual – and becomes transfigured into the universality of the spirit, which lives in its own communion, dies there daily, and daily rises again.²⁶

Hegel says here that *existence* as individual, or “rather” particular, is pictorial, meaning this, it seems plain, not merely in this select instance. That Absolute Spirit, to reverse this, so presents (represents) its nature should be and hence is “transferred to self-consciousness itself”. This is spiritual understanding or true interpretation, in or as “the knowledge which maintains itself in its otherness”.

This self-consciousness does not therefore really die, as the particular person 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,

²⁶ *The Phenomenology of Mind*, pp. 780.

of his particular independent existence: this particular self-existence has become universal self-consciousness.²⁷

Baillie, in adding “Christ” as explanatory footnote of Hegel’s phrase, “the particular person”, seems rather to obscure the thought, as if Hegel talks round things in a kind of embarrassment (also Findlay’s suggestion). Rather, his thought applies to existence and death in general, always of particular persons, however. He has already spoken of the Divine man, the “mediator”, here he brings out the universal or spiritual significance of these terms. *Ecce homo!* It is “the knowledge which maintains itself in its otherness”, that one dies for all, always, that “if one died, all died” as, conversely, one is “made sin for us”, but as in eventual universally mutual correlation to the point of coinheritance. So, immediately previous to this passage, Hegel refers to “God’s individual self-consciousness”, which Baillie again glosses as “the Christ”. The point is not that this is not the Christ but that it is divine or infinite as such, anywhere and everywhere, that religion “narrates” what is eternal truth. It is in this dialectical or logical sense that self-consciousness “becomes the universal, becomes the religious communion”. Implied is the more general position that history is a pictorial representation of itself, of what is finally *dialectical* process. Upon this ground thesis the whole structure of *The Phenomenology of Mind* as “first part” of Hegel’s “system of philosophy” is built.

So even the historical “religious communion” is unfulfilled “in this its self-consciousness”, part of “the pictorial idea” that is put before it. It must suffer “disruption”, he says, towards “return out of its figurative thinking”. No doubt this insight, expounded far and wide after Hegel’s death, helped precipitate the disruption of the “modernist crisis” in the Church, still a factor today within this communion. There is a permanent opposition “between spiritual consciousness and objective idea” (Baillie). Hegel goes so far as to say that this communion is not “consciously aware what it is”. It couldn’t be, since “spiritual self-consciousness... is not object to itself” as just this, though this is, he seems to say, itself a falling short of “clear consciousness of itself. It rather retains those “picture-thoughts”, which after all were needed to initiate the members as children or otherwise new to the game, as we might call the play of wisdom, of the Concept, here. It matures, however, as Hegel makes plain, as turning to “become inward to itself” in self-consciousness’s own “self-centredness”, relinquishing “natural existence”, reaching “pure negativity”. For this is “just as much the self-identical essential Being”, as all Hegel’s post-Fichtean philosophy declares. Theology is the best theologian, always.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 781.

Hegel goes on to say that all this is the worshipper's *own* action, again in a non-reductive sense, Substance itself having truly in its own self-development become Subject.

So, this "death of God", of the abstract "Divine Being" "not yet affirmed as a self", is "the expression of inmost self-knowledge", "dark knowledge", also called "the cloud of unknowing"²⁸, the depth of darkness where Ego is nothing but bare identity with Ego... knowing nothing more outside it", naturally, since "the outside is the inside", logic declares. Substance is lost over against consciousness, to which though it is transformed, elevated, thus remaining itself as Subjectivity. This is "spiritualization".

McTaggart complained that Hegel offered no account of immortality, in which this later commentator is sure that Hegel nonetheless believed, for the reasons he, McTaggart, gives.²⁹ He suggests, oddly, that Hegel was not interested in the matter. But it was clear to Hegel that there can be no eternal survival of an abstractly separate ego alongside God, the Infinite and Absolute and just therefore the Idea. There has to be a transition, a passing over, a sublation, in a death to the self that never was nor could be, "from shadows to reality" (Newman). Aquinas implies the same, whether he was conscious of it or not, in teaching firmly that God can have no real relation to "creatures" outside of himself but only to his own idea of them, which in every case must be identical with the simplicity of the divine essence. I think that he was thus conscious and thus, behind his inherited method, he participated in that Absolute Idealism which Hegel teaches is the proper and distinctive consciousness of Absolute Spirit in its final or perfect philosophical form, beyond both Art and Religion, the two preliminary forms of such Spirit, which "must come first". Similarly Jesus says, or the evangelist has him say, "Why do you call me good? There is none good but God alone?" This is true in any event and whatever implication we suppose or fail to suppose to be behind those words. For each has in the end to say: "I and my Father are one", the moment to which Hegel refers as "the loss of the Substance" and which is at the same time "the pure subjectivity of Substance" (*Ibid.* 780).

This knowledge is thus, again, "spiritualization", whereby Substance becomes Subject, by which its abstraction and lifelessness have expired, and Substance therefore has become real, simple, and universal self-consciousness. In this way, then, Spirit is Spirit knowing its own self.

²⁸ This is the title of an anonymous fourteenth century English treatise on the inward life, *sc.* mysticism.

²⁹ J.M.E. McTaggart, *Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology*, Cambridge (CUP) 1901, Chapter 2, "Immortality".

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Pope Paul VI once brought out a document he called “The Credo of the People of God” in which he claimed that Christians, or people generally, must believe that it is innately or inherently possible for human reason naturally to know truth. This has been taken by some, notably Hans Küng, as a naïve effort to hold the faithful, or anyone, to a naively realist philosophy as, in the writer’s mind, precondition for any faith at all. This almost Pavlovian critical reaction was not necessary, however. The Pope’s words were open enough to include, indeed especially to include, absolute idealism, whereby philosophy takes on its native task of thinking the thoughts of the One whose “thoughts are not your thoughts”, not, that is, the immediate representations of every day. Indeed in Hegel’s philosophy also the sceptical moment, of ancient philosophy or of Hume, is not shunned but rather integrated into philosophy’s final all-inclusive and truly ecumenical vision, which, of course, as existing in finitely written or spoken documentation, is never completed for any age but our shifting present, as one can find Hegel himself saying, contrary to widespread prejudice. It is just in this spirit that one must beware of taking the utterances of the primitive community, whose coming first is often seen as reflecting the very absoluteness of the Notion or Concept, as comprehensively normative. “The Spirit shall lead you into all truth” and this, always, in all days, *via* the faith of today’s community. On this point Hegel is very Catholic, certainly in the judgment of one of his best translators:

such a view is in agreement with essential doctrines in the catholic faith of Christendom. This was no accident of Hegel’s scheme of thought: it seems to have been one of the purposes which provided a controlling motive for his work.³⁰

No doubt others will have to judge of this for themselves, the final verdict being ever the property of that Spirit we have been freely invoking. It is not to be quenched.

³⁰ J.B. Baillie, “Translator’s Introduction”, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, Harper Torchbooks, New York 1967, p.64 (Footnote 1). Cf. our *New Hegelian Essays*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle 2012, along with *From Narrative to Necessity: Meaning and the Christian Movement in Hegel*, Newcastle 2012.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE NECESSITY IN THE CONTENT OF THE ABSOLUTE PICTURE-IDEA

In Hegel's account of Absolute Spirit its final form is philosophy, as revelation transparent to itself. Even here, however, what is meant is not philosophy as a mere particular form, that of the written down text. That is an abstraction from the Absolute Idea, from Absolute Knowledge. What is meant rather is Truth as self-thought or "truthed", the Absolute Idea which is, he says, the Absolute, the Absolute as mediated, as proceeding, from the immediacy of Being or Life. Spirit is thus realised at and as the End ever realised in and as its own Other, self-externalised Reason returned to itself as never having left itself, in whom and with whom alone every and each constituent is as being identical with the Idea, as being itself ideal. This is the Hegelian equivalent, or rather alternative, to "the analogy of being", postulated in older logic and philosophy simply because the Idea alone or entirely is Actuality, as the thinking of thinking. This means that every actuality is identical with the Idea, is being, but differently, in universal likeness. Every being is being, just as every mind is mind, both of which are infinite and the one infinity, mutually analogous inasmuch as analogy itself is an analogous concept and infinitely so.

This, spirit, as infinite, is self-knowledge, where "self" stands for the consequently knowing knowledge. This is at once, therefore, equally system, universal and person, in the sense of absolute personality. "The principle of personality is the universal", or, as we know from the Logic, the universal, the Idea, is the final individual. Only in, as identical with, the Idea is any existence actualised. It is thus improper, a concession to finitude, to speak of the Idea as itself existing. The Idea is, is the true form of Being inasmuch as being itself is truth, or indeed freedom, the final elucidation of Being as "that with which science must begin".

In the Idea, further, freedom is necessity as necessity is freedom. That is to say, knowledge is finally will, or practical. Duns Scotus wished to make of theology a practical science so as to show its superiority to and freedom from the theoretical necessities of philosophy. It perhaps did not occur to

him that philosophy itself might be practical, that the higher reach of reason itself is will, as is shown in Hegel's logic. Such will, of course, is by no means the abstract or finite will, which we naturally envision as "self-will" or caprice. As the Absolute (idea), will is actuality itself as conscious or self-determining. It is, in a word, Goodness defined as what all tend towards or necessarily seek, as itself the principle of seeking, of self-tending or, again, will. The theoretical is thus included there as a moment, as indeed is necessity itself and its freedom which, thus, is freedom itself. It is not a moment as something left behind, like a temporal moment, but as something retained in being put by, like all partial abstractions (abstraction is setting apart), in that free ascent to the Absolute which is the System (of logic and spirit, of Reason).

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So one might describe Hegel, like all modern culture, according to the historian Etienne Gilson, as Scotist.¹ He would, however, as would also Scotus, be equally Thomist, Aristotelian and Platonist. There is one System of philosophy and it is necessary. According to this system Goodness, specifically, as Will, is diffusive of itself (*diffusivum sui*) or, as Hegel transcribes back to religion, with Plato in mind, "not envious", not, that is, finitely infinite or conceived as infinite in a bad or finite way. This goodness is not the idea of goodness but the Idea simply. Being is friendly, so to say, or absolutely one, unity as unified, in itself. Thus, to illustrate, "my God and my all" is a bad or falsely subjectivist translation of the Franciscan *Deus meus et omnia*, my God and all things. This rather shows forth the infinite subjectivity of "my", of I as "universal of universals".

This one system, therefore, necessarily includes what is known in religion as Creation. In truth, Hegel shows, this is absolute selfhood's self-manifestation. It is, that is, not manifestation of this or that but manifestation itself, Nature as he calls it, whether extrinsic, macrocosmic, or intrinsic, "microcosmic". Such manifestation, as the very being or essence of the Absolute, of Self as "self-emptying", is thus absolutely necessary just inasmuch as it is freedom. It is as much negative as it is positive. As a general principle (of philosophy), a necessity of nature is not a restriction upon that nature, and here we speak of nature as intrinsic to a

¹ E. Gilson, *On Being and Some Philosophers*, Toronto 1952. Gilson makes an exception of modern neo-Thomism, which he thus removes from the actual movement of Spirit, leaving it fixed in a previous, superseded moment. For Hegel, however, all thinkers of the past are taken up into actual thought in the very same movement in which it puts them by (*aufhebt*).

given being, as a “principle of movement and rest” in just anything, inclusive of the rational being or Mind itself, which has cognition as finally will for its “nature”. Mind speaks or utters itself, is thus Word and *the* Word, of which our words are mere echoes and pictures. The would-be exclusivity of theology, in the past, when speaking or writing of this, is thus abstractly finite, or calling for absorption in supersession. What is called “inspired” is thus, rather, in truth marked as of the Spirit, of spirit, belonging to *sophia* or knowledge.

How then do we, just we, come to know it? Necessarily, it is known “in the fullness of time”, that fullness which is eternity, of which, it is said, time is “a moving figure” or, rather, eternity figured as finite motion. The motion, the activity or Act, is rather infinite and thus coincident with our notion of changelessness, immutability, conceived not as negative restriction but as transcending the imperfection of any finite motion as such, defined accordingly by Aristotle as the act of a potency inasmuch as it is (still) in potency, so that it is “still moving”, as we say. The fullness of time is thus time’s acknowledgement of eternity.

This, however, is accomplished in and by consciousness as such, of which humanity is the figure and, so to say, incarnation. This is the sense in which man is self-transcendent, or not man, as death is the proper fulfilment and actualisation of Life or of the Idea Immediate. This revelation of self to self, Hegel says, is merely pictured in religion as an historical event, inasmuch as history itself is a “gallery of pictures”, no more, in which “in the fullness of time God sent forth his son, born of a woman, subject to the law”.² In reality this is eternal truth while, as the Moslems like to remind us, God, the Absolute, does not have sons. Nor does it give commands or pass laws, however. It follows, anyhow, that we should rather say “sends” than “sent”. The past is not actual, nor is it properly or *qua* past the object of memory therefore, or of *Er-innerung*, inwardisation, that deep pit or mine where our words and scheme of language lies buried. It has to be re-membered.

Now religion also pictures such revelation or manifestation, as it properly is, in the form of free gift, which is easily understood and so often represented under the explanatory rubric that God “might have done, or not done, otherwise”. This, it is not seen, is simply to finitise the act in question, or act as such. The Absolute, however, is essentially Act and not substance, as act itself is thought or, again, manifestation, utterance. Hence even Scotus represents what is called, represented again, in theology, since quite a while ago, the incarnation or taking of flesh by God, by the

² *Galatians* 4,4.

Absolute and not by some finite “angel”³ seen as creature⁴, as necessary or as, in his representation, intended from all eternity in formal distinction or, it seems, separation, from whatever finite free action, sinful or virtuous for example, was to take place.

Nature is the mediating moment of the Syllogism of Necessity, which is simply the Object becoming Subject in true vision. But this moment is the mediating Universal, disjoined, alienated, “disjunctive” in Nature as a totality of particulars. In Nature every rational possibility is realised. Only as temporally represented can we speak of potentialities here (or anywhere). Nature is in fact Reason. But, as mediating, the Universal can only suspend mediation as “coupling the subject... with itself” (*Enc.* 192). It is this dialectically unfolding rationality that is revealed as Nature’s essence, both by our latest biological paradigm of evolution, which is not, as a representation of precisely the temporal, philosophical, as also by the ancient representation of knowledge as remembrance, of truth, namely, as generated (otherwise we would have to remember it again *ad infinitum*) within the subject. Nature’s externality is itself this necessary (and, differently, necessarily) inward moment in spirit’s, i.e. absolute, process.

Now for philosophical idealism there is no flesh, no face even, *in abstracto*. Face, we might say, is expression. These are all fleeting phenomena, false therefore. It is in this sense that Hegel speaks of the Absolute, of God rather, as he at this point prefers to say, as first coming to himself in concrete fullness in this his revelation, which he himself, or the divine nature, the Absolute, is. He really is himself as not being himself apart from this his coming to himself, in the eternal novelty of Act. Equally, the Absolute is here first known, touched, by us with certainty, as by those “then” living but, all the same, just as we touch one another. So religious teaching and tradition echoes this identity (in difference) continually, reaching back to the “command” to “love thy neighbour as thyself” and, behind that, to the figured insight that God, the absolute, “made” man, Kant’s “rational creature”, “to his own image and likeness”. God, of course, is not a mere species of the absolute, as the form of a personal name might suggest. God is godhead, is a *nomen naturae*,

³ It was the effort of Athanasius, in the fourth century, *contra mundum*, to establish what here Hegel further thematises. In it, the appearance in immediacy, is the full reach of the exteriorisation, the speaking, which the Absolute is and which is thus absolute. The “rational creature” is Nature’s final intention, *viz.* to return in spirit, gathering all into one. Hence Nature is not nature *in abstracto*.

⁴ As is not the case in Hegel’s discussion of angels, or of anything else, in *The Phenomenon of Mind*, ch. VII. The creature is *in esse et posse* null, save as itself the Idea.

though this expression remains analogical, and hence “figurative”, as regards use of the particularising term “nature”. God is only distinguished from “other” persons so as to declare their identity or “gathering together into one”. Nor, therefore, is it peculiar to Hegel to stress that the Absolute is, and is hence knowable, in self-constitutive manifestation. Further though, as Hegel explains, this manifestation of man is not particular or specific manifestation. The body, like the all-purpose hand, is and is essentially the *sign* of this self-sustaining generality in infinite self-multiplication, even this, however, being shared between two, as between the larger “body”, spirit’s own community, extended into education.

Hegel calls this certainty or necessity we mentioned the certainty of faith, belief, as specifically a form of knowledge, fully aware of course that belief and knowledge are precisely what the Understanding would keep apart, that my knowing that *p* itself entails the truth of *p* as my believing it does not. Knowledge, that is, is not grounded in sensation or sense-observation as the empiricists teach, since the objects of sense, the here, the now, are themselves false. What they deliver to reason, rather, is the mediated denial of their apparent selves. In and through them alone do we ascend to reason, their active reintegration. The ascent of the ladder is in fact its stepwise denial by “sublation”. It is not merely cast away “afterwards”. The passage from shadows to reality is not literally a passage, from one thing or place to another. It is more passage itself, as an action. Orpheus is not merely forbidden, as the tale would have it, to look at Eurydice in this passage. She is not there to be seen, not yet herself, and so to attempt it is the final crime or sin of nonsensicality. We can only look forward. What “lies behind” is not even there to be forgotten. In this sense the prophet represents God as saying “I will not remember their sins any more”. What God forgets is intrinsically unknowable, is not, since, Hegel can be seen to concur, *omne ens est verum*, all that is is true or thought, as finite “things” are not.

So God too, subjectivity itself, the Absolute, is self-known in that manifestation, to us or as such indifferently, which it, he (she), essentially is. It is in this sense that Hegel suggested the Spirit might most properly be said to proceed immediately from the Son alone. He obviously has no conception of the Absolute as itself becoming temporally. This is plain misreading, as is shown by any number of passages from Hegel’s works, but supremely in the reading of that text of the Logic (either version) where Becoming is presented as itself a vanishing in equal proportion as it is a becoming category! “The vanishing is vanished”, and there is no vanishing over this vanishing!

That is, the presentation of the Son in religion, that moment of Spirit, presents or makes visible the true assessment and philosophy of temporality and of the things of sense, of what appears immediately, like Life itself in the first instance. "He that has seen me has seen the Father". "I and the Father are one". Generalising, "The Outside is the Inside" while, furthermore, "The Inside is the Outside". There is no rind as, consequently, there is really no "pulp" either. With this, then, theology as a special discipline disappears, we must finally "realise", since theology, called "sacred", cannot allow itself to be thus represented. For the sacred itself disappears, the veil of the holy is ripped away, when everything is revealed as consecrated, as the Idea itself, an identity in which, finally, there are no cows to be black or anything else. They are, in that they are not, abstractly. They are the Idea or, in an older realist terminology of the theologians, they are one of the myriad ways in which God sees himself as imitable, such that any and every one of the divine "ideas", thus viewed, is identical with the divine essence and so, in isolation, is not. Its particular intention, that is, is seen *straight through*. This very transparency is what Hegel identifies as the contradiction of predication as such. Predication, unless at a supposed level of "correctness" intrinsic to the predicative Understanding, is a misrepresentation or disguised form of the actual transition which is thought's process and the sense in which *a* becomes *b* and so "no longer" *a*. Hegel here identifies the element of truth in Kant's denial of the possibility of metaphysics. The latter, namely, does not go far enough, does not accomplish that leap of mind that truly nullifies the world (*Enc.* 50). This is precisely Hegel's reproach against the *a posteriori* proofs "from experience" of the truth of God. The mind, in rising to God, transits from and thus annihilates the finite world.

The vanishing mentioned, however, must include the finite idea, the dialectical moment, of existence. Given this idea, there is, for every idea, an idea of its not being an idea (not being the case), and *vice versa*. Thus the necessary is possible, the possible necessary. Not merely so, but this contradiction is endemic to each and every realisation or exemplar, that it is in not being, is not in being. This is what makes it Idea as even the Idea itself can pass from Being to Non-Being without destruction, which would be one-sided non-being. In our time even physics approaches to this and it is echoed, *mutatis mutandis*, after Hegel, in Nietzsche's espousal of "Eternal Return", ultimately annihilative of time. Hence becoming shows itself a category, the ceaseless motion, which as ceaseless is, rather, immobile, rocklike. Motion does not itself move. It is the same with Self and Other. The other of the Absolute is the Absolute so that from that other, specifically and more properly, Spirit proceeds, thought is born as

Act. We do not die because we never truly live. We more than live. Ultimately, we are not we, exclusively, anymore than is the Absolute. “The eye with which God sees me is the eye with which I see God”, Hegel quotes approvingly from Eckhart, a Dominican “theologian”.

It might seem that what is anticipated here is the Feuerbachian reduction, if reduction was indeed Feuerbach’s intention. I believe this is a mistaken reading. We would then have to reduce absolute idealism itself and philosophy with it, along with speculative knowing. Referring to incarnation, the document known as the Athanasian Creed, but in fact more or less contemporary with Scotus Eriugena in the ninth century, states that incarnation is achieved “not by conversion of the godhead into flesh but by taking of the manhood into God”. Religion once again portrays necessary truth as an event. This truth, it is apparent, is that, as religion itself clarifies, “in God we live and move and have our being”. That is, the Concept, the Absolute Idea, Infinity, is one, sole, in perfect (and not merely “perfectly”, therefore), differentiated and concrete unity or system, unrelated to anything as if external to it. This is why thought thinks itself alone. Furthermore, the spirit perceiving this is our spirit, as spirit as a whole is “for us”, as I is “the universal of universals”. Nor is there flesh into which the godhead or Absolute, unchanging after all, might be converted.

In this sense, in this truth, everything has to return into the Logic, into logic, as itself the final ontology or actuality absorbing or superseding ontology. For the content, as conceived, is the same throughout and just therefore, in fact, the Idea.

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Thus, then, what was in religion content, or a way of imagining (*Vorstellen*) the other, is here the action proper of the self. The Concept is the connecting principle securing that the content is, again, the action proper of the self. For this concept is, as we see, the knowing that the action of the self within itself is all that is essential and all existence, the knowing of this Subject as Substance and of the Substance as this knowing of its action.⁵

Here Hegel states what was to be the essence of McTaggart’s vision of things, even though he culled it especially from his study of the *Logic* of Hegel, rather than the *Phenomenology*. The “particular moments, each of

⁵ Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind* (Baillie), Harper Torchbook, New York 1966, p. 797

which exhibits in principle the life of spirit in its entirety”, disclose severally, though in the most perfect unity with one another, its content. That is, the content “had already presented itself in the form of a mode or shape of consciousness”. The phrase “in principle” means to correspond to Hegel’s original derivation of the Notion or Concept as absorbing back into itself all appearance as that manifestation (*Öffenbarung*) which it is, which never left it and conversely.⁶

Once this ground has been gained philosophically the variegated and yet unitary witness of “religion” must be understood accordingly. Of theological representation Hegel remarks, in effect, that it can just as well be seen as an elevation of picture-thinking into the sphere of pure thought as it can be seen as a falling short of the latter. What is “common to all philosophies and all religions” is “the one need... of getting an idea of God” and of God’s relationship to the world. Hegel makes this statement while referring to “Absolute Mind”⁷. It is by analysis of this concept, *the* Concept, as final analysis of the infinite, necessary and necessarily free, that philosophy arrives at the essence of whatever has been reckoned divine. It does not begin there but with being as the only possible presuppositionless or first thought, as itself requiring freedom from all dependence in order to be itself. Philosophy is thus itself being as indeed, it emerges, thought or the Concept, which is thought’s thinking itself. It is only from within this act that philosophy conceives Nature as the necessary alienation of such thought from itself as, again, necessary or “logical” moment of such self-thinking. This entails, again, in despite of whatever appearance, that nature be the setting out of all that is included under the moment of possibility, especially therefore its self-sublation. This though is an affair of time, not of space, as corresponding to a representation of what begins, to being. This is the divinity, the absoluteness, of evolution, of development as a concept, whether or not biology taken abstractly should include development, advance, under its own understanding of this otherwise dialectical term. So what does not, did not or will not evolve is not possible. This is the significance, the spiritual import, of nature, the enabling or mediating link of logic with mind, without which logic could not be thought as logic, reason.

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⁶ See the chapter “Immortality” in McTaggart’s *Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology*, CUP 1903.

⁷ *Enc.* 573.

The syllogistic identity of universal and individual that Hegel expounds perfectly mirrors the doctrines of, especially, New Testament religion, understood, as it should be, spiritually, in the spirit. This spirituality of knowing is not exclusively “modernism”, a pejorative term until recently in Catholic circles particularly, but characterises the procession of Spirit as such, leading, ever leading, as the phrase goes, “into all truth”, where no one shall say “Know the Lord” because all shall know him. Such was the prophet Jeremiah’s judgment upon the religious ideology of his time and place, in which he by no means took distance from religion but just the opposite. He both anticipated the then future Plato here and in a sense went further than Plato, of whom Hegel says that “the infinite form of subjectivity... still escaped his intelligence”, so that “subjective liberty” remained wanting to his ideal state or republic.⁸ This is the spiritual root and nature of modern democracy as the inherent self-realisation of intelligence as such. To deny to this infinite subjectivity Hegel calls modernity its validity as development, as advance, as MacIntyre appears to do, can only be understood as in function of a recognition, assertion, of some further reconciling advance to come, as is indeed the nature of dialectical and hence speculative thinking. Otherwise it would be mere regression to picture-thinking, severing religion from its constitutive form as Absolute Mind, and therefore irreligious and even unaesthetic but, above all, unphilosophical or strictly finite, work of the understanding mistaken as definitive. What understanding pictures falsely is the other as thereby not the same, not self. It is, in this finite sense, natural as not ascending to “the reason-world”.⁹ In the particular case it is, therefore, “fideist”.

So, in Hegel’s account of “revealed religion”, *die geoffenbarte Religion*, the definite article is not idiomatic merely. What the typical English translation represents as simply German ambiguity also in fact reflects the truth that the universal is as such particularised or concrete. Hegel clearly means here Christianity as an historical phenomenon manifesting precisely Absolute Spirit, first evident in art, perfected in philosophy. Hegel universalises this concrete individuality (common to all religions *qua* religions in some sense or other) and individualises the universality. Thus if it is in a religion precisely that the individuality of the supposedly (*gemeinten*) historical Jesus Christ is actualised, this phenomenal fact is not to be confused with its universal signifying of the thought to which the phenomenon gave rise in, precisely, the phenomenal world, thus and to

⁸ *Ibid.* 552.

⁹ Cf. *Enc.* 82 and add.

that extent subsuming the individuality, otherwise abstract, and preparing its subsumption in absolute and perpetual renovation. For “in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.” So “what God has joined together let not man put asunder”, to universalise a Gospel context. Therefore that “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (*John*, 1) means, can only be interpreted as, that the Absolute does indeed “dwell among us”, not in a side by side relation but as the identity of all the constituents of the Concept, as Hegel outlines at *Enc.*160, and that we do, “in principle” see his glory. “In the fullness of time” this “appeared”, was “manifested”. The water of appearance had all along been the wine, the “living water”, of actuality. All is thought, that thinking, of itself, which is “blessedness”.¹⁰ There is thus no “euphoric moment” merely. Blake’s fool, therefore (“A fool sees not the same tree as a wise man sees”), is an essentially phenomenal figure, i.e. is figured, the “wise man” is philosophy itself, feminine for Boethius, in which all consciousnesses, all consciousness, is eternally united, “full of grace and truth”.¹¹

Thus the individual, in which all consciousness is alone concretised, is one with the community (“now you all are the body of Christ”, writes the Apostle Paul) and hence the grace of this community, ultimately universal and, as I, again, “universal of universals”, is intrinsic, is grace itself, if we retain that concept in rational sublation. Modern spiritual advisers often advise their penitents to forgive *themselves* first. By the same token they can also learn to thank themselves and thus to make that “upward spring” Hegel speaks of. So Augustine had said, in full accord with religion’s intention and “orthodoxy”, with “right” belief, “There is one closer to me than I am to myself”, a saying (other) philosophers have more approximated to than improved upon.

There are of course theories of happiness, such as may be adumbrated at universities, institutes as abstract as the theory it is their business to guard and develop, such as the man Hegel in his day became beholden to. Philosophy itself, however, utterly transcends these and their situation, as including poetry, dance and all of religion, along with, above all, the self-immolation of mysticism, the return of image to imaged, which is rational process. As subject it is not, except by metonymy, a subject “in particular.

¹⁰ Cf. *Enc.* 159.

¹¹ We have also Dante’s Beatrice, Diotima or wisdom itself in her Old Testament figuration. She is mother of all fathers, of all that is “patristic”. *Es zieht uns an.*

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

REVEALED RELIGION

It seems to me carelessness, if, after we have been confirmed in the faith, we do not exert ourselves to see the meaning of what we believe.¹

To appreciate Hegel's account of revealed religion one has to see it in context, that is, one has to see it in context of the tradition of religion understanding itself as revealed. This, however, has a special meaning for Hegel in terms of his general logical and metaphysical philosophy, whereby for religion to be revealed just means for it to be understood as revealed, in a sense to be given to this last term. There is nothing conceivably behind that, no revelation-in-itself as distinct from how it is known and thought by subjectivity, by us. By "us" is understood the continuous tradition of what he takes to be the paradigm instance of revealed religion, namely Christianity (following on Yahwism-Judaism), whether or not including this or that variant or what is taken (by some or all) as a variant.

I will preface my analysis, therefore, with an account of how revealed religion appeared to Thomas Aquinas, in its capacity as a revelation. Thus I take him as representing the classical tradition, in terms of the predecessors he acknowledges, the scriptures, namely, Paul and John, later Augustine, John of Damascus (*De fide orthodoxa*, "On the Orthodox Faith") and the history of Christian doctrinal development generally. It

¹ Anselm: *Cur Deus Homo?* C.1100, literally, "Why is God Man?" A term for "became" or even "becomes" is not found in this classical title, as it is in the body of the treatise. The passage is quoted (by Hegel?) at *Enc.* 77, Footnote One (Wallace translation), in rebuttal of Jacobi's doctrine of an exclusively immediate knowledge of absolute truth, a doctrine Hegel labours to show is "reactionary" and very or purely "abstract". The truth lies rather in "the self-affirming unity of immediacy and mediation", discussed, he says, in "the second part of Logic, the Discussion of Essential Being" (*Enc.* 65). The whole of *Enc.* 61-78, "Immediate or Intuitive Knowledge" as "Third Attitude of Thought to Objectivity", requires exposition and commentary as supplement to the present essay and the positions here taken up.

should be evident from what I have said that for Hegel to be taken as expounding revealed religion, in its concept and substance equally, it is necessary to take him as presenting precisely that Content as already presented. His particular interpretation, that is, cannot be taken as some kind of a fresh start, absolutely speaking. He is rather "working upon the trunk" (Confucius). If he were not, then it would no longer be a treatment of revealed religion, either materially or in its concept, whatever other points of interest his interpretation might possess. This in fact is precisely his criticism of the equivocations² upon Faith typical of much theology contemporary with him, e.g. that of Jacobi (cf. EL63):

Firstly, the Christian faith comprises in it an authority of the Church: but the faith of Jacobi's philosophy has no other authority than that of a personal revelation. And secondly, the Christian faith is a copious body of objective truth, a system of knowledge and doctrine: while the scope of the philosophic faith is so utterly indefinite... Faith itself, taken in this professedly philosophical sense, is nothing but the sapless extract of immediate knowledge, - a purely formal category...

Neither should this professedly philosophical sense be confused with "the indwelling of the Holy Spirit", he goes on. In our ecumenical or supra-ecumenical day we are rather stressing that the Spirit "blows where it will", but Hegel's point remains. There are certain parallels, in his treatment of faith, with his presentation of *Sittlichkeit* and it is only by ignorance of or incapacity to understand the foundation in Hegel's Logic that the view in either case is misunderstood as mere unbelieving conservatism³. It is, however, by detailed study and commentary of his treatment of mediacy and immediacy (here at EL63-78 especially), his doctrine of their mutual implication, that still greater clarity can be achieved in this question of "revealed religion" such as we may arrive at

² Such equivocation must be distinguished from the real distinction between faith as a virtue and faith as the dogmatic content or what is thus virtuously believed, as it is claimed.

³ Hegel's ethics, implicit in that he left no treatise on ethics, are to be sharply distinguished from any mere run-through of customary morality or what he calls *Sittlichkeit*. Even the ethical affirmation of *Sittlichkeit*, in so far as he makes it, is to be distinguished from the latter, although or even if this latter imply such an affirmation, at least implicitly. Any practical posture whatever implies ethical affirmation, as "Zarathustra" surely has taught us. The distinction, anyhow, is none other than that of Aristotle, who prefaces his Ethics by stating that its first principles are *taken from* custom, so that to have been *well brought up*, i.e. educated, is a condition for understanding the science (of ethics)

here.⁴ This treatment is formally distinct from the privileged position he accords to Christianity, the latter being more in accordance with his "cosmology" than his purely *a priori* logic, to borrow McTaggart's term from his *Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology* (Cambridge, 1901). It remains true that Hegel sees in Christianity as phenomenon much of the formal character he ascribes to religion (and *a fortiori* revelation) as such.

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Aquinas, then, begins his *Summa theologiae*, written for theology students, with a treatise *De Deo Uno*, on God as one, followed by the treatise *De Deo Trino*, on God as three, or as threefold. His earlier *Summa contra Gentes*, for "outsiders", the nations (*gentes*), without Christian faith, is not thereby styled, however, as a purely "philosophical" treatise, abstractly separated from *theologia*, but simply as, again, a *summa*, offered now to "the peoples", to the whole world without distinction or privilege, to those who otherwise, untaught in their "uproar", "imagine a vain thing" (*Psalm* 2).

His chief target there, clearly, was the encircling Islamic world. So he treats there too of reasonable belief, as a mean between rejection and levity. He treats of the Trinity, without appeal to authority, making no rigid distinction between a metaphysical or "abstract" Trinity and the "economic" Trinity as taking shape for men (revelation) in the history of salvation and the New Testament events particularly. The later Trinitarian treatise in the *Summa Theologiae* culminates in a treatment of divine *missions* (of Son and Spirit), thus leading into the Treatise on Creation by way of the contrasted processions (*processiones*, not *processus*) *ad intra* (Trinity) and *ad extra* (Creation).⁵ In the *Summa contra Gentes* this

⁴ One therefore hopes to find or attempt, in supplement, such a commentary as crowning preface or finishing touch to the genuine rock-bottom philosophy, as reintegration of an originally differentiated, in genuine self-consciousness, enlightenment, of this "new age" (without capitals!) we are and have been moving into through some generations now. For this, called now "globalisation", will not remain such if it should be abstracted from that self-revealing religion, called by Hegel "absolute", out of which this universalising imperative, to "teach all nations", but first of all the teachers, has grown.

⁵ Compare, again, Hegel's parallel to this mutual assimilation of *extra* and *intra*, under the rubric of intrinsic *processio* in Aquinas. Hegel, namely, conceives an infinite selfhood or, equally, self as intrinsically projected to an other, in "play", which it "sets up": "The movement of the notion is as it were to be looked upon merely as play: the other which it sets up is in reality not an other. Or as it is expressed in the teaching of Christianity: not merely has God created a world

material is treated at the end, along with incarnation, sacraments and "last things" (*eschata*) as matters "above reason" but not opposed to it. There is no similar distinction in Hegel. Instead we have that between *Verstand* and *Vernunft* within Reason itself. Thus Reason, as "faculty of the Unconditioned", is never "led captive" but is ever called to go higher. What sense, we might ask ourselves, does belief have when nothing is understood?⁶

This latter Treatise, on Creation, treats of the "production" of creatures and the consequent distinction of things (*rerum*), of good and evil, of body and spirit (a different distinction), of angels and of corporeal nature, having man at its summit as composite of body and spirit. It closes with a treatment of the divine conservation and government of things (*rerum*), their movement (active and passive) especially and the production (*tractatio*) of man by man.

We stick now to the major *Summa*. It continues (Ia-IIae, Prologue) with a thorough treatment of Man (*homo*) as image of God inasmuch as rational or intellectual (spiritual), free as to choice and judgment, self-determining (*potestativum*). These qualities are all cited from John of Damascus, *On the Orthodox Faith* (eighth century). Faith, namely, is taken here as a ("theological") virtue, prior to being identified with its object(s) or with what we sometimes call the Faith or our faith, in the sense of creed.

It remains then to consider man as such an image of the universal exemplar, God, theology's object. Man, that is, is now to be considered with respect to freedom, in a consequent treatise on "human acts". Since, however, these acts are defined or specified as *propter finem* (*Q.* 1, *art.* 1, of *Ia-IIae*) there is a preliminary treatise on "The Last End" (*finis ultimus*), *viz.* God as happiness, before going on to the means of coming at this end. These, namely, are just these human actions, of man *qua* man. In general, this project elicits treatment of human psychology, of the voluntary in relation to the intellectual, of the passions and, finally, of the principles of human acts, as distinct from passions, whence they proceed. These are potentially intrinsic to us as *habitus*, as what is or are "had". As such they are virtues plus gifts and fruits of the Spirit, along with vices as principles

which confronts Him as an other; He has also from all eternity begotten a Son in whom he, a Spirit, is at home with himself" (*Enc.* 161add.). These two notions are manifestly the same.

⁶ On this see my "Faith as Thinking with Assent", *New Blackfriars* Vol. 86 No. 1001, January 2005, pp.101-113 (Chapter One of our *From Narrative to Necessity*, Cambridge Scholars, Newcastle 2012,

of sinful acts specifically, which can also therefore become intrinsic.⁷ The relation to God, all the same, remains intrinsic to the treatment (*Ila-Ilae*). So, anyhow, the cause and effects of these are all gone into before taking up certain *extrinsic* principles of action. These come either from the Devil, inclining to evil, or from God, inclining to good. They are then, these principles, temptation, law and grace respectively. God, extrinsic, "instructs us by law and helps us by grace". Each of these, law and grace, receives, therefore, a separate treatise, while for temptation we are referred to Ia, Q.114, where we read of angels being "sent" to us, by God or the Devil, as either custodial or hostile (*impugnativi*). Hegel will strive, in a measure, to overcome the appearance here of abstract dualism or "divorce", natural to finite judgment, and to give the negative its due.

After this, then, the first of two parts of this second part (flanked by the first and third "parts", on God and Christ respectively) on "man", Thomas proceeds to "human acts in particular", *viz.* virtues and vices, including the three theological virtues and their opposite vices, i.e. the extrinsic principles remain a major part of the picture. This is completed by an additional treatment of particular states of life and "gratuitous" (*gratis datae*) graces, i.e. those given to some men or women in particular. The double denomination gives a hint of the conceptual *flow* underlying the schematisation, this flow indicating that "everything is grace" (K. Rahner), as cancelling the scheme of the *schemata*. These graces freely given, anyhow, include prophecy, rapture, tongues, wise speech or knowledge, as well as particular "vocations" to states of life, active, contemplative, typically "religious" (i.e. monastic) as the "state of perfection" voluntarily assumed under the three vows of *religio*⁸ (poverty, chastity, obedience), or especially to vocation to the state (*status*) of being a bishop! The treatment constituting this mammoth Second Part of the *Summa* was thus all along, since this last additional section belongs with it, a treatment of man, as final or specifying difference of the whole, in the Aristotelian⁹ spirit of Thomas, ecclesial and replete with Trinitarian references.

These ecclesial and Trinitarian references, however, come more into their own in the third and final Part (*pars*), which remained unfinished at Thomas's death, treating of Christ as in himself (*in seipso*) creation's way or very return (*reditus*) to God, this same way (*via*) we have been studying

⁷ This yields two senses of "natural", as we also find in Hegel. The natural naturally fails to be itself, has no stay, being but a moment, rather. It is therefore natural for it to *desire* to transcend itself.

⁸ Religion is in fact identified as a virtue falling under justice, like piety, as what we owe but can never repay to God or our parents respectively.

⁹ Cf. Aristotle, *Met.* VII.

as a or the human project. Here Incarnation is treated of, as well as sacraments as effective signs of salvation and, finally, immortal "life" itself, along with the "resurrection".¹⁰ References to the treatise on the Trinity abound here.

So, in general, we might ask, why does Thomas, and the tradition, begin with *Deus unus*, the unitary nature or *essentia divina*, before considering the necessary reality of persons and/or processions (relations) "in" God? This "in" already suggests the at least conceptual priority of the container. One might believe in God without knowing he is Trinity, though this maybe tends to "deform" one's conception. Yet when St. Paul declared the unknown God previously worshipped in ignorance by the Athenians he did not in fact expound the Trinity as such to them.

So Thomas declares that God is the subject of "sacred science" (Ia 1, art. 6). To God, therefore, all matters are referred *secundum ordinem ad Deum*, be they the very principles of this science, divine attributes (processions?), articles of faith (the "persons"), things in general (*res*), signs, works of salvation (*reparationis*) or the whole Christ, head and members (men). Some, he concedes, attend more to the matters treated than to the form (*ratio*) of this science, which is indeed *ratio* as such.

How can it be this though when we so emphasise its treatment of positive and particular "revelations"? See here Ia, 1 art. 1, where Thomas claims that it is *necessarium praeter philosophical disciplinas aliam doctrinam haberi*. There is a consistent if not absolute dualism here, faith and reason, grace and nature, also, as appears, soul and "body".

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Hegel, it is well known, has a different, more unitary approach, if we consider now the penultimate chapter of *The Phenomenology of Mind* as an example of this. Here Hegel warns against mere "reversion to the primitive", to Biblicism as we might say. The true life of Spirit as Subject is "not brought out" when "untwined and reduced" to the ideas of the first imperfect community, or those who knew Jesus, "the actual human being incarnating the divine Spirit", says Hegel, in the flesh. This point is made in the New Testament itself. Hegel is not "original", not unorthodox. Here one would confuse the "origin" with the "simplicity" of the Notion. Here is "not the notion, but bare externality and particularity", "soulless

¹⁰ These, however, are treated primarily as aspects of the *vita Christi*. For treatments of the Last Things themselves there is a supplement put together posthumously from Thomas's teachings in the earlier *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*.

recollection of a presumably (*gemeinten*) individual historical figure of the past" (*Phenomenology of Mind*, p.765).

How then is this content, Absolute Spirit, Subject? "The Absolute is Mind (Spirit)." This is "the lesson of Christianity" (*Enc.* 384). In general, Christian proclamation must not be tied to any particular epistemology or, even, ontology. Therefore, if substance is rejected in favour of subject as final category, under the very influence of Christianity historically, then we restate the latter accordingly. If matter is an illusion then incarnation and resurrection, like birth and death generally, must be restated as wearing a different face. If one conscious subject is not absolutely distinguishable from another then that too receives new explanation, as indeed must any theory of "person" and persons, besides relations. These sorts of philosophic considerations once led Augustine or Aquinas to identify the persons *with* relations, though not then attributable as accidents or properties, it would seem. Similarly, God becomes trans-ontological, if, as infinite, the absolute is one with essence, in a unique *actus essendi*, not though an act *of* the essence since identical with it. It follows already that to "have Being" is, in Hegelian terms, "but a constituent stage in the Idea" (*Enc.* 160 add.). Ontology, that is, transcends itself and this had already led, in earlier theology, to the transformation of the naively realist "I am" of Scripture into this union of being and essence, in the first place, eventually issuing, for thought, and hence correctly, in absolute idealism. The finite predicate, applied to particulars first, is then applied to the absolute only to be absorbed by it. "I am he who is, you are she who is not", St. Catherine heard said to her, not adding that the speaker might then have added that this meant that neither of them were or are, that such existence, as we predicate it, is a mere dialectical moment in conceptual self-development (*Enc.* 161), though this will be just therefore the final truth of being itself. Nihilism, universal nullification (*Enc.* 50), is but a moment in and of this self-transcending insight, "the loss of the Substance" which is yet "the pure subjectivity of Substance" or, in a word, "spiritualization" (*Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 782), of which any notion whatever of *object* is "its figurative idea".

Trinitarian thought, thus developed, is inseparable from thought of God incarnate. Nor is this because of some abstracted consideration of a purely "economic" ¹¹Trinity. Yet "incarnation" is a slanted term. God, the infinite,

¹¹ As theory is the highest praxis (Aristotle), so praxis, in the ultimate economy, is the highest theory. Theology, Scotus taught, meaning thereby ultimate wisdom, *sophia*, is "a practical science". This appears to have remained merely implicit in Marxist thought to date, although happiness, as final end of all consciousness,

is said to "take flesh" as something not had already. But what God does not have is, just thereby, nothing. Hence the preferred notion is of God's emptying himself, *kenosis*, which, if it is also *kinesis*, a moving or "proceeding", can only be absolute or perfect act, the perfected concept of infinity. It is thus movement sublated above its normal definition as imperfect act of the finite as such. It is movement without change, perpetual unrest, even, "all at once" as Mozart said he heard the music he later wrote down "in parts", a moment becoming a movement. We must add though that in this unrest God rests, as *all* flows, it was said, as also that "in God we live *and move*". In emptying himself God brings to nothing the things that are, St. Paul had remarked, speaking in picture, however, as if he might conceive this exclusively as an historical moment, leaving it to his Johannine colleague to absolutise this moment as "God is love" or gift, *donum*, a "name" for the third person or Spirit, Aquinas suggests, as otherwise not distinguished from spirit in general. This identification of the Spirit of faith with generic spirit is thus not a heretical invention by Hegel, as McTaggart rather interpreted it, himself impatient of the orthodoxy he wished to declare Hegel free of.

What though is absolutely required of Hegel here is that he demonstrate that God cannot be other than Trinity, that he is necessarily and that therefore, conversely, Trinity adds nothing "positive" or particular to a full and yet general notion of God. The same applies to Incarnation. It, they both, must be part not merely of God's concept but of the one and only Concept. Can Hegel deliver on these? To deliver, moreover, he must, as we said above, leave the Christian faith what it was before, at least inasmuch as one might say this of Paul the Apostle ("born out of due time"), say, that he too left it as it was before, inasmuch as it was *just this* that he transformed, Hegel's prototype in this.

The situation is directly analogous to that where Aquinas posits a procession of persons, a re-producing, as following directly from the divine attributes of *esse* and simplicity. Aquinas, like Hegel, derives the Infinite's¹² necessarily manifestatory character from its being as Intellect, as self-knowing, as self-conceiving Concept. This self is other inasmuch as what it conceives is a *conceptum*, interior word, *verbum interius*. Given simplicity, this word or concept is one whole with the total *simplex* (the ultimate complex), and yet it is other, self as other.

seems increasingly recognised as a category needful for economic science to be rational.

¹² We may name God by any one of the attributes, such as infinity, identical with himself or with his Concept, whether or not this leaves open whether or not this becomes self-defeating, e.g. if being is non-being.

Opinions differ as to whether Hegel identifies the external procession of Nature with this internal procession of the Word or not, or even as to whether there is a real difference between these two interpretations. Theologically, creation is in the Word, while each of the myriad "ideas" is "identical with the divine essence" as a whole (Aquinas, ST Ia 15, cp. Hegel, EL160).

The Incarnate One, as he slowly came to be viewed, taught that whatever is done to anyone is done to him. Given such exchange in identity beyond co-inherence there seems indeed no difference (between these two interpretations), while under Idealism "earth... rocks and stones and trees" fall out of account. Further, if such is really done to him then our distinction of persons is relativised and that must affect the distinction of (divine) persons insisted upon, to the extent of putting aside any charge of tritheism.

Hence Aquinas's reflections upon Incarnation, next, are in many ways as liberal as Hegel's or more. He allows (*Summa theol.* IIIa) that any of the three divine persons might assume a human nature, either individualised or abstract (that of Jesus was individualised), a nature indeed either human or animal, while the number of natures assumed might be one, several or (why not?) all. It is only, he says, that each would be the same one divine person. This indeed becomes for St. Paul (but is already in the Prayer for Unity as narrated by John, at *John* 17) the desired end-result, "that all may be one". "You are all one person in Jesus Christ". Aquinas's only objection to such a divine choice is that it would not be "fitting", i.e. he opposes no argument¹³ and it is anyhow how things turn out, we see. Christian thought, that is, often posits personal unity where we see plurality, as in the "one flesh" of marriage, based on that of Christ with his church or body, though it is called more fundamentally a "natural" sacrament. "Now you (all) are the body of Christ".

This modification of the uniqueness of Christ (as of any person), Hegel shows, is a purification of figurative or pictorial thinking (his terms). There is no divine election apart from what actually happens, no chosen people (or person) apart from those who actually succeed, on pain of making the Infinite finite. That is, Jesus stands for all and each of us. Only

¹³ One might hazard a guess that this unfittingness is all he would oppose to the suggestion that God might assume a female human nature, though we might think that the possibility of this, which seems to follow from his concessions but finds no explicit mention there, does not seem even to have occurred to him, as is the way of things thought unfitting. Hegel doesn't say much in this direction either. Still, the traditional liturgy interprets Scripture in and as identifying Mary and the divine Wisdom, that Holy Spirit that "comes upon" her.

thus can Paul say "He was made sin for us", as we in turn "bear one another's burdens". Hence, Hegel can say,

This incarnation of the Divine Being, its having essentially and directly the shape of self-consciousness, is the simple content of Absolute Religion.¹⁴

Here we touch on a coming together, indeed an identity, of Form and Content as required by the Absolute Idea (in its perfect form, the philosophical). This is not to be confused with Jacobi's reduction of revealed truth to immediate intuition. The content is not reduced to the form, this is not the meaning of Hegel's identification of the Idea with the method of coming at it. Rather, all is here contained, nothing is dropped or omitted but all is taken up. "What do they not see, those who see God?" (Gregorius Magnus).

Hegel also accordingly says that it is in the incarnate one that God himself becomes perfect, which is the same as his being perfectly manifested, as is true for Hegel of all "beings". It does not mean that the Infinite and Absolute emerges at the end of a temporal process. The temporal too has to come to be seen as dialectical or certainly phenomenal, appearing only for as long as spirit needs it, Hegel remarks in, it seems, playfully speculative idiom.

Hence spirit necessarily appears in time, and it appears in time so long as it does not grasp its pure notion, i.e. so long as it does not annul time.¹⁵

We might rather say it thus necessarily appears in time *inasmuch as* it does not grasp its notion. "Before Abraham was, I am." In terms of Hegel's philosophy we may all say that, even Abraham may say it. Jesus again is man, having the unity of all within himself, as McTaggart again puts it, speaking of each and every person, and we are each of us so in so far as we think. Or, we should add, whereas man is taken for granted in religion, as immediate, in philosophy we consider Mind or minds, *res cogitantes*, nor are the boundaries of self certain; in fact it quite certainly has no boundaries, the final position of religion too.

It is thus that Jesus has been taken or posited and this, in Hegel's thinking, is equivalent to his being so. The position of Jesus depends therefore upon the reality of the believing community, the Church. This is in fact the Catholic position or very close to it. The only difference is that this position is not usually presented in terms of absolute idealism, such as

¹⁴ *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 758.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 800.

Hegel claims is the proper form of philosophy and so, *a fortiori*, of philosophy of religion. There is not, anyhow, a plurality of bodies of Christ. So faith implies a confidence in the permanent or unailing (a variant upon "infallible") presence of the Church, the "spiritual power", in some form or other, we might wish to add.

One might note that one finds this reflected in Church dogmas such as that of the Immaculate Conception of Mary (papally "defined" and/or proclaimed in 1854). There a "miracle" is asserted that is essentially not open to be witnessed (as is also the case with "transubstantiation" as understood in realist theology). There can be no such miracle, the preservation by a special grace from an inherited guilt through the foreseen merits of Christ's passion. The meaning of the definition can only be that thus Mary, as mother of God incarnate (*theotokos*), is to be regarded. It is analogous to Kant's practical postulate. The same applies really to the Virgin Birth of Mary's Son, now that theologians affirm that there is no logical necessity for God incarnate not to have had a human father. She is to be thus viewed, as shoring up or protecting Christ's unique divinity while this uniqueness, again, is to be taken in the way described, as Hegel has perceived. There is again a link with the Lutheran idea of "imputation" of "righteousness". There is no grace "really" changing people. Rather, the graced person comes into a new relationship with God, through Christ's life and death, in which he should trust as in a promise of "acceptance". So he or she will most likely go on "sinning" and Luther even advises him, playfully perhaps, to "sin strongly", *fortiter*, as sign of his trust. In a sense we are here finding the philosophical rationale of this theological "moment"¹⁶, which first occurred in the bosom of the undivided Church, we might note.¹⁷ What is called Lutheran *gnosis* (as by

¹⁶ To understand this moment more sympathetically, less confrontationally than was the case in the first confrontation, we might consider Aquinas's contrasting of cause and the more open term "principle", applied to God without implying "diversity of substance"; "it is enough that order is discernible" (S.T. Ia, q.33, *art.* 1, c, and *ad* 1 and 3).

¹⁷ In line with this I cite again Philip L. Reynolds, "Philosophy as the Handmaid of Theology: Aquinas on Christ's Causality", *Contemplating Aquinas*, ed. Fergus Kerr O.P., UND Press, Indiana, U.S.A., 2006, pp.217-247 (including the *acta* of a one-day conference held in June 2001 at Heythrop College, University of London, on reading Aquinas today). Reynolds is a noted American "Thomist". In his essay Reynolds finds that the later work of Aquinas, although continuing to attribute instrumental or efficient causality of grace and "salvation" to Christ's humanity (as instrument of his divinity), in no way shows or explains how this causality is effective, using it rather as merely an analogical model, but of what, Reynolds asks. The inference might be, if this is true, that the whole effect of such

Erik Voegelin) is rather an attempted closer approximation to the unity of theory and praxis in God, also the inspiration for the earlier Scotistic "moment", that theology is a practical knowing or science. In "canonising" those identified with such moments one moves away from (and thus more deeply into) earlier "stances", positions. Thus is echoed the distinction between a knowing "after the flesh" and the need to "know him so no more" but in ongoing spiritual interpretation in the life, the knowing, of the same spirit. This point, but lately conceded in regard to Scotus particularly, will, as it has been, doubtless be applied to other re-formers or re-formulators indifferently (this indifference is precisely the point) "in the fullness of time".

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But, to continue our original speculation, it is difficult to see why, conceding that much, we might not eventually declare that Mary too is an incarnation of the Word, is God or the Absolute made manifest. We might even affirm this of any person whatever, as infinite in Hegel's definition of "infinite". In that sense, indeed, each will have the unity of all within him or her. This also gives a sense to the Pauline vision or, rather, stipulation according to which God will finally be "all in all", as having been it "all the time" though we have still laboured under the illusion of time. Obviously there can be no *future* in which Time will be no more, no past before Time was.

"Spirit is the Being which is the process of retaining identity with itself in its otherness." The whole of the Logic has taught us this. On that account solely this Being is revealed, known. "The divine nature is the same as the human." Nor does this invalidate Chalcedonian formulations. The human is at least the sign of the divine as, differently, is body of soul. Each connotes differently what both in either pair denote, even though a nature itself become sign, like the symbols of mystical interpretation (of Scripture), and even like the whole of nature. In Scripture even events are signs. That is, they are not abstractly events and so there are not events

"revelation" would be ethical, and in that sense spiritual, and nothing else. This will not surprise anyone familiar with Hegel's thesis of the accomplishment of religion in philosophy, as well as of his critique of causality as a finitely limited notion. Conversely, what is ethical will include an "absolute" and beatific or happy-making perspective, thought thinking itself (*noesis noeseos*, cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XI, 9; XII, 7) in the effortlessness of perfected virtue. Grace as a reality, that is, is not dependent upon such a causal or quasi-magical model, being thought thus thinking itself in us. Reality is thus basically friendly, i.e. rational.

absolutely. The only event, *Ereignis*, is the speaking of the Word, never anything but new in Pure Act.

Similarly Hegel says here, in effect, that overcoming the figurative entails seeing the Substances-become-Subjects as ultimately moments of one reality, one concept. Now where the divine persons alone were as it were "reduced" to moments a charge of the heresy of Sabellianism was made, as if each person were not really wholly God but a mere aspect of the triune unity. But if persons as such, human or divine, are anyhow moments (a philosophical position) then such a characterisation of the divine persons will not be heresy without more ado.¹⁸ Similarly, if taking flesh just means putting on an appearance (of finitude), since this is all that "flesh" is anyway, then there is no heresy of Docetism, as it was called, in saying so. Christ did not just seem to be a man if men are themselves just such a seeming, if flesh is but a negative limit upon Spirit, as it must be, if they had but thought further.

The type of reasoning employed here may strike some as what was called, somewhat unfairly, Jesuitical. The Jesuits have not in fact always been very good at it, having other fish to fry, especially today. It is not, anyway, inherently vicious or power-hungry to wish to re-veal the unity of the tradition as the unity of Reason, of the Concept itself, from first to last.¹⁹ This was not merely Hegel's "view", but the essence of his philosophy as a whole. Here the factual or material fuses with the formal,

¹⁸ Neither of course could the dogma of Transubstantiation be wedded to a particular philosophy, e.g. the Aristotelian, of substance. One can affirm that he who partakes of the sacrament partakes of Christ without affirmation of substance in either case. This is especially unproblematic in a philosophy where each and any constituent "is the very total which the notion is", even granted this yields a view closer to Hegel's own preferred Lutheran theory. It is nonetheless impossible to dub his thought a Lutheran any more than a Catholic philosophy exclusively.

¹⁹ This is the principle of Development, of which evolution is an analogy or even instance when not taken "materially". Hegel's objections against admitting material evolution into a philosophy of Nature are well-known, although it is not easy to grasp why he could not "dematerialise" this "matter" in the same way as he does gravity or life itself when treating them "in the Concept". Alternatively, one can perhaps find evolution thus treated under a different name, if one looks, where he discusses the Heraclitean advance upon the Eleatics, for example. The situation would be similar to his criticism of Newton in relation to Kepler as a natural philosopher specifically, or of the treatment of ancient atomism at the hands of the physicists, whatever the gains he concedes have been made through this "material" treatment. They resemble the assumption I have to make of the materiality of my house-key when I search for it on the floor. This present I, along with floor and house-key, remain phenomenal.

the "logical" while remaining itself. The immediate is mediated, comes before us as result.

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I proceed now to fresh considerations concerning that one man whom Pilate, we read, presented as the man or simply man, *ecce homo*, behold the man. Thus Terentius had presented himself, *humanus sum et nihil humanum me alienum puto*. I am human and consider nothing that is human alien to me. So what you do to another, as if *alienum*, you do to me, he too might have added.

All that is said here is offered in support of the view that what is thought is always, ultimately, thought itself, the most general, the one Concept. Similarly the birth of any music is in a sense the birth of music itself. It is thought itself that is the Notion. The Notion is not of anything. The same applies to Revelation. Hence it is figurative thinking to speak of "revealed truth" or, still more, truths, as distinct from revelation as such. Traditionally the term Epiphany is used for this, as a manifestation "of glory". For what is glory unless Self here? This is the full meaning of *Aufhebung* as Hegel uses it.²⁰ This is why, indeed, Hegel is able to relativise the numerical aspect of the Trinity, showing how it "might" be made Quaternity or Quinity (772), though his comment here is clearly itself made merely relatively, "as regards its (Spirit's) moments". So Aquinas says that *numeri non ponuntur in divinis* (we don't discuss quantities in divine things). The three are one. So the Creed, *credo in unum Deum*, Spirit, one as whole, i.e. not even a discrete quantity such as gasoline, yet as ultimate Concept both one with and over-reaching all "reality". This is the movement of thought sketched in the Ontological Argument. This is only rejected as no argument from the Realist standpoint because it, suitably presented, overthrows such Realism. Hegel's Logic is the detailed demonstration of just this.

Revelation then is God "becoming", i.e. appearing as, human or concrete. The Trinitarian materials are derived therefrom, as Augustine had so well understood. God is a Trinity as man is a community. For Hegel, indeed, the Spirit or third person is the life of the (believing) community and nothing else. Hence that community is nothing else either than that life, life "hidden with Christ in God", along with any gathering in unity of two or three anywhere, this now being (and not merely coinciding

²⁰ McTaggart used capitals to distinguish names for categories from names simply. I admit to a less systematic usage.

with) a philosophical conclusion. Yet each one of us is the community, "there in the midst of them". Hence Aquinas declared that the "society of friends" is not essential to blessedness, just as Hegel takes his stand on "absolute knowledge". The ego in being magnified to infinity by the same token disappears altogether.

So, in McTaggart's thought, interpreting Hegel, reality is a community, indeed an inter-subjective (but supra-organic) system, of love or rational harmony, with each as centre as each having the whole perfect unity within self. We love God because God loved us, runs the Scripture²¹, and because God has loved us we "ought" also to love one another. The causality is indeed one, yet for Hegel as for Hume causality is phenomenal, not absolute. The essence of the Absolute, this final or archetypal One, is its own unique act of Being. That is, again, it has neither essence nor being in the usual abstract sense. It is universal precisely as individual. As self of self (Augustine) it is self itself²², hence other than self. This is, precisely, self-consciousness. It says, "He that has seen me has seen that (the Father)", "I and the Father are one". "Become what you are", philosophy urges us, as the first "natural law", so to say. *Seid umschlungen, Millionen*, exclaims the poet, and thus does it, the "impossible", himself.

Anyone, any one, is the One. This, Hegel shows in the *Logic*, is the truth of Atomism. In *The Phenomenology of Mind*, too, this stage, once reached, with "Absolute Freedom and Terror", is not abandoned. The atom is both individual and, just therefore, universal (as in Scotus), the "lowest is thus at the same time the highest", he says here, in the *Phenomenology* again, doubtless in full Biblical consciousness. What is revealed at the surface, he goes on, is the deepest (this will reappear in the *Logic*), "made sin for us", in Scriptural dialectic again, to be developed further in Hegel's own language later in this penultimate chapter of the earlier book. Such sense-consciousness, the seeing and hearing, is culmination and consummation of the Notion, of the "Supreme Being", whom the Enlightenment too had worshipped in ignorance, Reason placed there upon the altar it had never left, in all her eternal beauty, art, religion, philosophy, a myriad eyes reflecting. "Look well, we are, we are indeed Beatrice", one (any) individual linking heaven and earth for the poet (at the threshold of Paradise). The incarnate one, eternally begotten or spoken (it is the same), is reflected only in the eyes of a beloved who "has lived"

²¹ Not McTaggart, who denied God as impossible.

²² That the "intensive" classical pronoun *ipse, autos*, translates as "self" (or as "the very man", thing etc.), just as does the "reflexive" pronoun *se*, is a philosophical clue "in itself", though, it might seem, one of indefinite focus.

(762) and hence now "ever lives", though she is not at first recognised, so great is the difference, traversible by Thought, between phenomena and the Concept. What you do to her, or she to you, you do to me. "The Self is Absolute Being". This becomes Spirit so that it is no longer itself standing in the way as alien Object (it never really was this), but Subject, identity, "attainable in pure speculative" knowledge alone, "the knowledge furnished by revealed religion" which, again, is not revelation *of* anything. The "joy of seeing itself in Absolute Being, becomes realised in self-consciousness and seizes the whole world." The sign of such absolute exchange is not the dollar, which it has facilitated, but the cross. Ultimate reality is Spirit as ultimate destiny or End of "immediate self-consciousness", ultimately, that is, no longer or not at all "a sensuous other", but "all", each or *omnis*, singular (as in traditional formal syllogistic), "arisen in Spirit". "I live yet not I". It is mutual, that is to say.

This then, in germ, is Hegel's philosophical or thought Trinity, conditioning, again, Absolute or unconditioned Knowledge, at once Reality and the form of Discourse wherein it surfaces. In fact the truth transcends the "pictorial" perception of it in the specifically religious communion bearing it but not yet knowing itself²³ as Spirit, in so far as Spirit "leads" into all truth, i.e. into itself as path or Way. What is seen is appearance only, what is thought is eternal Content. God is love, "made sin for us", "the same" and "not the same", "cancelled and preserved at once" as we transcend "the soulless word 'is'", as it were giving Nicholas of Cusa the last word, behind Descartes, after Thomas Aquinas. "The moments as much are as they are not." This comes out, or is shown, not said, "in the shapes or modes consciousness has assumed" (789), God "foaming forth" to God, alpha and omega. Let all then proceed as before.²⁴

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²³ A Catholic might say, the communion, the Body, perceives it, "the truth", sacramentally rather than pictorially, signification transcending figuration, at least as far as words themselves do this. Yet still, Hegel's main point, there is a "not yet".

²⁴ "God" appears as a proper name but it is at least equally a *nomen naturae*, a name of a universal nature, synonymous with *deitas* or "godhead". As such it is, like "ether", open to scientific treatment, as individuals maybe are not, history notwithstanding. It would thus seem open to science to claim that it is not instantiated. Hegel's position here seems to be that this name, "God", transcends the question as to being instantiated in that it names, includes in its naming, the instantiation itself of whatever might be absolute or ultimate.

Etienne Gilson understood our project here very well, referring at length to it in an endnote to the final chapter, “The Middle Ages and Philosophy”, of his *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy*, based upon his Gifford Lectures, given at Aberdeen in 1931 and 1932. He understands it only to throw cold water upon it, however. He refers to what has been attempted more than once, of which a “typical example” is, he says, V. Gioberti’s essay, *Della filosofia della rivelazione*, published in 1856. Hegel, Gioberti’s source of inspiration, is not mentioned in the whole three-page end-note, nor is the whole theological movement known as “ontologism”, mediated from Hegel by this thinker, the main propositions of which were dismissed as “not safe for teaching” by the Roman “Holy Office” in 1860.²⁵ The phrase used is important as stopping short of condemning the proposals as false. Its wording recalls, perhaps consciously, the contrast Hegel drew between exoteric religion and esoteric philosophy, discussed more than once above. What may have been “not safe” then, however, might now be opportune for “the religious party” (Hegel) to take note of. For philosophy, of course, truth in her nakedness is immediate object, to be unveiled, *revelanda*, to the limit of the capacities of any given time and place. One might compare the fate of Christian “mysteries”, at first kept as *arcana Dei*, hidden from the uninitiated, as for the initiated alone, later promulgated and discussed in Roman or any other catechisms. Here esotericism in religion fell back to become the mark of the heretical. The question is whether philosophy can admit the same process, of being thrown open to the people, yet not degenerate into manipulative ideology, as happened to that other Hegelian offshoot, Marxism, as also, one might reasonably claim, to that earlier “mass movement”, revolutionary democracy.²⁶ A hopeful sign here is the observable fact that it is members of the religious party, of Christians at least, who tend in our societies to be more open to a natural reflectiveness upon things and situations recognizable as the ante-room to philosophy, whether or not they turn to theology proper for sustenance in such meditation. This distinction is often exclusively claimed for the “politically aware”, a great many of whom, however, themselves belong to and take sustenance from this so-called party, often of course by way of reaction to it. Such are to be distinguished from the (largely imaginary) “disinherited masses”. This phrase is a simple insult, invented by ideological manipulators, to our inherent, distributively universal human dignity. The individual, Hegel insisted with right, is itself the universal, of

²⁵ Cf. our entry “Ontologism” in *Dictionary of Metaphysics and Ontology*, ed. Smith and Burkhardt, Munich 1990.

²⁶ De Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* is the classic text here, alongside such writers as Edmund Burke or, later, Mr. Justice Stephen.

which personality is the mark and principle while, contrariwise, universality is “the principle of personality”.

By this route we may hope to disarm Gilson’s “take it or leave it” realism, his finding “reprehensible” whatever “suggests that Christianity can become a philosophy”. This approach, he finds, “amounts to an attempt to build up a Christian philosophy on a suppression of Christianity itself”. This asserts paradox where none is to be found, while begging a complex of questions. The confusion arises, namely, precisely from Gilson’s own contradictory phrase, “Christian philosophy”. This suggests a philosophy that would be, impossibly, limited by a qualification other than “true”. The particularity, rather, and this is the second of Hegel’s three final syllogisms with which his *Encyclopaedia* closes, itself becomes universal, the Idea, so that God, as principle all the same of every individual personality, is seen as “all in all”, in the Pauline phrase, the implication of which is that what is of Christ, the Christian, is no longer treated as conceptually separate from this totality or absolute unity, of which “I am you”, plentifully illustrated and taught in the Gospels, is the watchword. The suppression, if you like, is equally the absorption, the taking up, the *Aufhebung*. The mediatorship is itself self-suppressing, as the whole Christ is God himself.

Gilson feels obliged to remain with “the mysterious character of revealed truths”, not noticing that this directly denies the revelation it asserts. What you can’t understand has not been revealed to you. At best you are condemned to a lifelong parroting of to you unintelligible stock phrases. This opposition of faith to understanding is abstraction and falsity, as witness the phrase, also become all too conventional, as one may fear, *credo ut intelligam*. That means, in accordance with the truth of conceptual flow Hegel brings out, in believing I am on the way to understanding, belief is itself a first understanding. In this way Hegel identifies the attitude of the good child as belonging to the “reason-world” of genuinely speculative reason, “the right of every human being on whatever grade of culture or mental growth he may stand” (*Enc.* 82 add.). So he adds that “there is mystery in the mystical, only however for the understanding which is ruled by the principle of abstract identity” (*Ibid.* 82, add.). He adds, as if referring to a Gilson of the, for him, future:

And if those who recognise Mysticism as the highest truth are content to leave it in its original utter mystery, their conduct only proves that for them too, as well as for their antagonists, thinking means abstract identification, and that in their opinion, therefore, truth can only be won by renouncing thought, or as it is frequently expressed, by leading the reason captive.

Such abstract thinking, he adds, “tends to work its own dissolution and swing round into its opposite”. For what are held apart as two frequently on inspection coalesce into one, their child. Thus traditional Trinitarian theology, for example, absolutising in principle each separate Scriptural representation, rests upon the claim that “there are two processions in God”²⁷. There is no need to deny this, based as it is, though especially in Western or Latin theology, upon the twofold “action remaining in the agent” as “an intellectual nature” of intellect and will. Closer inspection, however, shows that intellect and will are correlated with one another and thus far the two make one inward action. Thus Aquinas speaks of will as intellect’s *own* inclination to the true thus seen as good, this distinction being one of reason only.²⁸ Thus it is that Hegel subdivides these two categories under that of “Cognition in general” (*Enc.* 223), placed between Life and the Absolute Idea, as “Cognition proper” and “Volition” respectively.²⁹ It is therefore in accordance with Thomas Aquinas’s own mind when Hegel’s Trinitarian thought sees rather, or finally, the *one* process of Spirit proceeding from the beginning, the Father, but more immediately *through* the Son, thus far coinciding more with Eastern Trinitarian thought, but just thereby stressing as corollary that, in this *immediate* sense specifically, Spirit proceeds *from* the mediator, the Son, alone. He could have quoted the text “And I will send you another comforter”, i.e. I rather than we, while as thus *sent* the other here is thus far the same as the sender, as in “I will put *my* spirit within them” (my stress).

Regarding this linkage to Eastern Orthodoxy, a surely beneficent effect even if outside Hegel’s intention, Gilson himself stresses the importance of Scotus Eriugena, in the ninth century, implying that it is only due to contingent factors, such as the Viking invasions of Normandy, that the latter’s Neoplatonic thought did not become definitive for Western Christianity too.³⁰ Here though, and the text is twenty years later than the remark on Gioberti’s and related efforts, he abstains from the kind of

²⁷ Cf. Aquinas, *Summa theol.* Ia 27, 3.

²⁸ Cf. Aquinas, *QD de potentia*, VII.

²⁹ There is a kind of precedent in Kant’s identifying the will and practical reason, carefully distinguished in Aquinas. By contrast though he makes of practical reason a separate faculty from the theoretical, as Aquinas does not. For him it is the particular ordination of unitary reason to action or work (*opus*). Hegel inclines more toward the side of Aquinas here.

³⁰ Cf. E. Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, Sheed & Ward, London 1955 (1972), section and notes on Eriugena.

judgment made earlier that we are considering.³¹ Gilson quotes, with apparent approval, Eriugena saying: “It is therefore certain that true religion is true philosophy, and, conversely, that true philosophy is true religion”. This makes no mention of “Christian philosophy”. Gilson, adds, however, a plea not to “forget that he is merely repeating Augustine”, a consensus that can be pushed, thus far, in either direction. The “merely”, even so, embodies Gilson’s abiding wish to reject development such as we are pleading for in these pages, both as existing and as now requiring to be developed further. That is, the doctrine of the development of Christian doctrine³² entails development of the doctrine of development, to a point, it may be, where Christian doctrine becomes fulfilment of and as true philosophy, wisdom from above, indeed, but wisdom all the more for that and so, as above, not above, in accordance with Hegel’s dialectical superseding of the correlation of dualities in general. Or, we may say, the teaching of all nations (*Matthew* 28) implies the universality of philosophy inseparable from “globalisation” as indeed its very meaning.

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A point that may have been uppermost in Gilson’s mind is the failure of philosophy, even Hegel’s, fully to take account of the particularity of Jesus Christ. He speaks of the “interior and intimate drama of nature and grace, the hidden life of charity, the mysteries of the divine life in God and in the soul... things without which Christianity would be no longer itself”.³³ These, stated thus, however, all presuppose a naively realist outlook to which it is no part of Christian faith to confine its adherents. Nor is it part of religion generally and for this reason Hegel speaks of philosophy itself, which he expressly identifies with absolute idealism, as perfected *Gottesdienst*, with or without liturgy.

What difference now does such idealism make, for example, to Gilson’s list above? Regarding the drama of nature and grace, one cannot do better than “read, learn and inwardly digest” Hegel’s treatment of this theme in *The Phenomenology of Mind*, chapter “Revealed Religion”, in the Baillie version the paragraphs from page 776, “The reconciliation of the Divine Being with its other...” to page 781, the paragraph ending with “This particular existence has become universal self-consciousness”. This is not philosophical reduction but “understanding spiritual things spiritually” (St.

³¹ E. Gilson, *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy*, Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York 1940, final chapter.

³² This is the title of Newman’s study of 1845.

³³ Gilson, *Ibid.* p.416.

Paul). It reflects Johannine evangelical theology itself, where “the particular person” declares, and that not in mere consoling euphemism, “I go to the father”. He is, Hegel says, “pictorially imagined to have really died” as “self-consciousness does not therefore really die” or, as he says elsewhere, death “wears a different face” to thought. This is the true meaning of “God made not death”, that we do not “really die” as we imagine it. Those “in the hand of God” only “*seem* to have died... in the eyes of the ungodly”, in natural, unspiritual sight.

This last is taken from Biblical representation, in *The Book of Wisdom*, of insights Hegel expounds philosophically, knowing “Christ after the flesh” “no more”. Realist thought treats the life of Christ in time or on earth, as we thoughtlessly say, separately (*vita Christi*) from that of spiritual self-consciousness, which is one with, absorbed in, universal consciousness as, nonetheless, as Spirit, “its own community” (p.778). For Absolute Idealism the latter neither is nor is not, “soullessly”, but is a moment of thought’s process. This is “the strength to dream” (Tennyson), where Gilson, saying “Dream on”, can only see the weakness of error. By a typical reversal in plasticity³⁴ Hegel says that the ideality of the finite is the dogma of philosophy as “the truth” about the finite. This does not deny the dogma of creation, as Gilson, in thirteenth century manner, might charge. It interprets it according to the self-gift of the Spirit, as a theologian might say.

We find a similar reversal, perhaps incomprehensible on a first reading, where Hegel speaks of knowledge as such as self-centred and therefore evil. Spirit “in natural form”, this would mean, “has to become evil”, but for a moment, so to say.

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... (*The Phenomenology of Mind*, p.778).

We should note here the correlation of existence, a finite category in Hegel’s *Logic*, with the phenomenal. Self-consciousness, too, is opposed to natural or “abstractly” individual consciousness as “its own community”. “I live yet not I”, as it is expressed repeatedly, with variations, in Scripture. We are all *and each* “members one of another”.

³⁴ Catherine Malabou develops perception of this “plasticity” in *The Future of Hegel*.

Since, that is to say, the essential Being is inherently and from the start reconciled with itself and is a spiritual unity, in which what are parts for figurative thought are sublated, are moments, what we find is that each part of figurative thought receives here the opposite significance to that which it had before.

Spiritual reality in general, Hegel finds, is “unity in otherness”, the basis of Trinitarianism and ultimately, this is the strength of the view, a *logical* matter. He has just thereby treated of Gilson’s other two “moments”, life in charity or love and the “mysterious” interaction, interpenetration even, of God and the soul, the “eye” whereby the seeing of one by the other is the being seen (Eckhart), so that the one would not be without the other.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

OUR DEEPEST FIRES

One watches a TV-series where the plot turns upon plates of a brainscan showing, it is claimed, that a patient cannot now have the memory-loss he has been professing. Peter Geach, in his book on McTaggart, *Truth, Love and Immortality*, calls such brain-mind claims "bluff". They are comparable to the Pythagorean assertion that justice is the number four, where we cannot understand what is being said. There is no point of contact, namely, between such brain-references and "my sudden recollection that I must go to the bank".

One might suspect equal bluff in what Geach is saying, however. The whole presumption, after all, behind our common understanding of the widespread Alzheimer's disease is that there is measurable correlation between such ability to recollect and the observable state of the brain. This correlation can always be further filled in, in confirmation of the original presumption, which, going back at least to Aristotle, was always more than a mere well-founded guess. For him, indeed, any knowledge at all requires the reality known to be present and not merely remembered, i.e. both object and subject must have a material base.

Endocrinology too, like neurology, encompasses personal affective life in a quite natural, so to say internal aspiration. To add "to some degree", as disclaimer, is like falling back on a "god of the gaps" in religious apologetic. Here God becomes just the name for these gaps, or for the "implicit" on the far side of finite understanding. Yet hormonal research continues to explain more and more, narrowing the gaps.

"Hormones rule, O.K." is one reaction to this. But do we want merely to replace one restrictive explanation with another? We cannot, I suggest. To rule, hormones must be more, or less, than themselves. They must be a language, a way of "naming" experience as given in our knowledge, in consciousness, as God (in Adam) named the creatures, whether one by one or in groups indifferently for our purposes here.

So if one says "the brain" determines, as source, all conscious life (either from itself or from what it "makes" of sense-experience indifferently) then one cannot retain the common-sense apprehension of the brain as part of the

human or animal body. For this too is a pure deliverance of the brain in that case, while if I cannot know that the body exists then I cannot know that the brain exists either. Here materialism and idealism in "critical" form coincide.

In place of existence we have now, in this situation, to speak of conscious act, since this is unmediated. It corresponds immediately to "the living brain", as existence does not. This act, activity, might be ours or it might be no one's. Brain activity cannot guarantee or support, cannot reach through to knowledge of substance, its own or any at all. In speaking like this, therefore, in assuming entitlement to make judgments, even as to an all-determining brain's situation, we reject the thesis implicitly. Together with substance, nature falls away as intrinsic object of investigation. This, however, quantum physics might seem to confirm. We investigate ourselves in inseparable correlation with "the object". The outside is inside and *vice versa*, indifferently since there is no longer either outside or inside. It becomes a figure of speech, as does speech itself, if we would hand all over to the brain.

For our consciousness it is plainly natural to construct such a correlate object, to "objectify", independently of verification. So predication is, as such, untruth, says Hegel, conscious though of the self-contradiction.

It is not a choice between flesh and spirit, as on the old scheme. They coincide. The brain paradigm, that is, was just that; nothing more. We do not reduce spirit to flesh, to "our" mode of apprehension. Nor is flesh reduced to spirit, as in some idealist scheme. It is its textual expression, rather. There is a background in the history of dogma, where the manhood (of the incarnate God) is "taken into" the Absolute so that the latter is not "converted into" the flesh, as if into a restricting medium (Athanasian Creed). Flesh is not a restriction but a manifestation standing for itself, as, in sacramental theology again, a sign can be what it signifies.

So our bodies are not additions around some spiritual core. They are, rather, along with sensible phenomena in general, signs of the concreteness of the true universal or, put differently, of its logical or "rational" character, to which the three syllogistic moments, like the three "persons" they reflect, are essential. The perceptual or sense-sphere is that of the individual in its initially abstract isolation from which Spirit ascends in self-constitutive process to complete self-consciousness as, eternally, its own result. This, the truth of the absolute and hence absolute truth, finds final expression in incarnation, according to Hegel. "This incarnation of the Divine Being... is the simple content of Absolute Religion".¹

¹ Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p.758. Cp. p. 775f. Here Hegel relates divine self-emptying to the Pauline figure of Christ's being "made sin" or evil for us", preparatory to an important general discussion of good and evil.

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So what the all-determining brain would give us would be something like "the world as will and idea", purely. To say that the brain determines me to think the brain need not be inadvertent contradiction but the signal, rather, that something else is aimed at, obliquely necessarily. As when one asserts the purest voluntarism one might just as well deny what one is saying. This was Aristotle's reason for safeguarding predication by affirming the law of non-contradiction, and of bivalence as between true or untrue. It was also, this voluntarism, the premise from which Hegel overturned this philosophy of substance within a world of change.

Today though, in view of what we have said above, it becomes possible to view materialism as a stage on the road to idealism. In idealism the self spins the world from itself as much as would an all-determining brain. I, any I, am universal in both systems. Predication is mere vehicle and finite categorial condition, as is language itself, for infinite creativity. It thus gropes its way to the Hegelian notion and beyond, where all predication is nullified. The old balance is gone, irreparably, as it had to go. Matter, for its part, is non-thinkable and with this materialism agrees, since it makes matter prior to thought. The materialist thinks materialism all the same, in a consciousness, of brain as source of brain, though this is not more than pure I, pure subject. He knows, that is, that materialism is a text, a way of speaking, ideology ultimately.

One cannot though be subject without being essentially related, correlated. This correlation, what makes subject to be subject, is world, its contrary, however we construct it. We make the others and they make us, without beginning or end. Each is necessary, therefore, as each is all in his all-determining brain or consciousness indifferently. This necessity we merely call his being, in memory of the lost balance. Being is necessity linguistically viewed. We have no real need of it. We are or are not, indifferently, as we are spirits or brains. Spirit, that is, is the overcoming of ontology and not, therefore, some "soul-thing". Aquinas said rightly that the being we know is the changeable being of nature, *ens mobile*. Any other being is extrapolated analogy, and now we see that we do not know the being even that we thought we knew. We know, rather, that it is not. Similarly, the necessary cannot be, have being, since then we could ask, self-defeatingly, why it is necessary or why any proof of necessity should hold. Asking why seeks the "reason of being". Without being there is no such reason, as indeed there was not, by definition, for God. We thus find ourselves to be "absolute source", in Merleau-Ponty's phrase.

The project here, necessarily implicit, is to subvert language, its rigidity, as stultifying dialectic. Dialectic first ascends through language. At some point though, perhaps the penultimate, perhaps in its earliest stage, it must call language in question, exposing its insufficiency, which is the insufficiency of knowledge, from the absolute or only true viewpoint. This critique of knowledge, of saying something about something, focuses on the illegitimate construction of objects, which is constitutive of knowledge and which, in W. Benjamin's terms, goes beyond the "naming of the animals", meaning by naming something transcending the linguistic or objectifying as constitutive of other-reality, as creation.

Knowledge, therefore, is not reciprocal. As necessarily "self-centred" it is even evil², Hegel says, as is the finite under any aspect or as a whole when taken in abstraction from its absorption in the infinite, *since* it is then "sham-being". Hegel here goes counter to "the favourite contrast of the introspective modern world".

The error arises when we take Evil as a permanent positive, instead of what it really is – a negative which, though it would fain assert it self, has no real persistence, and is, in fact, only the absolute sham-existence of negativity in itself.³

This in fact is why "the wrath of God" he cites in his earlier book belongs to figurative thought at its most strenuous, in "a fruitless struggle... devoid of the notion". Evil is a finite category, hindering the exchanges of reciprocal love, where there is no place for speech and any appearance of predication, e.g. "I love you", is necessarily illusory. "I love you" is an expression of a caress; but my caress is not the pre-linguistic expression of the truth that I love you. It is post-linguistic, as mere animal contact, to which it is analogous, is not. Evil, becoming evil, the "moment", is thus transferred, behind judgment, back "to the very earliest realm of thought", to offspring (son) or creation as such, in the *figure* of Satan, "the devil", as Lucifer or Son of Light, first-born, who "fell" so that "in his place another was at once created". This "other" can be read either as man or as the divine Word proceeding, though the term "created" would there contradict Hegel's Trinitarianism outlined in this same chapter. He contrives to suggest, all the same, and with intent, that man, Kant's "rational creature", and this Son are identical. His concern, not imaginative merely, is with what "we may say", *viz.* that such figurative thought, in terms such as

² *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 771f.

³ *Enc.* 35, add.

“fallen”, “either... transmutes and lowers the moments of the notion to the level of imaginative thought, or transfers pictures into the realm of thought” (*Phenomenology of Mind*, p.771). This is in accordance with religion and art (pictures) being forms of absolute spirit, the final position of the *Encyclopaedia*, while preserving the speculative self-contradiction, viewed as from the understanding, of there being an “absolute religion”, which both is and is not its own truth as philosophy, since philosophy too, as mediated by language, remains encased in the world of sacrament and sign. This after all is the same truth as that God, while absolute, is yet intrinsic self-revelation or expression. The absolute mediates itself in itself or, that is to say, immediately. This is the core Trinitarian notion (Cp. *Enc.* 160, 161), opposing identities in an opposition that is “broken down”, as “the thoughts of good and evil”, opposition as such, become broken down, he says. The Biblical antecedent here, as Hegel could have been confident his readers would recognise, is that of precisely the mediator “made sin for us”.

Hence it is that self-centred knowledge, “cognition proper” in one translation, gives way in the dialectic to Will or the Good, before being united with it in the Idea. Thought of course is not destroyed, yet theory itself is made “the highest praxis”, the Good, as Aristotle had said in his *Ethics* (NE), significantly. Only a certain thought or conception of thought is destroyed. We come to see that thought, consciousness, is closer to the reciprocities we call love, harmony. As when we say that to think of God, of the Absolute, is to be in relation with it, even to bring it about. This though would mean that we have always been thinking (if this is what brings God about), each one of us who thinks at all. Any thinker is thus a necessary being (or non-being) as mutually brought about in this way. To be posited is to be, at this level. A possible thinker is a real thinker. A real thinker is an ideality nonetheless. Hence Hegel says that the truths of Christianity have only to be “imagined” or postulated to take effect and so we find Blake writing that the imaginations of today are the realities of tomorrow. This in turn, though, shows how time, its idea, functions, in ordering purpose or possibility (they are the same) to deed. They are themselves the same or merely one. For time is species, appearance, of eternity as genus, as a rabbit is an animal. If we don’t see the animal we don’t see the rabbit. We must see, with Traherne, or St.Paul, that we sit there now, in “the heavenly places”. In this non-reductive but rather ampliative sense it is right to condemn an “after-life”. “The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind?” Indeed, or make the pulp so sweet and the question remains the same in structure, while which is pulp and which is rind is indifferent again, depending upon whether we wish to pass from

time to eternity or, in creation, go the other way. It is a circle and so "there is a time when God dwells in the soul and there is a time when the soul dwells in God".⁴

This is the point, or should and could be, of Nietzsche's circle. It transcends repetition because it is an eternal return, like the *exitus* and *reditus* of theology. It, time, re-returns as not being repeated. I do not live my life again, in the way that I get up each morning again. That would not be a return *of time*. What returns *within* time, phenomenally, by contrast, is never the same, just because it, as *second* instance alone, is returning. Or we may say that mornings are phenomenal, while life in this sense, is not. Regarding life itself, too, "it is useless to count". We do not, that is, "only have one life". We have life, simply. But then it is no longer the *immediate* idea only. My life, life, rather, seen as circular, is eternal, as time itself returns or cancels itself. In absolute terms, then, I was neither born nor do I die. To say it ever comes back is to say, in a figure (the circle), that it, the moment, never went away. Again, what "comes back" is the moment itself, not its repetition or simulacrum. In just this way is the death or resurrection of Christ represented in the liturgy. In just this way is each and every moment the uttering of the undivided Word. The Father is this uttering, the Son this returning, the Spirit their in-spiration. All is within while, to paraphrase Eckhart, how this thinks me is how I think this and *vice versa*. "I and my Father are one", said the man. "The spirit of the Lord is upon me", a woman might have preferred to say, including identity in that "upon", perhaps beyond its context in the Old Testament. We must, anyhow, conceive a father's motherhood and a mother's fatherhood. In seeing me you see everything or, again, being has no parts. Conversely, where the parts are of infinite number, as in mutual perception of perceptions *ad infinitum*, or in eternal return again, the whole is in each of them. Only thus is it infinite, as revealed.

So the divine missions of religion are, says Aquinas, an appropriate way of speaking of a person going forth without ever leaving "home" or base. "Mission", he says signifies in one both procession of origin and "a new way of existing in another", like "beginning to exist in the world by assuming our nature" even though he was "previously" in the world, he adds, citing *John* 1, 1, in the theological manner⁵. The being of God, philosophy shows, however, annuls the world, which "is explained to be a nullity" (*Enc.* 50). So the "new way" of our temporal perception is our new apprehension of an eternal truth, one, like any truth, with the

⁴ From the eighteenth century "spiritual" work, French Jesuit J-P. de Caussade's *Self-Abandonment to Divine Providence*.

⁵ Cf. Aquinas, *Summa theologica*, Ia 43, 1.

Absolute, which, as such, is itself idea (*Enc*, 213), or truth of its self in mind itself, *in mente* as truth is defined, here transcending or absorbing being. The *entia rationis* (such as truth, but equally goodness), for us limitations upon real being as mental relations *to it*⁶, are absolutely or in final self-analysis true being as absorbing and transcending the latter. So yes, mind is finally being inasmuch as the latter is neither conceived nor brought forth apart from it. *Still*, as its own beginning and self-foundation, Mind does not merely find but grounds itself. This is the “free being of the notion”, incidentally illustrating Hegel’s point that no individual predication escapes being one-sided and thus far false, that the truth of the finite lies *only*, as such or in each of its parts, in its identity with the whole, which is the Idea. The finite, that is, is “ideal” (*Enc*.95).

As freedom, however, being itself is *spirit*. This is the lesson of Hegel’s philosophy as he says that it is “the lesson of Christianity”, that “God is spirit”. That this *appears* as the opposite of Thomism is a trick of perspective. There, truth and goodness as mental representations of being are abstract disguises for it, to which mind and will respectively correspond; here, being itself is truth, goodness and, finally, the self-knowing Idea, abstracted from nothing and in no sense object, therefore. Nor is it simply that mind is will and will is mind. Will, rather, is an advance upon mind (as “cognition proper”), thus medating the Absolute from it.

Spirit, that is, in its truth and goodness, is not *analogously* being, as a Thomist might urge, but being *qua* being. Just therefore is being able to be abstracted logically from the Idea as its opposite, the poorest or emptiest of categories, able, that is, to begin or *generate* logic over again in and as subject. This first act of abstraction, of the Understanding, is foundational of science, Hegel claims. Thus the initial Cartesian intuition, one with the oracular Socratic imperative, here continues to expound itself. The claim is, after all, modest. Thought thinks itself in all its thinking as light is everywhere light and nothing other than infinite self-reflection, in that universality we identify as personality, in the union of opposition. As Thomas defines it, *ratio est ad opposita* (in contrast to nature as *determinata ad unum*), not merely though in the judgment of freedom, as verdict, *vere dictum*, but in the freedom of judgment, to which no limit can be set. Hence mind itself is not itself natured but rather nature. It is not determinate but “all things”, possible and actual in one (cp. *Enc*.143). The one can only be the many if the one and they is and are infinite. “It is useless to count”. The finite is infinite as ideally absorbed in it, though this

⁶ Aquinas, *QD de potentia*, VII.

is not reciprocal; “it is only the finite which is absorbed” (*Enc.* 95). Here existence is no yardstick. “I exist” is something that God, as “I am”, never says. Nor does “he” properly “say” that he is “that which is”, unless it would be in imagined condescension, such as the Biblical, as if limiting himself against that which is not, since the nothingness we fear is, precisely, nothing. “This is heaven, nor am I out of it”, one might reply to Mephistopheles’ characterisation of “hell”. The depth, we remember, is on the surface, the whole at one with each or any of its manifestations, even if reduced to the smallest point.⁷

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One might ask, further, is this really the way to go, this return of thought upon itself in absolute idealism? Yes, if it is produced necessarily out of and by thought and is thus the destiny of all thinkers, to the destruction of all abstractly other commitments. Just this was the point of the Carmelite mystic's distinction between silver (dogma) and gold (a "dark" knowledge) and we do here enter into an "unknowing", having suggested, but actually within the dialectic, that there is a final category beyond absolute knowledge (McTaggart's suggestion), or that such knowledge is best called something else. Mysticism and epistemology coincide in one search, equally practical and theoretical, existential rather. Such self-consciousness, knowing oneself in knowing another, is of the essence of thinking, the identity in difference. Deliberately to ward it off is falsity, bluff indeed.

Actually it is upon this self-interrogation that freedom and democracy rest, the periodic "Have it your way" (elections), recognition of truth as in the subject. *Veritas est in mente*, where mind is not an abstract universal merely. There are styles of thinking. Hence we suggested a freedom from restraint, a creativeness, as absolute source, not to be reduced to a "voluntarism" still staying within the old essentialist paradigm. What can happen at some time does happen, it was said, even from within that absolute subservience to the temporal mode. The possible worlds are all actualities, finally. Every musical combination possible is destined to fall upon the ear, every disharmony, as seeking resolution. The drama of sonata form, for example, is nothing else, a finite infinite, an infinite finite. One cannot really have done with it, though we attempt fugally, fugitively, to see or have it (not hear, especially) “all in one”. So each new face of the

⁷ Here one might consider Hegel's anthropological remarks on sleep, from which consciousness “sets itself up as Reason, awaking at one bound” (*Enc.* 387).

other, this opposition represented by male and female, like the sonata reborn, launches every ship that ever was or could be, as every pair of eyes, every mutual looking, is an absorption, to recall the song, into the essence and nectar of a Jovian absolute, the Idea. That too is liberalism, the affirmation of each by all, of all by each. This is what acceptance of the ecumenical principle takes on. It brooks no reservations.

Just in this very opposition lies the *affinity* of the sexes, as the Logic demonstrates that repulsion is attraction, attraction, more obviously, repulsion, as animal courtship graphically illustrates. Other varieties of sexuality are explicable in the same way, as an attraction of opposites, now, however, detached from Hegel's "process of *Kind*". Here, through this variation, we can see how *Kind* does not remain abstractly separate but, like any Hegelian category, flows in continuity towards the ultimate spiritual unity in difference, called also Love (*Enc.* 159, where Hegel does no more than *associate* love with "feeling" specifically). Still, it is because life is "no more than the Idea immediate" that it "breaks up into two sides". So "the living being dies, because it is a contradiction" or, rather, because it is itself the *Kind*, which has "a being of its own". So it is that "the death of merely immediate and individual vitality is the 'procession' of spirit" (*Enc.* 220-222). *Kind*, we may say, is a matter of one being all, as all is one, concretely.

Due to this sexual affinity use of the masculine pronoun for God has limited significance. Woman might seem more apt for this, as feeling herself one with Spirit, since spirit especially is an all in each, in its very concept, though this be true too of a principle of common origin (Father) or manifestation and self-return (Son). Spirit, the Idea, actively seeks to be acknowledged as everything for someone. It seeks it for each one severally, indeed, but in each case Spirit is wholly involved, heart to heart, so to say. It must be so, the attention or consciousness undivided. This founds the unity of each with all, as it does that of all, itself first, with each. One might want to say this is especially strong in woman, not necessarily as mother first but first as loving her man, where in fact her maternity is first engaged, even where first, again, given away as a young virgin. In this sense there is, Catholicism correctly intuits, a "mother of God", an eternal birth of Spirit, masking all things, but first itself, new. As regards the phenomenon, woman, this easily leads to a sense that she could be everything for whomever she chose. Bitter indeed then is a final casting off, seen as man's inability to love. He should rather have died first, she thinks. And indeed the lover too, the male especially, desires to die then, in love's moment, if he might but die without losing his life finally. In her arms, as we say, he wants to die, never go somewhere else, as his body's

action, passion, or passion in action, expresses. For here he would return to the womb, from which, it is a simple fact, neither he nor anyone ever wished to go out. For the woman, though, conception through this “death” of the male in self-excess⁸ is life anew, again a circle. It is then a circle for both and life and death are, surprisingly, the same, fulfilled in one another. The woman died already in giving her heart, as we say. New life results, self as transition to another, as *having* the other as self or other indifferently, in Hegel’s Aristotelian account of knowing.

This is what men call the mystery in woman or, in bitterness or incomprehension, pseudo-mystery and pretence. It is though a natural consciousness and cause of being woman, when it is especially strong. For the difference between the sexes is more in degree than it is specific. Hence they have, as sexes, again, an *affinity*, treated, we see, by Hegel as the particularisation of **Kind**, which itself is that universality of nature which each individual *is*, as assimilating precisely its own “external objectivity”, which thus becomes internal (*Enc.* 220). The living being is “split up in itself”, be it man or woman phenomenally. Hence Hegel, in referring to the “ironical figure” that is woman, refers to woman as she is figured merely (by men), i.e. as a figure, not as she may be in herself, one appointed, like himself, for one’s specified other. There is no especial endorsement of a purely phenomenal monogamy to be looked for or read into the text here, however, where the same and the other, attraction and repulsion, have been identified. A *sittlich* monogamy merely stands for, figures again, the final or absolute unity of all in all, closer than all with all, in religion, of “Christ and his church”, groom and bride. Thus this, as also a dedicated virginity or celibacy, these, are ideals within the “ideality of the finite” only, as is man himself as phenomenon (*Enc.* 91, 95). In *The Phenomenology of Mind*, therefore, pardon or forgiveness, Nietzsche’s “rainbow after long storms”, is put as hinge to the door opening upon revealed religion (Chapter Seven of that work) as consciousness of the trans-phenomenal. So, in reality, “love is not love which alters when it alteration finds”. Love thus, in fact, perfects or absorbs knowing, in the Absolute Idea, as itself annulling the supposed alteration. What is brought low remains high and the highest.

⁸ This expression can cover orgasm (spiritual) and ejaculation (biological) in one and is, I was once told, on a plausible reading at least of *I Samuel* 21, 41 (“text uncertain”, comments the Jerusalem Bible, conjecturing “wept copiously”: compare the “and they exceeded themselves” of some older translations), used biblically to describe the mutual passion of David and Jonathan, here two of a “kind”, as we say.

She, woman, is thus the second sex that is yet first, as bearing man. Men have their mystery too, and women, at times, their infidelity in broader or narrower sense. Each knows that he or she bears all, male or female, as necessary to all, as is also this bearing. She would bear the all, for her part, even if she were indeed but "fair creature of an hour", impossibly. The hour, that is, is a transfiguration, of which the supposed event of that name is itself a figure. Thus death, says Hegel, is the entry (and not merely the moment of entry) into the life of Spirit or "resurrection". We have to face this. Hegel says thought can face it. "In spiritual self-consciousness death... passes into its true conception" (*The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 780). Here, as Substance becomes Subject, the finite objectivity of the mediator as *Gegen-stand* is cancelled, as is the mediation in the immediacy of universal self-consciousness, cancelling the question as to which or who is it.

So in these rounded contours, which a Picasso might draw as an arrangement of circles, an apotheosis of circularity, Spirit finds its definitive shape and unique text, brought forth from man who sees there his inner being, "flesh of my flesh", in the Scriptural reversal of natural generation. Man is woman, in inward consciousness, woman is man, in double and relational identity, closest affinity, each within the other, self, its own other, and self again as other of this, self's other.

In loving woman we, if men, enter the cave that brought us forth, adoring with the Magi, while she, again, fulfilled when thus entered, brings forth each beloved as her firstborn. This that we adore then, he in her, she in him, is self, absolute. I am that. We have only to look, "look well", Dante's Beatrice commands, each reflected in each other's, one another's, eyes, infinitely. This is the cause of eyes, to be only had, eventually, for each other, for "you" as the song says. Only persons, not birds, trees and flowers, can sustain this. To reject "eye-contact" in principle is to prefer the empty security of blindness. Eyes are the doors to love's hidden kingdom, when or, after, as we say, knowledge has vanished away. Only in that sense is it hidden, as by the insufficiency, the finitude and falsity, of knowledge of the objectual non-world and its unmatured subject. Or, equally, infinity is necessarily or logically hidden as not lying passive to the autonomous gaze of another limiting, i.e. finitising it. When I have become what I am I will no longer be what I was, no longer, because I was never other than that which I am. It is hate which feels most the pain of love approaching. "Why then, oh hating love, oh loving hate, oh anything of nothing first create." Love, that is, is blind, muffled, but only as seen from the standpoint of knowledge. It finds the pathways to its and our desire, with "eyes wide shut" as it were. In another's eyes we

drown to the cold, comfortable illusion, are buried and immersed away from it, as one finding newness of life, in reflection upon reflection forever. This then was the mystery as shown above all in man and woman together. But by mystery here we mean truth and the absolute, implicit as unconceptualisable in its infinitude of positivity, comprehensible though to itself and in this sense comprehended, tasted, absorbed by and absorbing each person.

Here we rejoin, we take up and do not shun, the poetry of the ages. It was Solomon the wise man who had a thousand wives, not to mention the Queen of Sheba (Hatshepsut, some claim), and yet one. His wisdom coincides with that (is it mere coincidence?) and each one of them is she, his wisdom. The three wise men, too, are one, adoring this that they are, all in each. Love, in the end, can only love love, itself, than which, therefore, a person is nothing other. Love speaks, bids welcome, love sits and eats (George Herbert). The most foolish little dog can seem to bring the love he or she, and yet it, is, i.e. appears as when taken “wholly”, without fangs apart, so to say. It bears for the moment the weight of the whole world, is vehicle of spirit, animal “viciousness” notwithstanding. The text, any text, of letter, leopard’s spots or dog, though, can in no sense intend itself, as if in *suppositio materialis*. We must see through the veil, which is thus as if ever being rent asunder, while in all that one says the whole is said over and over again, revolving in time’s mimicry of eternity returning.

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We have the doctrine of the unreality of time. What we seem to perceive as change and extension is misperception because “fragmentary” (McTaggart). Really we, and the whole we perceive and have within ourselves, are eternal and necessary.

We have also the doctrine of the Eternal Return (Nietzsche) and the two conceptions are profitably combined as showing that we are in eternity now rather than, contradictorily, at some future. Eternal return is not eternal repetition. That would be misunderstanding the doctrine as identifying just one more misperception in our misperceived immediate experience.

Rather, all that happens happens eternally and without end, is eternal (as the lives of the mentally disturbed, for the poet, are “hid with Christ in God”, and why just they?). We “sit with Christ in the heavenly places” (Paul of Tarsus), as the seeming repetition of liturgy shows forth as

overcoming repetition in being itself daily repeated. This life now, long or short, is misperceived eternal necessity.

The truth of eternal return shows that this life is misperceived. So it does not fall under the same misperception. What returns eternally never goes away and the circle is our best symbol of this supra-linguistic immutability.

McTaggart identifies this eternity as the reality of love, in mutual, infinitely differentiated perception, transcending knowledge, seen as a mere provisional finite category. In ultimate reality we do not, for example, make judgements, since the finite form of our predication-system guarantees falsity. We do not now make the judgements we seem to judge that we make (and this that I say now, therefore, as being a judgement, only provisionally approximates reality as does all that we say: the final injunction of the *Tractatus* of Wittgenstein is therefore not useable).

I would add to this that the all-pervasive validity of identity in difference entails that our conception of the self (“each thing is itself and not another thing”) at least may be radical misperception. The self as essentially relation to other selves is indeterminate, as are they, and therefore indeterminable. So finally we are not born and do not die, and the resultant nothing is perfect plenitude, best designated, after “love”, by the word “play”. Love is precondition for play.

Such is our life now. In its perfection it is not good for us to perceive more than we do perceive, as I perceive today what I have written here. The insufficient is sufficient, to paraphrase Goethe, as time is the “moving image” of eternity. As formally image it is itself nothing, non-being, like just any of our concepts. The Concept is not ours and we can form no concept *of* it. It is self-consciousness. It is the negative background to all freedom as act of all acts and inmost self.

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The Zen Buddhist D. Suzuki, growing to religious consciousness outside a Christian culture, tells us he could not understand why God needed to create a world, why he should have done so if he were God, that is to say, the absolute. And if one does not accept creation as traditionally presented, in the West, then all that we see has to be otherwise explained. We move away from our nursery school hymns, “All things bright and beautiful”, “Little drops of water”, pattered out on the piano by some behatted lady who just dropped in for the hour.

He made their glowing colours,
He made their tiny wings.

Well, there is no wish here to deny the assertion. Within modern philosophy, all the same, pressure has developed towards finding a necessity, in terms of which contingency and liberty are to be more deeply understood, going a step beyond saying that necessarily God can do what he likes, which still preserves the antithesis of these two concepts as they are applied in our human world. Rather, for Leibniz or Hegel, the perfectly necessary, beyond all constraint (by what?), is itself the absolutely free.

There are hints of this in the religious tradition. Thus we might think that we should see the human face as a sheer divine invention, overlooking the disquieting coincidence between this and the more aleatory evolutionary accounts. But then we can find ourselves faced with texts like that breviary hymn where the face of Christ is prototype for the face of Adam and, by implication, the procession of furry-nosed, but still nosed, many-eyed, but still eyed, creatures leading up to Adam, i.e. he would draw them out backwardly as Christ draws him out, such backward causation being a mark of idealism. But then all things had to be as they are now, they are the absolute itself broken up into our fragmentary perception, in “petty pace”.

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If Christianity, say, is for the future to be interpreted in terms of personalist or even absolute idealism then we have to reconsider the First Cause argument. We have to enquire how far causality is an inherently finite category, such that the consequent inappropriateness of deriving God from it is not resolved by simply dropping it at the crucial moment. Thus one talks of a self-caused being, *causa sui*, which can really only mean uncaused. This uncausedness is classically explained by a fusion of essence and existence, under the rubric of simplicity since the composite is as such finite. A variant upon this is to appeal to the self-explanatory, argued implicit in the accepted possibility of finite explanation generally.

If anything is then something has to be, but if anything has to be then this having to be will be simply what it is. It will be necessity simply. The “it” of substance disappears into this Idea. Aquinas further claims, with Aristotle in fact, that this has to be an act, and indeed the act of all other acts (*praemotio physica*). Hegel pours scorn upon this insofar as it is objectified or expressed in finite and therefore self-defeating categories. For why, how, should the personal existence of such an abstraction be more certain than that of our own? If it should not then this in turn will lead us to attribute necessity to what is now absolute subject, *viz.* each one thinking. Alternatively, thinking is subjectless, itself simply, something

like Deutsch's "multiverse" as openness to every possibility or, simply, openness, freedom, peace etc. Universal subjectivity does not define itself against objectivity, is not thus finite.

Nonetheless it is clearly true that it is we (whether as separate selves or not) that think, as other elements known to us do not. So the dependence of all else upon our thought (or of ourselves upon thought) is a fair conclusion. This thought cannot anyhow escape being identified as *atman* or true self, an idea disarming the dilemma. Augustine knew this, saying "There is one closer to me than I am to myself". For Aristotle this was thought, *nous*, "thinking itself". We have here a supreme instance of the indeterminacy and vagueness of our referring as defended in much analytical philosophy today. Nothing is just itself but everything is something else as well, i.e. the principle of vagueness is not itself vague.

CHAPTER TWENTY

“ALL THINGS ARE A JUDGMENT”: HEGEL ON SUBJECT AND PREDICATE

In Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* text (166) it is made clear, initially, that what we have to do with in the Judgment (the second of the three divisions of the Subjective Notion) is the specification of the Notion. It is not specified, primarily, into the kinds of judgments as concepts (conceived *qua* judgments), but simply as this or that. The Subjective Notion, S, we say, is this or that, P. That is, judgment itself specifies essentially. That is, the term "judgment" names specification. The Notion admits of specification inasmuch as *qua* infinity it necessarily requires infinite differentiation, without, however, the finitude of composition. In traditional logic there are four varieties of the identifying is, any of which, however, is just this "is", which is identity, such that all S, no S or some S is or is not P. It is indifferent whether or not P is S over again, i.e. there is no special "is" of identity; "is" just is identity. These four forms are not merely posited by Aristotle, whereas the quantifier "most" was not. He discovered them as the understanding's definitive modes, in terms of which any other, e.g. "most", could be explicated. Hegel is in no doubt about this, derives his whole triadic system from these syllogistic identificatory propositions, to the extent that "everything is a syllogism", he finds, and he ends his main work with a specification of three interlocking syllogisms grounding the final triad of logic, nature and spirit.

This relation of specification is one of identity specifically between what are mutually other. Hence ambiguity arises in our (notional) apprehension of the notion prior to this present development. For in awareness of the subject as now independent of the predicate we take it "to be a thing or term". The predicate indeed we see, *qua* predicated, as just such "a general term... somewhere in our heads."¹

¹ Frege's "concept", but only so long as we consider Frege free from Hegelian influence or a similar line of thinking, as when he asks "what is the world independent of the reason? To answer that would be as much as to judge without judging" (*Foundations of Arithmetic*, tr. Austin, Oxford 1953, p. 36e).

In this sense, McTaggart pointed out², apparently correctly, the individual is not restrictively or subjectively a notion. That is, "the true distinctions in the notion", viz. universal, particular, individual, are not in fact species of it, as they seem "when kept severed from each other by external reflection". For the third of them, again, the individual, is not a subjective notion at all but is objective and finally absolute, absolutely concrete, the "system" even and "method" too. The "finite" individual, in contrast, is unreal and hence "ruined" *ab initio* or in essence.

The individual, ultimately, which is the same as to say any and every individual, is the universal and this, that the individual is the universal, is the very form of the judgment, rather, it is the judgment, "in its abstract terms". Presupposed, however, is the relation of naming, itself an identity.³ Presumed to the discussion, therefore, is what is presumed to discussion itself. Discussion not so much incarnates⁴ as projects or represents the actual dialectic as thought thinking itself, as System, Method and the absolutely concrete Individual. Upon or within this Individual all subjective notionalities rest, just because the Individual, individuality itself but even "this" individual, is the Notion. Subject is "thing" before it becomes term.

These various entities are in reality an infinity of reciprocal relations. The relations themselves are reciprocal. They do not, even as relational, exist independently or abstractly. The reference, therefore, is no longer to any specific relation of reciprocity but to the reciprocity of relations themselves as forming a unity in identity, not a merely compositional unity as in the superseded part-whole category treated in the Doctrine of Essence. So these relations, as varieties of judgment, are contained in perfect identity in the Judgment of the Notion, which they even constitute. They cannot be manipulated "by us", ourselves such judgments, in our finite efforts to set them in rational order. Therefore we have had to devise terms, as standing for, in intention, all these elements. Yet any one such an essentially supposititious term frequently has to stand or go proxy for several different suppositis or elements connected by likeness and hence, in our naming, where they are *nomina* or terms, by *analogia*.⁵ Thus the judgment "is a connexion which is also a distinguishing", as the form "S is P" faithfully reflects. That is, as itself a judgment it reflects the infinite particularisation of the universally individual and as such it names the

² J.M.E. McTaggart, *Commentary on Hegel's Logic* 1910, §191.

³ Hegel discusses this in *Encyclopaedia* III: the "Philosophy of Spirit".

⁴ Cp. W. Wordsworth: "Words are not thoughts dressed, They are its incarnation."

⁵ Cf. Aristotle, *De soph. el.*, 165a, 7-16. This text formed the basis for post-Aristotelian elaboration of *suppositio* or theory of reference.

Absolute more perfectly than any category hitherto treated. The form of judgment is and has to be itself a judgment.⁶

Such particularisation, subjectively notional as it is, yet reflects and is intentionally identical with the necessarily infinite differentiation, again, of the absolutely infinite, the Absolute. All things, Hegel therefore says, are a judgment, "for to judge is to specify the notion" (165). Judgment is its active self-specification, as a thinking thought and nothing other than this thinking thought without limit. This indeed is the ultimate result, self-unfolding or manifestation or self-constitution ("thinging", thinking) of Being in its full self-realisation as actively self-thought. Being becomes thought wherever it is not confined to being just one "thing" or *determinatum ad unum*, the essence of Nature as thought's (or, therefore, being's) self-alienation. Thought has the self as other or, Hegel will gloss and expand, is itself just in the other. It transcends self in the latter's (finite) notion.

The explanation of judgment, rather of the *sentence* "passed", in terms of function and argument can never fully replace the paradigmatic denotational identity of Subject and Predicate since the former, functionalism, has to be explained in terms of the latter, identity, when one states, for example, what a function or an argument is (identical with). This is also why judgment in the dialectic replaces or supersedes the subjective notion as notion. Thus any subject, whereof something is said (predicated) in judgment, must always itself be explained under the same form or, here, category. Unless we are able to say what *S is* it will be a mere "proper" name, simply standing for (*supponens pro*) one or more individuals, without any rationale, precisely as Hegel analyses the necessary arbitrariness of linguistic signs in the Philosophy of Spirit.⁷ Thus I say that "telephone" means or rather names what I use to talk with those not present. Even this first *suppositio materialis* or, rather, *naturalis*, prior to or abstracted from sentential context, begins already to express a judgment, an identity of "telephone" with something else⁸, precisely in its

⁶ Cf. our "Argument Forms and Argument from Analogy", *Acta Philosophica*, Rome, Vol. 6, 1997, pp. 303-310.

⁷ Cf. J. Derrida, "The Pit and the Pyramid: Introduction to Hegel's Semiology", *Margins of Philosophy* 1972 (tr. Bass), also in *Philosophy Today* 1985, reprinted in *G.W.F. Hegel, Critical Assessments*, ed. Robert Stern, Routledge 1993.

⁸ By *suppositio materialis* the term as a material or individually occurring item stands simply for itself and not for its supposedly invariant non-contextual meaning (*suppositio naturalis*). Even this most unequivocal identity is thus made into a judgment of "standing for", thus making *suppositio* a broader category than "going proxy for", as in some later theories of reference. It belongs with a

being taken as a word or expression. This is more immediately apparent in the German *Fern-Sprecher*, but I apply it even to such a word as *fern*, once received as word. It implies a judgment about itself, namely that it stands for something, is supposing something (else). Even where it stands for itself it stands for it as something else. In Fregean terms, the subject-variables are never wholly unbound, the boundness is equivalent to a judgment, whether asserted or not. Again, though, any possibility is in fact asserted as a possibility, whether we speak of horses or unicorns, or even of "impossibilities".

In the simple understanding of notion as notion, therefore, we have, again, "a connexion which is also a distinguishing", essential judgment. Judgment is, therefore, the notion itself in its particularity. The subjective notion as notion itself passes into judgment. The judgment is saying what things are and therefore itself embodies that abstraction according to which concepts are formed. The explanation of judgment, therefore, as in essence the putting together of concepts, is false unless it is made clear that any concept is itself already either composite or a co-incident unity. As such it is superior to that towards which composition and order (hierarchy) strive, as uniting together in an infinite identity all its aspects or elements whatever. But as such, again, it will be the Absolute Idea.

The concept, that is, is infinitely judgment. If there are composites there must be simples, Leibniz declared. It is this judgment, however, this final identity, which alone is absolutely simple precisely as being (an) infinite and, hence, multiply differentiated identity. Infinity is itself judgment and a judgment, though not as initiating an enumeration simply. Platonic "third man" difficulties are sidestepped in roundly declaring everything finite to be false where taken abstractly for "itself and not another thing" merely. In this sense Being is not distinguished from anything else, since it is (is!) the basis of any "finished" perfection whatever. In this very first sense too, then, "the factual is normative" (Hegel).

In this sense, too, "the copula 'is' springs from the nature of the notion", of the notion specifically. The notion is that which is "self-identical even in parting with its own", i.e. it doesn't just happen to be that as one of its

universal theory of signs in which everything has a predicational relation to every other thing, even in affirming its own identity (since the predicational relation is itself identity). Cf. our "Subject and Predicate Logic", *The Modern Schoolman*, LXVI, January 1989, pp. 129-139 (esp. section IV); "The Supposition of the Predicate", *Ibid.*, LXXVII, November 1999, pp. 73-78; "The Interdependence of Semantics, Logic and Metaphysics as Exemplified in the Aristotelian Tradition", *International Philosophical Quarterly*, New York, March 2002, pp. 63-91. The first two articles are earlier versions of two chapters in this present book.

properties. This is what it is, the truth of Self and Other, as "the principle of personality is universality" (*Enc.*163, add.). This copula, however, constitutes judgment in identifying individual and universal in a "genuine particularity". At the same time, however, the copula should be assimilated to the predicate (the "functional" interpretation where, so to say, "is P" is P) as expressing act or entelechy⁹, something alike proper to the grammatical verb and to *verbum* or word in its universality, formal before it is abstract. Hence this formality of judgmental predication is not essentially predicamental, as if finitely marking off qualities from abstract because totally unspecified individuals. It first rather brings the individual into view in its inherent universality. We have here "the identity which is realised as identity or universality", leaving behind the correlations of Essence.

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Judgments are not then just "combinations of notions" (*Enc.*166, add.), as it were presupposed to them or made afterwards, as if these notions were themselves quite heterogeneous regarding judgments. Notions do not in fact "differ in kind" from either judgment or syllogism. All three are *verba mentalia* or acts of the understanding, all three are imperfect moments of the absolute idea they presage and reflect. They do not form three species even of the finite understanding, since the individual is already the universal. This, the judgment's basic form, is already the form of reality, of the Absolute, which is thus, to this extent, itself Judgment, as having judgment's form, that of identity (itself however identified as act). The Notion itself, here as "subjective", extends into judgment and is "the Notion as Judgment".

⁹ Aquinas explains this as that "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" (Aquinas, *In peri hermeneias*, lect. 5, no. 22. Cf. our "Does Realism Make a Difference to Logic?" in *The Monist*, April 1986, esp. note 24). The implication, as in Hegel, is that also languages lacking the *copula* "is", such as Russian, would be subject to this logical interpretation.

So what is "combined" in the judgment does not at first exist independently or as if separated. Affirmation and negation cannot be reduced to combination and separation in a final metaphysical analysis. This much is implied in the science, even or especially of logic, beginning with being (not to be confused with "existence"), as Hegel sets this out at the beginning of *The Science of Logic* (WL). Similarly, what is separated was never combined, but rather a perfect unity, of nature as of the Idea indifferently, as we see more immediately or "at first", although *prima facie* this raises the deeper problem of how a negative judgment can be a judgment at all as this is described here. Every such negative judgment, in fact, has finally the form of "Every elephant is a non-non-elephant", which is *not* negative in form. What Hegel is saying brings out what is misleading in the Venn diagrams and other mathematical analogies as illustrative of syllogistic and hence, in this mathematical model, of logic as a whole, as distinct from any projected logical model of mathematics, the reverse project. The logical relation is not the real and extensional relation of containment or inference but identity, a relation of reason alone. Hence identity effectively excludes the duality of *relata* needed for any real relation, since this relation, as a rational relating *in actu*, declares them to be one. The written word records this active relating, while the *vox exterior* manifests it. In this sense hearing is a superior or more spiritual sense than sight, something Hegel accordingly reflects in his aesthetics. Music and poetry, the highest art, are both primarily heard and so writing and notation here, like today's computers, are primarily tools of convenience. Dialectically, of course, the extremes of such convenience pass over into something more than itself in the general continuum, from moment to moment so to say. One might say further that the musical instrument generally is a tool of the voice, whether "intoning" words or more fundamental sound-patterns.¹⁰ So one might wish further to see words or speech as in their innermost reality an instrument of such an absolute pattern of supra-composite unity in absolute "harmony", the "music of the spheres". Or one might not. Hearing itself, after all, is finite and subject to decay. Yet a deaf or a dumb man, it is known, may create music and thought is not conceivable as co-existing with a total congenital insensibility. The Absolute, therefore, includes the immediate as mediating itself to itself. Sense-cognition and intellectual cognition seen as separate phenomena are unreal abstractions, an insight opening to us the mystery of

¹⁰ Further still, it is difficult not to identify speech or intoning with hearing, as Stravinsky spoke of when he first "heard" his "Rite of Spring". This merely testifies to the reflexive unity of thinking in the Absolute Idea. "My doctrine is not mine but his that sent me." This becomes a *general* point here.

the animals or, at the other extreme, of the planets and heavenly bodies, given that space is itself a species of finitude and hence "momentary" and an alienation of the Idea. Within a scientific perspective we dismiss planetary cognition and "influence" as baseless. At the same time it may on more general principles be a free or reasonable attribution, a way of looking at what is in the first place unfounded immediacy, the "manifest" image of man himself¹¹, self in other, other in self. This is the necessity of sense. It is not itself sensed but is, rather, immediacy, logically or metaphysically necessary therefore, to which it would be misleading to add that it is "ontologically" necessary, since being now itself represents something rather superseded into the notion or Concept, of thought thinking not being pre-cisely (*cum praecisione*) but itself. Of this "being" is our first name with which, Hegel claims, again, that science, in any language, must begin. The only trouble with saying this, however, is that science is not "in a language". The ideas, grounded upon the Absolute Idea, are quite plainly not in essence "linguistic capacities". To take Hegel seriously is to take distance from this view of a valid "analytic philosophy" developed out of "linguistic philosophy". The main reason for this is his repeatedly emphasising that it is not we but the Idea itself that generates the ideas constitutive of thought, since it is itself Mind and absolute mind. It is this absoluteness of mind, which is expressed in his identification of the Absolute with the Absolute Idea. "The definition, which declares the Absolute to be the Idea, is itself absolute" (*Enc.* 213).

The above stands. What is true, rather, is that mind ascends from sense-knowledge by means of language, whereby the alienated phenomena of nature, fragmented by abstraction, are not merely reassembled or composed but *re-identified* in pre-dication, in those judgments of speech which declare that two "things", while remaining two, are one, a contradiction as Hegel finds. In other words, use of language, in philosophy, is a call to transcend or overcome language, a call, as Wittgenstein had intimated, to silence, to philosophy's having done with philosophy. This is the transition into *sophia* proper, a properly unending or in-finite state of perpetual movement. This is already speculative contradiction or paradox; "state" is a standing, *status*, opposite to movement. Movement does not move, says Aristotle. That all finite concepts, i.e. all but the Concept itself, land in contradiction is not a rejection of this principle, but rather a finding that all that is finite is, if absolutely taken, contradictory, as "the free

¹¹ Cf. W. Sellars, *Science, Perception and Reality* (1966). Sellars uses this term in contrast to the "real" or scientific image (of man). This, more rigorously followed, however, would exclude even perception "at a distance". The outside would be the inside, as emerges dialectically in the Doctrine of Essence in Hegel's logic.

notion”, the Concept, is not. The truth then, as speculative, Hegel virtually concedes, is “the mystical”, what can be *shown* (Wittgenstein) or, Hegel particularises, shows itself but, as Wittgenstein particularises, “cannot be said”. Only language, however, can lead us to this. The case is different with angels (Aquinas) or with “separated substances” (Aristotle) and hence they have no language and have no need of it. This has nothing to do with questions either as to their existence or as to whether they, as “spirits”, are not to be identified with the Concept, as we find implicit in Hegel since it, the concept, is explicit for anything whatever. Thought in that case, however, is only of itself, for, as the poet puts it, “Turn but a stone and you touch a wing”. The resultant picture can be alternatively *represented* as colourless, “grey upon grey”, or as “the many-splendoured thing” our eyes “miss”.¹² Thought remains within itself in possessing or becoming, that is to say knowing the other.

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Thus, to return to our narrower theme, one does not "ascribe" predicates to a subject. Rather, the predicate is not thus ascribed since the judgment itself declares its antecedent identity with that subject and nothing else. It is not a case, therefore, of the subject being "self-subsistent, outside somewhere" and the predicate "somewhere in our heads", in either case exclusively. Nor does even the Fregean model imply this, once the foundation of the judgement in the notion, which it specifies without going beyond, is understood. Henry Veatch's trenchant criticism of Fregean procedures¹³ rather overlooked this point, whether or not it might remove the ambiguity of some formulations of Peter Geach when expounding Frege as in final harmony with Aquinas and Aristotle, in his (and Anscombe's) *Three Philosophers* (London 1964). The subject, namely, must of itself always expand or extend into a judgment in order to be known at all. Similarly, we shall see, judgment itself is a concealed syllogism, "the reasonable, and everything reasonable" (*Enc.*181), the Idea, in a word. Veatch's point, that form and matter are applied only analogically in traditional logical *schemata*, as is not the case in mathematical representations (Venn) or reformulations (Frege taken

¹² The poem is Francis Thompson's "The Kingdom of God". Rejecting objectivity, with Hegel, he asks "Does the fish soar to find the ocean?", though this too is mere representation inasmuch as the ocean is not in or one with the fish.

¹³ Henry B. Veatch, *Intentional Logic*, Newhaven 1952. Cf. our "Subject and Predicate Logic", *The Modern Schoolman*, January 1989, pp. 129-139 (preferred title, "Subject-Predicate Logic").

literally) of them, is a valid one, to be born in mind when interpreting the function/argument *schema*. What Hegel adds is that these very categories, of form and matter, as finite, are *per se* analogous and analogously analogous *ad infinitum* where there is nothing in itself, not even an analogy, on this “highway of despair” towards the infinite Idea that is the infinite, the absolute Idea that is the absolute (*Enc.213*), where all is “absorbed” as is “expressly stated” (*Enc.96*). Yet if “there is none good but God” then goodness is proof of divinity while conversely, as Hegel’s highway brings out, all is God, even or especially this very highway or “method”. That is, “the world” is annihilated, thought’s action annihilating “its basis” as “in *esse* and *posse* null”, “only a semblance... truth abides in God, so that true being is *another name* for God” (my stress) and not *vice versa*:

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 it denies the world. (*Enc.50*, my stress)

Formal logic for a long time ignored the intrinsic or essential nature of this "advance" from notion to judgment, making the latter "look as if it were something merely contingent". From this point of view the later post-Hegelian thesis that words only have meaning in sentences, or in context, is itself an advance, despite the limitations we have found in it above. For the earlier supposition theory offered a unified view of meaning in both cases. Thus what a word "stands for" outside of its sentential use, its primary lexical meaning or *significatio*, extends even to its bearer in the case of proper names. Yet one will not so easily escape the puzzle of whether "David" stands for all Davids (there is no need to say "men called David") living and dead. This puzzle rather supports the thesis of the comprehensiveness of the contextual theory. Used out of some context "David" is just a noise. One has at least to intend that "David" is a nice name or some such. But this too will be a species of *suppositio*. As Aristotle said, there are more “things” than there are names.nor can the things themselves be “got into the head”, the whole reason for language according to him, which he thus, as a phenomenon, holds apart from thought or mind, which is “all things”. Thus in thought it is the things

themselves, which yet are ideas¹⁴, which pass through the mind and not their mere *species intelligibilia*¹⁵, of which linguistic concatenations may be viewed as instances.

The true state of things, alone able to explain the necessity, which we recognize, of this advance, is that the notion does not "stand still" but is as such or essentially "self-differentiating". This is an advance upon the more figurative phrase *diffusivum sui*. This, "the native act of the notion, is the judgment". "It is... an infinite form, of boundless activity, as it were the *punctum saliens* of all vitality." All, he says. One cannot but think of the ceaseless procession of the Word in Trinitarian belief, well known to, indeed shared (of course, as with all believers, under an interpretation) by Hegel, or even of "the wonderful effects of divine love" as described or envisioned in *The Imitation of Christ* (cp. *Enc.*159). Thus Hegel would make good his final Encyclopaedic claim that philosophy has all the Content of Religion and Art and more perfectly too.

"A judgment therefore means the particularisation of the notion", which is yet in itself "implicitly the particular", made explicit in the subjective notion here as or under the aspect of judgment. "All things", it follows, "are a judgment" (167). This "all" is to be taken both distributively, in the sense of each and everything, and also as undistributed. In this latter sense all things, precisely as universally particularised, are a judgment, are judgment, are the judgment. The judgment is their particularisation, as sheep, goats and whatever else, taken verbally (in the sense of the predicative verb), in act or, that is to say, vitally (*Enc.*166, add.). Hegel refers us again here to his analogy of the plant:

...as we remarked before... the germ of a plant contains its particular, such as root, branches, leaves, &co.: but these details are at first present only potentially, and are not realised till the germ uncloses. This unclosing is, as it were, the judgment of the plant. (*Enc.*166, add.)

In the notion as notion, the germ, that is, "the particular is not yet explicit". This "not yet" of course refers to a moment of thinking dialectically considered, under the figure of temporality as standing for a more general

¹⁴ The absolute realism of ideas here is not to be confused with their role as subordinate phenomena within finite knowing as conceived in "moderate realism". They, the aggregate of the finite, are called ideas as absorbed in just the one and absolute Idea.

¹⁵ Cf. Aquinas, *Summa theological* 1, 85, 2, on such *species* as *id quo*, not *id quod*.

series. Ultimately, temporal development, including history in general¹⁶, is itself a figure for dialectical series, for the action of thinking and hence of judgment, itself the proper activity, itself made explicit in the syllogism as is the notion in judgment, of thinking. Logic, we see, is science of science. The temporal therefore happens, since it is our name for "what Hence the Apostle wrote, concerning the Old Testament history, as he believed it to be, of happens", and yet, as merely figure, does not happen. Abraham, of Sarah, of Isaac, of Hagar and Ishmael: "these things happened in a figure". The Latin has *per allegoriam dicta*, but *dicta*, as interpretative limitation upon Greek *allegoroumena*, does not appear in the original language of the preferred manuscripts. For our purposes, however, the intuitive felicity of this classic English version may stand on its own merits, witnessing to the Hegelian vision of things as in line with this ancient manner of perceiving events. Thus Christ's references to Jonah and the whale or Moses lifting up the image of a serpent show no disposition to see these things as stories and not events at all. Precisely as events they prefigure, just like the words of the prophets. So what they prefigure will not just be event over again.

So according to this vision those err, "just miss the notion", who demand to know, say, "Did Christ rise from the dead or not?", once the idea has been broached. It is a form, as Hegel develops this in *The Phenomenology of Mind* particularly, of "seeking the living among the dead", of limiting oneself to Understanding rather than Reason as "understanding spiritual things spiritually". We might hazard that the approach lies behind the Gospel protagonist's own confident affirmation of resurrection as in the Scriptural sources. It is not mere pre-diction. This, one might hazard again, is what enables or prepares the later Johannine "I am the resurrection", as it prepares the Hegelian version of not "missing the notion" presented here. From this the Eckhartian "The eye with which God sees me is the eye with which I see God" develops, again generalising an original figure, along with those of mission, election, messenger, sacrificial lamb and so on. These are not denied but *aufgehoben*, at once put by and taken up into the final *sophia*.

The same applies to Julian's "All shall be well and all manner of thing" (Norwich, fourteenth century). It is a characterisation of present consciousness in temporal figure, whether or not this is fully clear to the speaker. As Hegel puts it, we cannot always say what we mean or would mean. We utter something different, whatever we would mean (*mein-en*), as is attested even in Scripture in various forms. Thus Balaam's wish to

¹⁶ Cf. the Preface to Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, regrettably omitted in some presentations of this work.

curse Israel came out as a blessing, "Oh Israel how lovely are thy tents", and later Caiaphas prophesied precisely as high priest the expediency of Christ's death, but in a sense not desired or meant by him personally. Here magic has given way to a sense of the spiritual signification in things, while not yet discerning the falsity of the finite as such.

Not merely, therefore, is the factual normative, as Hegel is often reproached for saying, as if restricting the latter, but the normative is rather factual, in the sense of absolutely true, things agreeing with their notion (where they truly are "things"). This means, however, the notion's agreeing with itself, since it *is* this agreement, while, Hegel says repeatedly, "all that is finite is false".

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In further consideration, not only of the "not yet" as figurative, but of the notion particularised as itself "all things" and exclusively so, yet not then as Thing but as Judgment, we can take the notion of the plenitude of power. If the Pope, say, has this plenitude then he is not bound by the sins and errors of his predecessors in office or by anything at all, as by those ways of acting and therefore of speaking (of theirs) now called "unfortunate" or by anything finite. If there is a ruke of faith, then his is the interpretation of it. His personal piety is absorbed in his office and charism, for good or ill. The Popes are increasingly realising this, to the dismay of the more literal, enmeshed in the initial contradictions of pure understanding, of which religious positivism is a species. As identified with or as acting for the all-powerful he, the Pope, may declare, of his predecessors, "I will not remember their sins any more". This, indeed, is the secret essence of forgiveness, that it annihilates the past as past, in implicit denial of temporality, thus becoming a *disregard*, a positive negativity. Thus things, and not merely the events of the Bible, happened "in a figure" and not merely "as in a figure". This is the philosophical leap of ingratitude (*Enc.* 50), the kicking away of the ladder. It is also Hegel's philosophy of history, as stressed in the Preface to that work (omitted in one Internet version).

"No birth, no death". This is the *facit*, the positing of the normative as determining the factual because *it* is the factual, the good as constituting being, itself or another's indifferently, making *all* things new as, therefore, in this ever the same. In acting thus, however, the Pope, for example, simply assumes the intrinsic power and virtue of any person whatever, the Logic here shows, of personhood as such. He ceases to be a merely abstract universal. "The principle of personality is the universal".

Accordingly, each person is End or self, not just an end, as if there could be a plurality of such finalities, but end, as Kant was on the way to rendering explicit. It is a "kingdom" indeed, but "within", precisely put as transcending the outward. At the same time, however, this declares this outward to be actually inward (*Enc.*140) reciprocally, since the inward is itself become, for thought, outward or the real, beyond all figure or alienation. For we have implicitly identified alienation into Nature as nothing other than figure, since nature is temporally (and spatially) determined, a "tale" by eternal reason, set up in play, so to say, and "signifying nothing", because it is itself the Idea, in its very nothingness, "and not another thing". Thereby, too, is it "determined to one" and not another, *determinata ad unum*, instead of being, as is Reason, *ad opposita*, not as called upon to choose between the opposed in the freedom of judging, in the sense of arbitration, but rather to determine, in yet ampler freedom, their mutual relation. Nature, therefore, is determined to reason, and not just to any "one" as being it. It sets no limit to it, therefore, since reason knows that what is not reason is just therefore reason or, that is to say, self as the other of itself, "thoughts of one mind" (Wordsworth), everywhere "akin" (Plato). "We began with Being, abstract Being: where we now are we also have the Idea as Being. But this Idea which has Being is Nature" (Hegel, *Enc.*244 add.). Since consciousness of reason and indeed of understanding just is realised freedom, so freedom must realise itself to the uttermost. "My kingdom is not of this world". So speaks the rational self. Talk of a *kingdom* of ends, therefore, is figure for freedom of mind. All should say this or, in philosophical, less figurative terms, that "Everything is a judgment", in particularisation, that is to say, of the Notion or Concept, which simply is thought of itself as thinking. Freedom, Hegel makes clear in several places, is reconciliation of the negative and positive, even of good and evil, in the way he explains (*Phenomenology of Mind*. p.776f.). Good and evil, as "absolutely different", as selfless simplicity and self-centred self-existence ("pure knowledge") respectively, are the same and not the same. In knowing myself I "fall" from my selfhood, become "universal of universals", denied as nothing.

It is only these two propositions that make the whole complete... their wrong consists in taking such abstract forms as "the same" and "not the same", "identity" and "non-identity" to be something true, fixed, real, and in resting on them. Neither the one nor the other has truth; their truth is just their movement... 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. (*Ibid.* p.777)

We here pass the point where it might be meaningful to enquire concerning the credentials of that speaker, in finite abstraction from his actual or factual appearing as "the Christ". We have implied that he would appear, that there would be such an appearing, in normative determination. This is the birth of each person writ large. The two, factual and normative, are reciprocal as in reality one. This is the foundation of any natural law, which, however, applies as much to history as to biology, psychology or anything similar. It "takes Fate by the throat" indeed, as it is fated so to do. The necessity is the freedom, as logical method first confirms.

Categories of messenger, mission, "the one who is to come", are, as finitely positivist, necessarily transcended in the infinite, in Notion, which rather declares one will come, is ever present, not this or that one but the universal particular or personal, the Notion. This is equally the Beloved, being consciousness as such (159). "Believe me for the very work's sake." Whoever listens to you listens to me; any who listen to me listen to one another. Thus is built the Eternal City, the community, the Idea. This latter ever stands realised, though the Cunning of Reason, says Hegel, is bound to conceal it from us, since it is essentially Result, seemingly contradictive of the appearance which must mediate it, as the senses must mediate reason.

So then Hegel's plant, the judgment, is the unclosing of the seed, the notion, which thus dies to its abstract generality in what is *ipso facto* its fruition. This refers, still, to the "subjective notion as notion" and not to the Idea Absolute, the Notion's true form and "the very heart of things". Everything inside is outside, and makes things what they are, for these two are one, their initial reciprocity itself overcome as heralding this unity merely.

The judgment is usually taken in a subjective sense as an operation and a form, occurring merely in self-conscious thought. This distinction, however, has no existence on purely logical principles, by which the judgment is taken in the quite universal signification that all things are a judgment. (*Enc.* 167)

As Aquinas has it, *logicus non considerat existentiam rei*, here, however, for the seemingly opposite reason that logic has revealed itself as itself the final ontology, and not a mere guide to speaking about *ta onta*. Thus, for Aquinas too, God, the Infinite, is one with his act of self-intelligence, while, as he also saw clearly, there is no empirical nature of the thought-process. Just upon this basis we have constructed computers and are confident that we can rely upon them. The subjective is objective, I the universal of universals. All things are a judgment.

That is to say, they are individuals, which are a universality or inner nature in themselves, - a universal which is individualised. Their universality and individuality are distinguished, but the one is at the same time identical with the other.

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Hegel now distinguishes judgments from "propositions", passing here beyond the formal abstraction of traditional logic. Such a move might seem to coincide with that of a beginner in logic who has not yet grasped the intention of abstract formality as governing or indeed founding this science of argument forms and *schemata*. This very intention, however, of the so-called "propositional calculus", quite ignores in practice the first two "instruments of reason", *viz.* notion and judgment. So p or q , its simples or elements, leave "S is P", Fx or any other propositional structure, as distinct from structures of relations between (simple) propositions, out of account. The calculus as "truth-functional" (*sic*), is only later, after it is formally perfected, applied to concepts or classes of individuals denoted by x , y and following in a way which, far from being a sophisticatedly mathematical abstraction, assumes without discussion a simple or common-sense ontology of individual substances. This assumption is represented by an opposition of the universal to the existential "quantifiers" that these symbolists have themselves invented, only the latter having "existential import". This is an idea having no natural place in logic at all. *Logicus non considerat existentiam rei*, whether or not it be a purely lexicographical question whether all or only some dragons are green or even whether they are existing beings or, maybe, only some of them are. Thus, according to Aquinas's critique of it, the Ontological Argument only lexicographically establishes (and this is the necessity) that God is an existent being. Being, in fact, is the more general concept and is hence the beginning of thought as signifying the truth any proposition as such, for the reason Aquinas gives (in his commentary on Aristotle's *On Interpretation*), that it names and is "the actuality of any form" whatever, even, Hegel will say, that of negativity. Form itself is an analogous concept, as is being or, indeed, logic. This leaves entirely aside whether the given proposition is in fact true, although "the false" is itself a being but a "being of reason" (*ens rationis*) only. Such a logic is quite capable, all the same, of being used, and often is used, to question this ontology reflexively, e.g. in propounding various versions of the Ontological Argument which might negate any possible finite reality in the concrete. Similarly, the notation in terms of a series of predicative relations, monadic, dyadic, n -adic, need not be made incompatible with a strictly

"monadic" affirmation of predicative identity.¹⁷ So even if it might be thought a logic "which cannot say what anything is"¹⁸, it yet does not render impossible this saying what anything is or, again, the saying what this logic is.

Aquinas, then, leaves a dualism of being as copula, *veritas propositionis*, and being as *actus essendi*, despite their would-be fusion in the concept of God as in the judgment "God is". We noted already that some languages *qua* languages dispense with the copula altogether. They do not, though, dispense with identity. Hegel stresses rather their correlation of these two senses of "being". Being cannot be left totally equivocal, whatever the analogies of speech. Scotus too had denied any real analogy of being, while Hegel distinguishes true from merely "correct" propositions. The correlation is made into or is seen to be an identity, to identity itself, no longer seen abstractly. The result is Absolute Idealism, for which "the ideality of the finite" is "the chief maxim of philosophy" (*Enc.* 95). Ideality, by this, like Existence or "The Thing", becomes a finite or "momentary" category like all the categories, necessary to as identical with the whole, explicit here though as being's necessary "reference to itself" as "for itself". Being, however, as equivalent to its negation as non-being, the same in their absolute difference, is, in this mere "immediacy", more fundamentally **One** or the One. This "is found in the 'I'", really, by Hegel's own principles, rather more than the "readiest instance" of being-for-self, as the addition here records him as saying (*Enc.* 96). By this the reflections of logical science are themselves sublated in the science of spirit as sublating them, in the Concept as inconceivable because self-conceiving, a "leap" made by the I, by self-consciousness, itself or even as such. The subject failing thus to leap, "dies away", no longer self-conscious. That is, it *would* thus die away. For this is not the Kierkegaardian leap of faith (cf. *Enc.* 50) merely. It was a chief maxim of those Hegelians called "ontologists" that God, by which they meant the Absolute Idea in freedom, is necessarily present to mind as such. In this way logic becomes ontology, studying itself as real and not merely logical being. The enquiry about the "ontological value of logical forms" (Henry Veatch) is only one facet of this study, a little of which is worth more than all the rest, says Aristotle, urging a practice of death (*athanatizein*), as is echoed by Hegel (as later, either more obliquely or more directly, by

¹⁷ Cf. Peter Geach, in his *Logic Matters* particularly.

¹⁸ Cf. Henry Veatch, *Two Logics*, Evanston 1969; also his "On Trying to Say and Know What's What", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, September 1963.

Wittgenstein), particularly in his endorsement of speculative mysticism (*Enc. 82, add.*).

What Hegel rather stresses, attending to the S-is-P form as taken from grammar originally, is how this form of judgment yet more fundamentally contradicts any such a mere ascriptive interpretation of it as what some given speaker happens to propose. "The rose is red" is the judgment. "The rose seems red" is a different judgment, *viz.* "The rose is red-seeming". Rather, the latter is not a judgment at all. It is only a proposition, like, Hegel suggests, "Caesar was born at Rome in such and such a year, waged war in Gaul for ten years, crossed the Rubicon, &co.", "I slept well last night" or, as leaving mood (indicative, imperative etc.) out of account, "Present arms!" All these have a temporal reference, to McTaggart's A or B series indifferently. They can become judgment, "subjective at best", only where some doubt or specification is being clarified, such as that I slept well last night but not the night before that, or that I slept well even if no one else did. Hegel thus subscribes to the out-and-out contextual theory of meaning, inherent in supposition- or reference-theory, according to which "roses are red", *qua* affirmation, denies that they are blue, lack colour etc. The judgment, that is, "is an expression of finitude" (168, my stress) while the proposition is merely asserted or proposed within finitude's ambience taken as such, as abstractly "final", in the sense of finished, bounded. As such, all particular "things" are a judgment. We come back to that, that *we* do not make judgments. Peter Geach exclaims in wonder at McTaggart's daring to say, i.e. to judge, that this is so. It does indeed imply that McTaggart is not McTaggart, nor Geach Geach. Rather, we beget one another in a reciprocity only explicable as identity, as Father cannot be Father without Son and *vice versa* and yet Father is all he is, that relation namely, and not some abstract element waiting to be related or related "potentially". The potential essentially is not (actual). Aristotle's celebrated distinction, we may say, is two-edged. There were never two species of Being, of Actuality. The logical copula, that is to say, is never "is potentially", just as it is never "is deontically" or "is to be". It is always and absolutely just "is", with potentiality, gerundive force or any other such finite attribution belonging with the predicate alone as said of or identified with the subject as notion. Substance gives way to relation, as taught first in our inherited theology. In Feuerbachian terms, that was our first inkling of the truth of self-consciousness, not though, as he himself would have it, of man taken abstractly or "absolutely" as alternative to God.

Judgment generates finitude in self-alienation, productive of its other, differentiating just in order to unite in and through this very

differentiation, as Nature is for Spirit, the dialectic is for its result, war for peace. It is a "play" indeed, a pattern, as in a game, of which we might say with the bard, "all the world's a stage".

The predicate in its universality "must have particularity", as concrete and "abstract", universal and indeterminate, are united or connected by "is". This, realised identity, thus no longer affected by this "difference in form", of S and P, "is the content". This Content, this universal identity, is what is finally posited as common to art, religion and philosophy. As such, as content, it is, there too, indifferent to the threefold hierarchy of specifically formal excellence they represent in their difference. Music, work of the muses, passes into liturgy or service of the Absolute and liturgy passes into contemplation or *theoria*, the eternal theory of theory itself. This is, so to say, the "finished" or perfected "comedy", the encyclopaedic circle indifferent to and unaffected by any chosen point of entry, since it is only entered by those already within it, i.e. entry, as if by us, is the wrong "notion". It is not we who "make" judgments since we are not we. In religious terms, "How can the gods see us face to face until we have faces?" But the "I in them and they in me" of the Scripture is eminently susceptible to the philosophical treatment it has evoked. You, or we, are "members one of another", i.e. not parts at all. *Sumit unus, sumunt mille*, each one "standing for" all. *Seid umschlungen, Millionen* is quite well translated by "O ye millions, I embrace thee", I being the universal without which the universal cannot be thought. That is why we read the newspapers, watch television, study philosophy and so on, giving the subject "its specific character and content". "The Absolute is the self-identical", uniquely, it is meant. Every notion as notion thus becomes a judgment. Even, therefore, where we would further specify the subject, the "empty name", of this judgment we do it precisely as making another judgment. The notion as notion can never be an empty name, however. It, this "subjective notion", is therefore as such superseded (in the dialectic) by Judgment. Hence

To define the subject as that of which something is said, and the predicate as what is said about it, is mere trifling.¹⁹ It gives no information about the

¹⁹ Wallace (translator), in a note, cites a text from Whately's *Logic* that Hegel might have had in mind. Now Whately was Newman's teacher and master at Oxford (cf. Geoffrey Faber, *Oxford Apostles* and Newman's own *Apologia*) and Newman went on to write *The Development of Christian Doctrine* (1845), which might be described as discreetly, if unconsciously (?) Hegelian. After the rejection of Ontologism (a Catholic movement under strong Hegelian influence) and the papal endorsement of Thomism (1879) such a book would have been impossible,

distinction between the two. In point of thought, the subject is primarily the individual, and the predicate the universal. As the judgment receives further development, the subject ceases to be merely the immediate individual, and the predicate merely the abstract universal; the former acquires the additional significations of particular and universal, - the latter the additional significations of particular and individual. (*Enc.*169, add.)

These definitions, that is, merely posit themselves over again. Yet their intent, as Aquinas puts it, is that the subject signifies *quasi*-materially, the predicate *quasi*-formally. This insight enables the development Hegel now makes explicit. We pass, that is, as developing the same thought (it stands for the Absolute, as Frege's assertion that the sentence or judgment "denotes the True" confirms), from "This is red" to "This rose is a red rose". Particularity is thus the middle term of the syllogism, to which the judgment gives way or develops in dialectical supersession:

The individual is particular
 The particular is universal
 So the individual is universal.

The key insight enabling this development is that "this" is always concretely "this A", this is this rose. Only thus is sameness or identity thinkable, although the purely abstract "this" or "now" is identical with itself irrespective of species, time or place (the starting-point of Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Mind*, main text). "Thus while the same names are given to the two terms of the judgment, their meaning passes through a series of changes." This Hegelian remark would apply first of all to the *terms* "subject" and "predicate", thus presaging their eventual supersession, the freeing of intelligence from the trappings or bewitchments of linguistic form. Yet we have noted above that the logical intention of identity already shows independence of the (form of) composition habitually employed to express it. It means in turn that the judgment which things are, universally or singly, is a particularisation not into parts but into differentiated aspects of the Unity. This unity is not properly therefore called the Whole, a more correlate term than "unity", though all terms, even "absolute", are in some or other respects correlate. Therefore, concern with the Absolute names the trans-linguistic.

So "The subject as negative self-relation (*Enc.* 163, 164) is the stable substratum in which the predicate has its subsistence" as, we saw,

though it became the secret driving force behind the Second Vatican Council (1962-1964), called "Newman's council" by the Pope of the time, Paul VI, himself.

determinately standing for something (real or "rationate"²⁰). The predicate is therefore "ideally present" in the subject, which thus has the nature of the Idea from the start. We do not attach ideas to or form them from "bare" individuals, like those indistinguishable "points" in time or space Hegel speaks of. Hence the predicate, it can be said, "inheres in the subject". It will connote "only one of the numerous characters of the subject". Nor could this ever be the only character we know or are conscious of, as in the abstract "F of x"; x, that is, can never be "unbound", variability is essentially within limits, the possibilities of further specification never closed. These two extremes, as impossibilities, are thus identical.

So, conversely, "the predicate as universal is self-subsistent and indifferent whether this subject is or is not." It "outflanks the subject" which had appeared "amplified and wider", "subsuming it under itself". Hence this judgment of inherence is also called one of "subsumption". Each is "on its side" or from its own viewpoint wider than the other. Yet the "specific content of the predicate (§169) alone constitutes the identity of the two" (*Enc.* 170).

At first, subject, predicate, and the specific content or the identity are, even in their relation, still put in the judgment as different or divergent. By implication, however, that is, in their notion, they are identical. For the subject is a concrete totality, - which means not any indefinite multiplicity, but individuality alone, the particular and the universal in an identity: and the predicate too is the very same unity (§170). - The copula again, even while stating the identity of subject and predicate, does so at first only by an abstract "is". Conformably to such an identity the subject has to be put also in the characteristic of the predicate. By this means the latter also receives the characteristic of the former: so that the copula receives its full complement and full force. Such is the continuous specification by which the judgment, through a copula charged with content, comes to be a syllogism. As it is primarily exhibited in the judgment, this gradual specification consists in giving to an originally abstract, sensuous universality the specific character of allness, of species, of genus, and finally of the developed universality of the notion. (*Enc.* 171)

Hegel refers here to the final Absolute, which all and any judgment implies and imperfectly names. This leads us on to "the continuous specification of the judgment itself", the chain of its various forms "usually stated as the kinds of judgment". Yet these are really mere

²⁰ I borrow this term from R.W. Schmidt's *The Domain of Logic according to St. Thomas Aquinas*, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1966, where, however, it is applied primarily to "relations of reason" (*rationis*) as understood in Scholastic thought.

markers in a developmental flow at every point of which the Notion or Absolute Idea is totally if but implicitly present. Hence the ordinary discrete enumeration (of judgment-types) seems "purely casual", is "superficial". Really the different judgments "follow necessarily from one another" as the continuous specification of the notion. The "judgment itself is nothing but the notion specified." It thus disappears. We make no judgments, since they are as such subsumed to the notion, as are "we" ourselves. Hence and finally we are thus not ourselves subjects. This negation of judgment itself, however, is perfected in direct perception, which is rather enjoyment as ultimate, no longer of this or that. The instrumentality of thought as *ratio*, the understanding (*Verstand*), is here concerned, though *ratio* too has its place in the dialectic (cf. *Enc.* 105), qualitatively somewhat quantitative here, however, as the **Quantitative Ratio** and therefore finite (in quality). "That the Quantum in its independent character is external to itself, is what constitutes its quality." Reason (*ratio* in Latin) is indeed a ratio or proportion and reason itself (*Vernunft*) perceives or beholds (*intueor*, *intuitus*, placed in earlier thought above *ratio*, along with *sapientia*, a tasting, of "sap") this.

So judgment also, we can now see, recapitulates Being and its transition to the reflectiveness of Essence, "but put in the simplicity of relation peculiar to the notion", *viz.* as continuous development of thought as, at this stage, the judgment.

Hegel refers to Kant here as first having shown that "the various kinds of judgment are no empirical aggregate" but "a systematic whole based on a principle", *viz.* that the individual is the universal. This principle is "the logical idea itself", namely. Hence, Hegel finds, the three kinds of judgment are "parallel to the stages of Being, Essence and Notion" now as it were ideated or even, we might say, taken in second intention. Yet Hegel has wished to show that absolutely this (intention) is first, since things are grounded in the Idea, reflected in earlier thought as "the divine Ideas", plural, since the Idea, the Notion, is essentially differentiated or, rather, self-differentiating and that infinitely.

"The second of these kinds", however, "as required by the character of Essence, which is the stage of differentiation, must be doubled" (into judgments of reflection and, secondly, of necessity). The Notion or Concept, as it "unfolds" as "the unity of Being and Essence in a comprehensive thought" (*Enc.* 159), "must reproduce these two stages in a transformation proper to the notion". It thus "moulds" what are genuinely grades of judgment (*Enc.* 171, add.). This is the "inner ground" for this orderly and systematically graded hierarchy we now come to.

*

Thus these judgment-types are in no way "of equal value" or on "the same level" of thought or, hence, reality, forming as they do, Hegel again emphasises, "a series of steps", i.e. a series simply. The difference between these steps, however, "rests upon the logical significance of the predicate", which, though, Hegel says, by no means has a purely "formal" or abstract character. Logical truth, that is, is truth indeed.²¹ So the differences in value are "evident in our ordinary ways of thinking." In illustration Hegel cites the material or concrete distinction in "subject-matter" between judgments concerning mutable phenomena, of colour or temperature, for example, and those identifying beauty or goodness. In explanation he says that in the first kind of judgments "the content forms only an abstract quality" needing no judgment as such since its presence "can be sufficiently detected by immediate perception". It is, so to say, a judgment of sense, hovering, in Aristotelian or Scholastic terms, between the *vis aestimativa* and the *vis cogitativa*, both relatively immediate.²²

The second kind, on the contrary, concerning beauty, goodness and the like, "requires... a comparison of the objects with what they ought to be, i.e. with their notion." Hence it is mediate and we might wonder whether a more formal or properly logical distinction between mediate and immediate judgments (not then exclusively or necessarily those of sense that he cites) might lie behind as either founding or expressing and testifying to this difference of value he introduces here. The dialectical sequel, concerning the four grades of judgment in specific consideration, may shed some light on this. Meanwhile we find Hegel saying in effect that judgments of value have more value as judgments than judgments concerning more "value-free" or phenomenal matter! This is but consistent in systems where all is "ontologically" assimilated to the Notion as, anciently, to the Good. Rather, the ontic itself is thus assimilated in freedom of Spirit or Mind, which is necessity here where nothing can be new or contingent, nothing old either, "pure play" indeed. What is this play? This, reflection shows, can only be a playful question so the answers are not likely or desired to be serious or "categorical" either. Have a cup of tea, as the Zen master says, and stop looking down your nose at Hume and his backgammon board, trust and be not forever confounded, as loving darkness rather than light. The individual is the universal. Therefore, in

²¹ Cf. Henry Veatch: "Logical Truth and Logic", in *The Journal of Philosophy*, 1956.

²² Cp. our "Meaning in a Realist Perspective", *The Thomist*, 55, 1, January 1991, pp.29-51, esp. section VI.

grasping the former, even as in a drunken or “Bacchanalian whirl”, you do not depart from the latter. This, in fact, is what makes art, first or immediate form of absolute spirit, to be art. Philosophy, therefore, as such spirit’s final form, absorbs and reflects art as, philosophy itself shows, is not improper for it, as Gilson had suggested²³, but entirely the reverse. Nor, similarly, is *sophia* correctly conceived without the love, *philia*, attaching to it, whether from the side of itself or of those identified with it. “You would not seek me if you had not already found me” or, in Hegel’s words, as handed down, “The consummation of the infinite End, therefore, consists merely in removing the illusion which makes it seem yet unaccomplished” (*Enc.*212, add.). That, in fact, is the theme of this present study.

²³ E. Gilson, *On Being and some Philosophers* (1952). Gilson suggests that German idealist constructions are too much like musical imaginations to be true philosophy. He sees his attitude as one of “Christian realism”.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

RENAISSANCE SCHOLASTICISM AS MEDIATING HEGEL'S THOUGHT

Germain Grisez¹, a moral theologian rather than a philosopher, I think he would agree, has argued recently again that many will go to the place or enter the state called Hell, since unless some go to hell there can be no exercise of the virtue of hope. But hope is defined for us as real and necessary in Scripture. The sins against it are presumption as well as despair.

There is, however, a fallacy in this reasoning that hope implies final despair as a possibility. The perfection of hope, namely, is hope for the whole human community as the truth of self. In this light we read the text, "I pray not for the world but for those whom thou hast given me" (*John* 18). In becoming one of "those" one leaves "the world", as itself "in *esse* and *posse* null", less even than the prophet's drop on the rim of a bucket (*Isaiah*). Still, it cannot be denied that there is this hope, corresponding to God's apostolically declared will that all shall be saved, the possibility, that is, that those prayed for, as given to Christ who prays, are yet one, severally, with "the world" he excludes unless as under this intention, of the I, namely, as "universal of universals", or that he, reciprocally, "belongs to all" (Hannah Arendt, interpreting St. John XXIII, pope)².

¹ Germain G. Grisez, article in *New Blackfriars* 2013. Grisez, along with John Finnis, is otherwise known for their joint claim to present a "new" version of Natural Law. The version, however, remains thoroughly legalistic in the neo-scholastic manner and so, as one has argued over subsequent years (cf. our *The Recovery of Purpose*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt, 1993, ch.6), falls behind Thomas Aquinas's account of it as "a reflected divine light". See, in the same journal, Daniel Westberg: "Reason, Will and Legalism" (October 1987, pp. 432-436).

² The Ethiopian Church is said to have canonised Judas, despite the saying that it were better for him "not to have been born". Recently the Roman leadership declared "unnecessary" the hypothesis of Limbo as a mild department of Hell for unbaptised infants. It remains true that "the letter kills", as against spiritual interpretation, though this must also then refer to the letter of this judgment itself,

“Christianity, we know, teaches that God wishes all men to be saved” (*Enc.* 147 add.). This is what I hope, in having an identical will and mind. If it is not fulfilled, then it will have been wrong to hope for it and God will not have willed it.³ We may say, indeed, that Hegel’s thesis of “realised end” interprets the “future perfect” or last of the grammatically tensed modes of time as time’s conceptual supersession in the mind “knowing itself” for which time ceases, not of course temporally.

Thus how do I ever know that God’s “original” will is never “consequently” (the logical sense absorbing the temporal) fulfilled? Or, is it not the case that Grisez’s whole reasoning is based upon a somewhat simple-minded and un-spiritual realism, such as the Jews in the days of St. Paul, one of them, rather took for granted. Here indeed we may essay a remark about “revelation”, in the light of Hegel’s reasoning on the subject. Revelation, in the restricted because abstracted sense of the mind of those “sent” as petrified in written documents, always therefore to be read “spiritually” however, never ceases. For revelation, as Hegel claims to show, is what God is. This is exemplified by the Apostle Paul, not to be explained so much as “one born out of due time” (the only way of accepting him into the Apostolic college by realist canons) but as one exemplifying the dialectical supersession (*Aufhebung*) of time in the Spirit by the otherwise, as temporally viewed, “new” movement. “There is

if made too absolute or “one-sided” against literal claims. The spiritual requirements of hope, nonetheless, along with the celebrated “compassion for sinners” of the saints, enjoin as guide that Scriptural statements appearing immediately contrary to this be recognisably interpreted in this spirit. The devils “believe and tremble”, while Mephistopheles declared to Faust that Hell was not anywhere, since he, the speaker, was everywhere “in it”. The diabolical, however, cannot, by Hegel’s logic, be more than a finite moment of consciousness. His finding that religious *representations*, say, depend, as such, upon finite and therefore false states of consciousness, that their truth may lie rather in their *opposites*, though not exclusively or in the one-sidedness of judgment as such, is a first step towards having done with the issue.

³ This is basically the dynamic behind, as it is generally considered, the same Apostle’s discourse through *Romans* 9 to 11. The gentiles are to be converted so as to shame those rejecting Christ (Israel “after the flesh”) into embracing the same faith, the same offer of “salvation”. Of course he refers to those broken off and enjoins fear, as of a threat. The main idea though is that if God used and ultimately “decreed” their incredulity to enlighten (“save”) the surrounding world, then how much more will their repentance achieve? It will be “life from the dead”, nothing less. We naturally first read this in terms of souls in abstract individuality, as “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (*Ezekiel*), but the intention and spirit can spur us on beyond this.

nothing new under the sun" and, absolutely speaking, no sun either. It is, it is declared, not seen in the "heavenly" city (called Jerusalem) of the *Apocalypse*, with which Scripture appropriately ends. Paul's special status, therefore, is not derivable from a placing of more weight upon his reported vision on the Damascus road, whether it blinded him or not, than it can bear. The Spirit continues to "lead into all truth", encountering, or positing, the dialectical contradictions upon the way as badge of that way's authenticity. Paul's apostleship, then, is a relativisation, within Scripture itself, of the picture of Christ claiming "all power" and literally delegating it to his closest followers as they watch him ascend beyond their ken. In reading that we necessarily forget that other truth, that "Greater things than I have done shall you do", though it is only in holding both together, again, that "one-sidedness", the closing of some of the eyes, is avoided. "The things that are seen are temporal", including letters on a page, here or elsewhere. The hermeneutic principle is a formalisation of this spiritual truth, "to the letter". That is, it is a circle returning, it too.

"Now abideth faith, hope, love. But the greatest is love and when that which is perfect is come then the imperfect shall be done away with". No faith or hope more. But when is this "when"? Is it not clear that it is a "moment", not however of or in time. Rather it is the Idea ever suspended above all moments, as in fact come, achieved end? We hope all the time that all are saved, God willing it. To them that have shall be given. That is, it shall be given in this moment of their present having, in the hope. The two are one. Or, in alternative vision, how can the rational man be happy with a happiness that does not include, that is not, concretely, the universal?

Differently put, it is the meaning of "all" that is at stake here, the losing or "hating" of one's "life in this world". Anxieties about "personal continuity" betray or deny this requirement of spirit. Those who shall be saved are each by definition all, with which each is identified in faith, hope and love, in the triadic form of speculative reason (cp. *Enc.* 159). In not making this identification, with all, with the universal that transcends any collectivity, "I" ceases to be I in self-conscious thought. It dwindles to nothingness as never having been anything.⁴ So, in philosophy, the one-sided and literalist pictures proposed in theology, over which the phenomenal passion of fear presides, are left far behind, in spirit's annihilating forgetfulness. This forgetfulness, in fact, is that remembering

⁴ This idea is adumbrated both in C.S. Lewis's *The Great Divorce*, where the damned simply disappear down one of heaven wormholes, and in P.T. Geach's notion, from within his finally incoherent "realist" viewpoint, of a "time fork" (*Providence and Evil*, Cambridge 1976).

of being Heidegger seeks to arouse, the leap beyond the world that Hegel celebrates (*Enc.50*). The world embodies, is, this forgetfulness of being.

Chesterton, in his *Autobiography*, reports his grandfather saying he believed he would thank God for his creation even if he knew he were a damned soul. Really this means he could never know this. Our creation is irreversible and our immortal destiny, our stake in being, goes with it. We are neither better nor worse than we should be, writes McTaggart, and this includes the amount of sorrow about it of which we are capable.

So Grisez will be saved, we may hope, in and as we do for all of us, a hope that our most “modern” theologian, Hans Küng, recently and in humility expressed for himself. As saved, however, these two appearances lose their phenomenal or pronouncable names, another and not themselves living in them.

But we were discussing realism, as something conditioning the human spirit until the birth of modern philosophy in the systematised subjectivism of Descartes. Before him modern thought had made a more confused or prophetic appearance in the phenomenon of Luther. In a similar way Greek philosophy had overcome or elevated the spirit above subservience to prophecy, still perhaps dominant then in African thought. What the modern systematisation, perfected in Hegel, brings out, however, is that it is this primacy of the subject which, unacknowledged, determines both art and religion in their aspect of being preliminary forms of Absolute Spirit, of the appearance of the Absolute, without figure or story, as itself, the God remaining after the passing of the gods.

One must add, however, or recall, rather, from our conclusion to the previous chapter here, that philosophy, in its absolute truth, is not abstracted from these more finite forms, art and religion, which continue to flourish though not, ideally, in separation from philosophy, called by Hegel therefore the highest *Gottesdienst*, while the element of Art exemplifies the concrete, by and in which all spirit is manifested. Thus John of St. Thomas (Jean Poinsot), contemporary with Descartes, called his treatise on Logic *ars logica*, the logical art. Similarly, when one speaks about the way of something, “of the Lord Jesus” (Grisez’s mammoth book) or the “little way” (Thérèse of Lisieux) or Frege’s “way” of seeing things or representing them in philosophy, one refers to art as not merely the jumping-off point but the controlling base of the most absolute of acts, as God’s way for short. *Epikēia* (Gk. *epieicheia*) as the most inward or spiritual form of justice, itself both one of four cardinal virtues and the form of all of these, springs to mind. Like *technē*, it knows when to break the law without doing wrong. As one with mind or spirit, i.e. as virtue inwardised or as its very idea, it has license to “blow where it will” and

repeatedly does so, breaking the law according to the intention of the legislator, as a Thomist would put it. Just therefore, however, it subverts law by its example and thus fulfils it, Jesus Christ being the supreme example of such art or, indeed, *synderesis* (the inchoate habit of virtue constituted by and in reason as such). Such breaking, indeed, is the birth of spirit, continually, and it is the error of traditionalism to suppose that any previous moment or insight is "final and sufficient" in all respects. Hence the birth of theology as a science ruled by "development" of doctrine within Christianity or absolute religion, this development itself, however, being ruled by "the rule of faith" (*regula fidei*), which, Hegel's analysis shows, is itself a species of speculative reason, of "the reason-world" (*Enc.* 82 with addition). Further, since it is itself a doctrine the development of doctrine is itself subject to development. This development, therefore, which at one point developed an abstractly separate theology, as a "moment", naturally proceeds to the end of such a theology, within the philosophy of religion, just as it guides religion itself to its end in Absolute Spirit that is philosophy or, rather, wisdom itself, *sophia*, to which the cathedral at Constantinople was dedicated, *Sancta Sophia*. In this end all means are absorbed in logic in their very conception.

Now a thing is called holy only from a phenomenal point of view, and that is why it is not a word in philosophical vocabulary. For thought that is holy is thought thinking itself alone, this concept, and it is itself *the* Concept, absorbing logically or in truth all notion of a abstractly particular viewpoint. It is so to say, "full of eyes", before and behind. Thomas Aquinas expresses this by saying that God, *qua* God, can have no real relations with his creatures. This means in turn that I am not myself. I not merely do not know if I have a body, as Descartes had it. Rather, as Newman declared, I am more certain of God than that I have hands or feet. This I, in fact, as transcending subject, will be certain with the certainty of God himself, of Mind, Spirit. This can be nothing other than a self-consciousness of identity in being with the Absolute, with God, as Aquinas showed that each of the divine ideas, as modes of Mind namely, are one in identity with what he called the "divine essence". Such language implies a kind of priority over questions of existence. This is how God must be thought, while thought cannot but think God as it thinks anything and everything, existent or not. This is the truth of what is now called "sistology" (Richard Sylvan, taking inspiration from Meinong).

Aristotelian philosophy has served religion for a long time and will continue to do so. Those taking it over, however, failed to see, or abstracted from, the absolute idealism whereby it was philosophy. So

Hegel shows how it did not contradict but fulfilled Plato's idealism in bringing out the active *energeia* of the Idea, the form.

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I want now to bring out further the view presented here by contrasting some of the forms of the later Aristotelian scholasticism with the treatment of the same themes in Hegel, "the new theologian" as one might, again, call him by analogy with St. Simeon of the Christian East, who bears that title. The themes fall under two head here, analogy and semiotic.

Analogy can seem to be largely ignored in Hegel's writing, though it plays a large part in Scholastic thought. Neo-scholastics⁵, indeed, tend to dismiss mysticism as a univocal response to God and the world, while analogy, by contrast, preserves God and the world in conceptual separation. Their successors have thus ended up, we might say today, speaking of an "ontological discontinuity" between the two, thus throwing out the very substance of what the prophets first proposed to us, that "in God we live and move and have our being" (words of St. Paul in Luke's *Acts of the Apostles*), insofar as they would adhere to this phrase in its natural import. There is nothing discontinuous about the prime causality, to use their own terminology, first act or "act of acts", *intimior me mihi*, unless in the prime sense that it is "only", as being All, continuous with itself. But there we fall at once into "mysticism". Hegel, however, virtually (and virtuously) equates mysticism with philosophy. He was himself a mystical philosopher, having Eckhart and Nicholas of Cusa (and Plato) as forerunners and not only Jesus the Christ, whom they all had, or Jakob Boehme, whom, by the way, he shares, with much else, with poets such as Goethe or William Blake⁶. It belongs with "the logic of mysticism" not to stop, not to be satisfied with, analogy. It would rather condemn, dispense with, the use of language itself. "All judgments are false", Hegel declares, giving further reasons, naturally in "prepositional" or judgmental form. God has "spoken only one word", St. John of the Cross declares, pleading for silent receptivity in prayer but, again, writing volumes in support of his contention. That is, he does not present a pure practical guidance abstracted from the theory of ascetical theology. So philosophy and theology both pay tribute to mysticism while seeming to

⁵ E.g. James F. Anderson, *The Bond of Being*, a brilliant presentation, all the same.

⁶ Blake, in "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell", calls him Jacob Behmen. C.S. Lewis's *The Great Divorce*, between heaven and hell, is at once reaction against Blake's poem and an instance of this mystical complex. He remains "romantic", in Hegel's sense.

reject it as method. Only Hegel finally identifies “the method” with the mysticism, without reduction. We might say that Grisez and the scholastics have wanted to replace the original freedom of visionary mysticism with what one might label “misticism”⁷, the justice of the letter. Every soul, declared the Carmelite from Lisieux again, gets what it expects, adding, to one of her sisters in religion, “If you want (God’s) justice then you will get justice” and not mercy, that is to say, not free presence and interchange, “co-inherence”, to recall Charles Williams’s term, as in “the companions of the co-inherence”.⁸

The common area of focus for our two themes, analogy and semiotic, is that of relation, the “weakest” of Aristotelian accidents. Viewed as accident relation inheres in the one relating to the other⁹ and does not conjoin the two as extrinsic to it¹⁰, while in Hegel all relation is rational or ideal, as is Being itself, the Idea namely, where the extrinsic is a form of the intrinsic and Nature is from the first conceived in Spirit. Spirit, the Idea, does not undergo, in finite passivity, the process that it is. Hegel here takes his cue from or coincides with Trinitarian thought where, ultimately, the subjects of relation are themselves relations. Where one might expect a deconstructing continuous backward regress, however, a philosophy of identity is born, fully in accord, again, with Trinitarianism. This has yet to be welcomed, however, Hegel rather felt, by “the religious party”.

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One might look, for example, at relevant work by Cajetan (1469-1534), his treatment of not just analogy but of the analogy of being, where he claims to follow Aquinas, taking up Aristotle’s thesis that “being is said in many ways”. This reference to saying (predicating?) has led some, for example the late Ralph McInerny, to claim that such an analogy is a thesis in and about logic and nothing else. There is no metaphysical analogy in reality, so to say. In Hegel’s thought, as we know, logic itself unites epistemology and metaphysics in one. This distinction or dilemma, between the real and the logical, cannot be made or posed, still less the choice for one horn of it.

⁷ The Poles, in proverb, say “must” is found in Russia, not here. It is, in a word, abstractly external.

⁸ Cf. Charles Williams, *The Descent of the Dove*, subtitled “A History of the Holy Spirit in the Church”, c. 1939, the year de Lubac published, in French, *Catholicism*, and Maritain his *A New Humanism*.

⁹ This theory is expounded in John of St. Thomas’s *Ars logica*.

¹⁰ This is the theory of Russell or Frege.

A preliminary difficulty is reflected in the controversy as to whether or not Cajetan plays down the original primacy of existence over essence stressed by Aquinas¹¹ but rejected by Scotus, who claimed not to know (*nescio*, he wrote) of any act of existing in Thomas's sense of *esse* as "act of acts", "the most perfect... the actuality of all things, and even of forms".¹² The difficulty is that Cajetan uses the Scotist terminology, which had become the terminology of this later Renaissance age, to express his Thomistic and Dominican view. The terminology, in fact, is that of the distinct Scotist system, just as now we might use the terminology of the Hegelian system or of whatever system might be thought already to have superseded it to express Thomism or Hegelianism respectively, as McTaggart later used the new "analytical" philosophy for the latter end.

So for Thomas's *esse* Cajetan speaks, with Scotus, of an *esse actualis existentiae*, whereas for *essentia* he has *esse quidditativum*. That is, Gilson judges from his Thomist viewpoint, the terminology is "formally essentialistic". The thought, however, is Thomist throughout.¹³ So Cajetan, though under pressure from Scotist contemporaries, refuses to reduce the act of being of a substance to an extrinsic relation to its efficient cause (*esse actualis existentiae* in the Scotist sense of a merely factual existence). Otherwise God or an uncaused substance would not be able to exist, as Aquinas had pointed out¹⁴. Besides arguments of his own he replies to objections posed in disputation in a way that makes it plain he is not just speaking of existence in general but of the unique act of being of each and every conceivable thing. He thus makes plain that existence is not a further, spurious essence, but constitutes a different order altogether, to which all essence, essence as a whole, is purely potential, as it is in Augustine's *Non aliquo modo est sed est, est*, speaking there explicitly of God. So God can become anything, a woman, for example (my example), since he is not himself in some "definite" way. For Hegel this is precisely what he does, constitutive of himself as of "the thing".

¹¹ For this view see E. Gilson, "Cajetan et l'existence", *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* 15, 1953, pp. 267-286. For reasons against it see J.P. Reilly, "Cajetan: Essentialist or Existentialist", *The New Scholasticism* (now *The American Journal of Catholic Philosophy*) 41, 1967, pp. 191-222.

¹² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica*, Ia, 4, 1 ad 3.

¹³ Cf. Leo Elders, *Die Metaphysik des Thomas von Aquin, I: Das ens commune*, Salzburg: Pustet 1985, p. 149f.

¹⁴ Cf. Aquinas, *Summa theol.* Ia 44, 1 ad 1. "But, since (*quia*) to be caused is not in the definition (*ratione*) of being simply, there is found some being that is not caused" (my transl.). He compares being caused to man's capacity for laughter. You could find a man who cannot laugh.

Cajetan adds, in clarification, that essence and *esse* are not related as potency and act in the order of essence (the Scotist misreading of Aquinas), but in the order of existence. So he says that “act in the order of existence plus act in the order of essence do not give substance but existing substance”. Part of my claim here, incidentally, is thus that to essence and existence correspond, in great measure at the least, Hegel's Essence and the Idea or Concept, as being returned upon itself.

It seems plain here that the “order of existence” subsumes that of essence as included within it, whether or not Cajetan takes this step, as does Hegel, for whom the Idea is the only and full actuality and ordering principle, thus far one with the *nous* of Anaxagoras. *Nous* is freedom, is spirit as final or definitive being. Cajetan finds no explicit trace of this doctrine of *esse* in Aristotle, he says, a remark indicating that he does not revert from Aquinas to Aristotle, as the Gilson and related interpretations suggest. There can indeed be good reason to revert thus to Aristotle, from Aquinas, on particular issues, such as the relation of form to matter, of “soul” to “body” in particular, but this is not one of them.

The weakness here, however, is the maintenance in thought of two *orders*, essence and existence, whichever one gives priority to. Cajetan himself does not maintain it when it comes to Absolute Being itself. There, as with Aquinas, essence and existence are identified, identical. Thomists, denying that St. Thomas should have asserted, in effect, “There is a God, that's what God is” (Geach's *reductio ad absurdum* of the identification when not properly interpreted), stress *esse*, being, as “act of acts”, *actus actuus*, over a merely factual existence. This is still not, however, Aristotle's (or Hegel's) “pure act”, *actus purus* and is related to a literalist interpretation of Nature as creation, a nature able to include angels, I mean, a making of something else in what they are now calling “ontological discontinuity”, rather than a run-up to intrinsic though self-alienating incarnation or, more generally, utterance or outer-ance, as unveiling (*revelatio*) of the inward, this being the essence of Spirit, which is not therefore the inward ex-clusively as if abstractly finite. That new phrase seems to be related to a trend in Polish philosophy particularly, as represented by Roman Ingarden's “grand project of refuting transcendental idealism” (publisher's blurb around the recent English translation).¹⁵

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¹⁵ Roman Ingarden, *Controversy over the Existence of the World* (tr. A. Szulewicz), Peter Lang, Frankfurt, New York, 2013. Cp. our “Creation *stricto sensu*”, *New Blackfriars*, March 2008, pp. 194-214.

Given this identification of being and essence at the final level one can work in either direction. Thus Hegel begins his logic with “bare” being in order to arrive, in the third part, at being itself as the Idea that is itself all, corresponding to the Pauline narrative postulation “that God shall be all in all” but put absolutely as “realised end”. From this point of view, which is “logical”, being and essence are one and the same. The second part of Hegel’s Logic, the Doctrine of Essence, teaches that Essence is a moment of Being, a process perfected in the Concept or Notion (*der Begriff*). Viewed from this absolute standpoint the “analogy of being” expresses the final truth of the identity of all being, of the one and the many, in the likeness (proportional) of difference, of self as other. There is not so much ontological difference, then, between God and creation, as profound identity in difference and only this is the “ontological discontinuity”, that God is the “all in all”, in each and every creature and class or thought of creatures, so that they are utterly absorbed and so nothing on their own. Whereas the Word, in Trinitarian thought, is put as God’s (the Father’s) image (e.g. in *Colossians*) “declaring” him (Johannine prologue), so, for Aquinas, all creation is God’s *self*-imitation, a dynamic imitation (he cites the Plotinian *bonum est diffusivum sui*). What Hegel adds to this, thus in a measure transforming it, is that this finite idea of imitation is not to be taken abstractly or ab-solutely. Rather, absolute act includes, entails, being in other as manifest resultant assertion of self to and for self without limit. This is *one* in all of its particulars, which are thus not particulars, because it is infinite and unitary act. Hence its expression, nature, is one system, everywhere “akin” (Plato) and is thus as a man or, rather, spirit (“soul”) that “has learned” or knows or is “everything” (Plato).

So we have here likeness opposed to image. Thus of man, *Genesis* tells us (in Vulgate or English translations, for example), God speaks, saying “Let us make man in our image and likeness” (my stress). The two concepts are put together as, again, an analogy, one might almost say. Hegel goes to work on this conceptual “flow” in the middle or Essence section of the Logic. I quote the Scripture simply as an instance of the distinction, normative for the distinguishing of internal and external divine “processions”. “What is man that thou art mindful of him?” It was and is self-stultifying for consciously atheist philosophers to ignore this background. Certainly McTaggart does not do so.

What it comes down to is, again, that there is no separate order of existence or of essence, as Cajetan, say, would have it, but rather the Idea. This is not an “order”, as of an alternative *way of thinking*, merely, but thought itself, Mind, *nous*, as Being’s final face or “incarnation”, in a kind of reversal of this term, in our thought itself of its self. It is, rather, a

breakthrough. In this way absolute idealism rebuts those who would look on it or present it as just one of “the ways of knowing and thinking”¹⁶ and hence finite as being just our own thought or “way”. It is, rather, Spirit’s own way and as such it reveals or presents itself. Immediate sense-perception, or that of “parts *outside* parts”, is thus thought’s own dialectical beginning, thought’s other but not as alien to it. It is of the essence of mind or spirit to be thus, though here we are investigating essence itself.

Mind therefore does not “have” being, does not merely or abstractly exist.¹⁷ This is the transcendental idealism in question, which is outlined as “the dogma of philosophy”, its truth, already in Hegel’s “Doctrine of Being”. “But the truth of the finite is rather its Ideality” (*Enc.* 95). It seems that Scotus and the Scotists were groping after this, but they were hindered by their more or less dogmatic attachment to “realism”. What needed thematising at a deeper theological or philosophical level indifferently, therefore, was the received doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*. Hegel performs this task, reconciling all the apparent contradictions, as is the task and truth of dialectic. The Idea, then, reproduces itself constantly and infinitely, being infinite and the Infinite, eternally, as Word. It is or has to be personal, Hegel asserts in the final chapter of *The Science of Logic*.

From this Word the Idea itself proceeds as actual Spirit, as, for all we know, do the angelic beings Hegel mentions. They proceed as well in an infinite succession of moments, within as in differences from this Word. This speaks or externalises all in one, whence, as one, Spirit gathers all and it up in recapitulation, a kind of “wheel of fire”, from which indeed the concept of glory, as infinite, is not separable, “as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be”. This is a most philosophical phrase, as are the words “I am alpha and omega”. “I”, says Hegel, whatever we may want to mean by it, is “the universal of universals”, thus confirming at its root Wittgenstein’s rebuttal of “private language”. If I suffer God suffers, all suffer. But God, as infinite, does not “suffer”, so suffering must not be posited abstractly. In the midst of suffering joy is fulfilled, even at the phenomenal or psychological level. Jot itself, however, is “absorbed” in the Idea, as itself “passing all understanding” in the absorption of peace. This is the analogy of being, of the proper proportionality of being to any and all its concretisations. It is the love, as this comes to be called, binding all together. Note, however, the clear difference, in opposition, of what is here united, of what is in truth one. There is otherness in God. Hence

¹⁶ Title of an otherwise excellent study by Fr, Ernest Ruch, OMI, National University of Lesotho, 1977.

¹⁷ Cf. Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, 1949.

outside is inside. In Hegel this takes the explicit form of validation of sense-knowledge, of nature in particular. She is as she appears, but to the perceptive eye. At the same time sense and its perception, of parts outside parts again, is systematic “misperception” (McTaggart), inasmuch as the spiritual or eternal, as whole, the Idea, is “not seen”, not because it abstracts from sense but for quite the opposite reason, that sense, namely, in the first place, has no being as abstractly torn from it. Seeing God is metaphor for knowledge, which is good news for blind people or those lacking one or more sense. Sense in general, however, is to be analysed in terms of touch and finally, transcending this, identity. This is its spirituality, its *ratio* as itself a kind of knowledge, *quaedam cognitio*, but not in separation. The senses deliver to the intellect what they do not themselves understand, since they themselves are that misperception which first art, as immediate absolute spirit, begins to correct or remove, as “feeling intellect” in the poet Wordsworth’s phrase, “a greater revelation than the whole of philosophy or religion” in Beethoven’s reference to the art of music specifically, as grounding or founding both these, namely. I choose Hegel’s two great and exact contemporaries (b.1770) to illustrate his thesis, itself a “moment” of thought’s eternal procession, denial of which would make philosophy, and indeed all spiritual pretension, “the saddest of spectacles”. This is a view common to Scholastic and Husserlian¹⁸ thought, for example, as well as to Hegel and, thus far, Kant. For Hegel’s view, see *Encyclopaedia*, paragraphs 13 to 15 and indeed the whole Introduction, which is indeed the *General Introduction* to the whole *Encyclopaedia* and not to “the Science of Logic” specifically, as can be seen from paragraph 18 particularly, where the division of philosophy into three parts is first broached.¹⁹

Thus, the history of philosophy, in its true meaning, deals not with a past, but with an eternal and veritable present: and, in its results, resembles not a

¹⁸ “Thus, the laws of formal thought apply to actual thought and discourse, but do not depend upon them for their truth or their evidence”. There is a “distinction between phenomenology and descriptive psychology... experience cannot be regarded... as a psychological event, as a real fact among others” but rather as “the science of the pure ego”. These citations are from two articles on the earlier (D. Willard) and later Husserl (P. Spinicci) in *Handbook of Metaphysics and Ontology*, ed. Burkhardt & Smith, Philosophia Verlag, Munich 1990 (vol. 1, pp. 365-371).

¹⁹ The late Joseph Kockelmans made this textual point with some emphasis during a graduate course given on the Logic of the *Encyclopaedia* at the University of Pittsburgh in the fall of 1967. It is obscured by its appearing as the first chapter of “The Science of Logic” in W. Wallace’s translation (OUP 1873, 1965).

museum of the aberrations of the human intellect, but a Pantheon of Godlike figures (*Enc.* 86, add. 2, *et f.*).

Hegel states here that “this is the true meaning” of the *phenomenon*, a term meant here literally or “scientifically”, of “the refutation of one system by another, of an earlier by a later”.

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For a comparison of Cajetan's and Hegel's systems we must consider Cajetan's doctrine of analogy more closely. For Cajetan the only metaphysical and hence “proper” type of analogy, among the three or four proposed by Aquinas, is that “according to (both) being and intention”.²⁰ He gives, as an example of this, precisely being (*esse*, the act of being) itself. “Despite the fact that their quiddities (i.e. of substance, quality, quantity etc.) are not only diverse but even primarily diverse, they do retain a similitude in this that each of them has a ‘to be’ proportioned to itself”. This is what Cajetan calls “the analogy of proper proportionality”, not to be confused with the mere “analogy of attribution” or even that of proportion, which is improper or “extrinsic”.

It is not so much that the analogy of mere proportion is “purely logical”. Proportion, rather, means any relation of one thing or term indifferently to another. Proportionality, however, the name, “is given to a similitude of two proportions”. Note, it is not given to an equality of proportionality, as in arithmetical ratios or proportions, but to a similitude. We are reminded here of Hegel's treatment of these categories in his “Doctrine of Essence” (second part of his tripartite *Science of Logic* in whichever version). It means in both cases that analogy is not reducible to univocity but is found in “reality” itself as equivocal, given that analogy is confessedly a species of equivocity. This is precisely what we find in Hegel, mention, namely, of contradiction itself being found in finite “reality”, from which it is just therefore ascended logically to the infinite and absolute.

Here it is claimed, then, that in the metaphysical or real order (of existence, as superior to, more real, than the order of essence), there is no likeness of things to one another absolutely, but only a likeness in the proportions of each thing to its own act of being. This means that the likeness in question must itself be analogical, not univocal. Being, in other words, is irreducibly an analogical concept, as the whole of Hegel's logic, for example, will later illustrate. It is thus unable to be perfectly abstracted

²⁰ Cf. Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, 19, 5, 2, *ad 1.*

from what has it. This, in short, is the weakness and ineffectuality, in Hegel's own estimation, of the first abstracted concept of being with which his logic begins.

Hence the basis of all such "proper" analogy is this analogy of the act of being in and with each of its instances, unique as each is and because of which, thus far, each individual thing, or instance rather, is itself and not another. So this identity in nature of two acts of being (they both "are") is itself proportional. So Cajetan takes pains to show that proportional identity is a real species of identity, so to say, whereby identity is not itself abstractly or univocally considered. He thus applies this or brings it into his account of formal syllogistic reasoning, citing Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* 99a 16, which requires analogous middle terms for proofs of causal connections which are themselves identical by analogy or "in difference", as described here, using Hegel's term "identity in difference".

Like Hegel then, Cajetan at once gives supreme concrete worth to the individual while totally submerging it in analogous being's universal sway. Thus in Hegel likeness between two things flows towards their identity as one thing, which means the things themselves are thus fluid. Hence it is "useless to count", as he says in connection with Trinitarian theology. As all beings are alike in this proportionality, so all beings tend to one (being). Thus we rejoin the Parmenidean thesis that "being has no parts". Is it possible that analogy as viewed by Cajetan and, by implication, Thomas Aquinas, is the key to Hegel at his most mystical? Is it even, after all, true that this is not to be found in Aristotle? As, for Aristotle, the ultimate difference determines the whole substance, so here the ultimate difference of substance itself, as universal, is being as the ultimate perfection or form, yet this form itself determines itself to ultimate difference, in a constant breeding of atomic individuals, the One of itself becoming many ones in an attraction which is itself repulsion.

By virtue of this real analogy the many are one, the one many. This is the pluriformity of nature. Nature is one, akin²¹, a system, yet many, to be considered spiritually and as a manifestation of spirit. The same is true of the human community and finally of the divine or absolute unity in difference, the Trinity. Again, however, these different levels of multiplication flow into one another. Hence we find, again, that the distinctions between angels, God's messengers, and God himself, the discreteness, is at one and the same time a continuous flow, of being or Idea indifferently, and this is what Incarnation means in Scriptural

²¹ Plato, *Meno*: "All nature is akin and the soul has learned everything". Nature, that is, is not to be viewed in the natural way, *materialiter spectata*.

thought, that the one sent is the one who sends. There is no real external “mission”, therefore, but it is so only in appearance. The economic and the immanent Trinity, so-called, are one. The one created, begotten rather, is the one who begets, his Word as it is said, “and the Word was God”, from whom Spirit proceeds, as living water flowing from the belly, in the Scriptural image, having first flown into it. “The eye with which God sees me is the eye with which I see God” (Eckhart). This One, all the same, is “begotten not made”. It makes no difference whether we speak of a state of alienation (Hegel), of petrified intelligence (Schelling) or of misperception (McTaggart). If the one sent is the one sending, the outside inside, as the dialectic reveals, then there is no alienation distinct from this misperception from which the Idea is finally to result as, says Hegel, “its own result”. This is a way of saying that the emergence is its own self-constituting process. Time therefore is the moment of objectification of that process as if not yet grasped in consciousness, while in reality everything is grasped and time is dissolved, as unreality and contradiction, in the grasping of this process. This exactly coincides with the Trinitarian conception variously adumbrated in Christian history. Hegel, therefore, is a Trinitarian philosopher, as Augustine had been, but without the same dualism. It remains true though that “the just shall live by faith”, within which, however, the possibility of philosophy is included as gift of the spirit, where it is called *sophia*. This, and not deistic rationalism, is why Hegel claims knowledge or reason, *Vernunft*, as spirit (“theological” virtue). Reason, not Understanding or *Verstand*, though this is indeed an “intellectual” virtue, is absolute.²² In this sense Hegel can indeed identify it as “the peace of God which passes all understanding”, passes, namely, the “faculty of the conditioned”. Reason is “the faculty of the unconditioned” (*Enc.* 45), having the Infinite for its object. At *Enc.* 42 Hegel rejoins the thought-world of *logica docens*, neglected by Kant in his listing, but not deducing, “the various modes of judgment”. When, however, at *Enc.* 45, Hegel goes on to say that Reason “is nothing but self-sameness, or the primary identity of the ‘Ego’ in thought (mentioned in §42)” it can be seen there that he is distancing himself from the Kantian

²² I am referring to the traditional division of virtue into the three theological or supra-natural virtues, where faith and hope are absorbed into charity as “the form of all the virtues”, these latter including, first, the intellectual virtues, such as prudence, science, understanding, wisdom, and, second, the four moral or cardinal virtues with their associated divisions. The scheme is fluid, e.g. prudence is both an intellectual and a moral virtue (see my *Natural Law Reconsidered*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt 2002). In Hegel’s scheme too spirit is entirely “supra-natural”, itself positing nature.

acceptation of these same phrases when he says that this “sort of Unconditioned... is supposed to be the absolute truth of reason” or “what is termed the Idea”. He declares though that by this, as in his own thought, “the cognitions of experience are reduced to the level of untruth and declared to be appearances”, whether in invalid subjective or in his own valid objective or, rather, absolute idealism. Nature is a “moment”, he says, of absolute process ever returning upon itself.

This is not “pantheism” but pantheism’s very opposite, God as “all in all”, the Idea. Until this point Nature has “groaned and travailed” indeed, waiting for its redemption.²³ But the end is realised, is the “design” of the whole. This realisation is itself the spiritual concept of nature, its self-concept as Word or revelation of God, of spirit, of the Idea, nature becoming that revelation of herself as proceeding, as spirit, from herself as she herself is the Idea realised and hence “othered”, but othered within the Idea’s own compass or infinite reach or active power of separation, rather. Nature, in short, is the Idea’s own other, that other it has as its own, repulsion conditioning final attraction in identity. There is no other sense in which nature could “groan and travail” than in Mind, in minds still in process of grasping, of conceiving what is eternal Concept, that awaited “redemption” which is, as eternal life, “knowing”. Knowing is “knowing God”, absolute knowing.

Cajetan, it is interesting to note, declared towards the end of his life that he doubted whether one could find proof for the immortality of the individual soul²⁴. This may well be interpreted as an insight, not yet thematised, into the abstract nature of talk of the individual soul, rather than spirit simply. Spirit has the other within itself in the sense, the only possible, that it is its other, be it one or many or neither of these. Abstract individuality belongs to “knowledge after the flesh” that is “ruined” by and in rational consciousness, the mystical. The self itself becomes “a new

²³ Cf. *Romans* 8:22f. This whole chapter introduces the three-chaptered vision, for St. Paul almost wistful, of the realised end of universal reconciliation. In fact though such wistfulness is a characteristic of hope *per se*. What is hoped for is not “yet” had. Even so, behind the temporal there is a logical “yet”, that of premises abstracted, as they must be *qua* premises, from the conclusion that, as truth, was present “all the time” as determining the whole process of syllogism.

²⁴ It had been declared by one of the fourteenth century popes, as correcting the informal error of a predecessor, that the souls of the blessed departed not yet reunited with their bodies do indeed enjoy the eternal happiness of the beatific vision so that, as Aquinas had said, “the body”, i.e. the having of it, only belonged to the *bene esse* of happiness, not to the *esse* of it. This indeed was absolute idealism in disguise, thus revealed again as “the chief maxim of philosophy” (*Enc.* 95) and not Hegel’s invention.

creature” and so not itself. In other words we witness here the first beginnings of a quasi-Heracleitean flow from a realist to an idealist consciousness in a first negation. The transition was to be further facilitated by Descartes in the next generation. The possibility of solipsism as it thus arises is the reverse image of the union of all spirit with itself in the dialectical supersession of the finite category of Whole and the Parts as “the immediate relation” (*Enc.* 135).

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We pass now to what we billed above as semiotic. John “of St. Thomas” Poinsoot (1589-1644), to whom we shall now refer, was a Dominican contemporary of the Jesuit-educated Descartes and as such, besides being a cleric as Descartes was not, he had a better grasp of the continuous tradition of philosophy. The Dominicans, namely, were committed to constant study, their official motto being “*veritas*”, while the Jesuits in all their work were an active missionary order using even knowledge, or an appearance of it, relatively indifferently, to that end, the “salvation of souls” identified as “the greater glory of God”. This is the element of truth in the vulgar popular slur upon them that they proclaimed that “the end justifies the means”, though few know quite where this slogan originates. They were more immediately practical than the older Order and this reflects itself both in their readiness to adopt “enlightened” interpretations of their own principles²⁵, e.g. on the eighteenth century Chinese and Indian missions, and in their all the same, or just therefore, admirably “humanist” system of education from the first, which in part conditioned Descartes. He was allowed to lie in bed in the mornings in order to “think”. Hume later visited their institute at La Flèche and was somewhat taken with it, though clashing with it on the question of miracles. This was not Hegel’s world at all, however, latter-day Dominican as, in spirit, he surely was. Hence we are relating his thought here to that of two Dominican savants of the Renaissance, Cajetan and Poinsoot, as including its own contemporary reaction to itself within itself. Renaissance or “second” scholasticism, namely, is what later became a Protestant scholasticism, of which Leibniz, by association at least, was the most illustrious representative. The unity of

²⁵ Calling this their more practical attitude may be an unjustified abstraction, however. Throwing transforming light upon a traditional teaching obscured by time is, after all, our own aim in this whole book. In which, however, dualism is finally cast aside. These early Jesuits stand midway between the Thomist-Aristotelian revolution and Post-Hegelian efforts of today’s by no means “post-Christian” West and world.

the two “religions” is here illustrated, as Leibniz himself worked to show, thus far like Hans Küng in a later age. Oscar Wilde’s mordantly humorous comment, answering a question at his trial, “I have no religion: I am an Irish Protestant”, is pertinent here as reflecting Hegel’s thesis of the ongoing absorption (*Aufhebung*) or of the perfection or accomplishment, in individual minds as in mind itself, of religion by and in philosophy. Wilde, after all, was, as writing about it (Preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*), a philosopher of art, while Hegel acknowledges a “flow” between the three forms he enumerates, those of art, religion and philosophy, in ascending and yet returning scale, of absolute spirit. For completeness, therefore, there should be here included an account also of the accomplishment of art in and by religion.

We are concerned here, however, more especially with John’s theory of signs. Hegel too has a theory of language as made up of conventional signs for concepts, these being primarily vocal, as with Aristotle. The interesting thing about John of St. Thomas is that he makes concepts themselves out to be signs of what he calls realities, *res*. They are however pure or “formal” signs, not as such perceptible, as are the words of language or Augustine’s smoke as signifying fire, a “natural” sign. John’s account here tallies with that of Aquinas, e.g. at ST 1, 85, 2. To perceive a formal sign as object, it is there implied, one has to employ another formal sign or concept of the concept “in second intention” and so on. The formal sign, called in Thomist writings “intentional species”, as these are distinguished into sensible *and intelligible* species or appearances, is always *id quo*, that by (or in) which a *res* is perceived or known, never *id quod*, that which is thus perceived. As “pure” signs, therefore, concepts are, dialectically at least, rather like Hegelian pure being and thus no sign at all (as being is equivalent to non-being). They are simply *of* something else, as being, *conceived* on its own, is for Hegel equivalent to emptiness, is the principle of category as such (“with which science must begin”). So the concept, for Poincaré, is interpretable as simply the relation between thinker and object, not therefore to be nominalised, a position defended today by P. Butchvarov²⁶, though it is also suggested in some work of André de Muralt²⁷, who finds John veering towards Scotism or even Ockhamism in this regard. There is, namely, no longer an intentional *order*, again, distinct or different from the realities conceived, the *esse obiectivum* of Scotus

²⁶ See his three articles in the *Dictionary of Metaphysics and Ontology*, Philosophia Verlag, Munich and New York, 1990.

²⁷ A. De Muralt, *L’enjeu de la philosophie médiévale*, Brill: Leyden 1991, p.98, also pp. 83f and 95, discussed in our *Philosophy or Dialectic?* Peter Lang: Frankfurt 1994, p. 67f.

notwithstanding. The “beings of reason” are the things. Conversely, the *same* formal distinctions are found in them (*pro parte rei*) as are found formally, again, in the intellect. The logical *issue* of this was to be the Hegelian philosophy of absolute mind. They, the *entia rationis*, such as concepts, are, as not being objects at all but “relations”, “things” in themselves, the true realities, though with this difference, that there is no thing-in-itself other than what conceives and is conceived, the Concept, namely. This is true being. With Aristotle, though in a measure only, and with Kant and his “tenderness” (Hegel) for the finite, things had worked the other way, mind assisting in its own dismemberment. Yet for Hegel too, since mind is all, it is not any definite thing.

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When we come to relations, and we must ask why we come to them just here, we find that John Poinsot finds all their being in the founding subject, as a reference to another. Relation to non-existent objects, otherwise a problem, for Brentano for example, becomes immediately intelligible. Mental acts need no longer be reduced to the *quasi*-relational, mirroring the Thomistic *entia rationis*. Dualism is, potentially at least, overcome, apparently while still within a realist philosophy. Is this really what it is though, realist? This identity of concept and thing founds reference rather than assumes it. With Hegel, re-interpreting Aristotle, we rediscover the *energeia* of the Concept, that it is act and, ultimately, pure act, not, for example, something just finding itself in being. These formal signs are real relations, implies John of St. Thomas, *secundum esse*, not merely quasi-rational or *secundum dici*.

All this is to be compared with what Hegel has to say about language in the section on “Theoretical Mind”, *Encyclopaedia* 445 and following, some of the most important material being contained in the “additions”. Jacques Derrida discussed this with his usual brilliance in his article “Speech and Writing according to Hegel”²⁸, though without reaching very definite conclusions.

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Thus if the formal signs or concepts are not merely relations but active relations and if also relations are found *in* their founding subjects then the real, as opposed to the phenomenal, is here. We have only to decide

²⁸ In *G.W.F. Hegel, Critical Assessments*, ed. Robert Stern, Routledge 1993.

whether on not the phenomena, of which the concepts are concepts, have any existence apart from them. Thus for Hegel it seems they do not, while for Husserl whatever reality they may have is of no consequence, literally. What exactly is the difference here?

Wittgenstein's suggestion, "Essence as grammar?", is, it now appears, no more reductive of essence than it is elevative of grammar. It follows from his denial, along with Hegel, of there being a private language. "The limits of my language are the limits of my world", that is, the latter, like the former, has no limits, language itself utterly issuing into the speculative, as when Hegel says "All judgments are false", all words being finally subsumed in the *logos*, which is Reason or Word, from which Spirit issues. Here all understand all, absolute knowledge being "thought thinking itself", as is cited in the Greek from Aristotle in the addition to *Enc.* 236. Here "the idea comes to be its *own object*"; nothing is private or abstractly individual. In this sense, as follow from the proposition just cited, the true is the false as good is evil, a conclusion that will follow whenever these terms are taken in abstraction from one another or, that is to say, finitely and not absolutely. This is what was found in the beginning of the Logic, that being is non-being. However, "the Idea is the truth" as "the result of this course of dialectic", though not as "mediate only" but as "its own result... no less immediate than mediate". Indeed "the stages hitherto considered", Being, Essence, Concept, Objectivity, even the Good or Will (Hegel, like Aristotle, equates these two) are not "something permanent, resting upon themselves" but dialectical. Their only truth, as applies equally to the category of "the existent thing", "is that they are dynamic elements of the idea".²⁹

So we read, as Hegel surely did: "Why do you *call* me good? There is none good but God alone". We add this to his own Scriptural examples, where he claims to offer their true meaning. They are not infrequent. This one clearly supports Wittgenstein's injunction of silence (not "calling" or naming) concerning "the mystical", to which Hegel claims speculative truth corresponds, "means very much the same as", as fulfilling or accomplishing it. The "reason-world" "lies beyond the compass of understanding", of words. Thus the implied "renunciation of thought" must "swing round into its opposite" and so here, reverting to Hegel, we develop further this last sentence of the *Tractatus*, bearing in mind his (self-referential) *dictum* that *all* judgments are "one-sided". The final or only true, but non-verbal judgment is thus the silence that is death, thus

²⁹ *Enc.* 213 add.

become, in religious figure, resurrection or, philosophically, as a finite term, its own opposite.

For words in general, all words, even those of *Tractatus 7*, are phenomenal. There an abstract dilemma was employed, speech or silence. But in reality just as there is nothing of which one cannot speak, so, equally, and hence in consequence, one may speak of and hence, *pace* Frege and Wittgenstein, predicate, after *die blosse Kopula*, everything and anything, not always (or ever, in view of the dialectic, as set forth above) as true, however. Only, it must be a "whole" and even, as regards truth, *the* whole, in the Hegelian perspective of identity in difference. That is, it will, by such logical positing, become, be put as, a whole. Thus, by logical form itself, if I say "Socrates is humanity" humanity, the term, becomes, names, truly or falsely, such a whole and not some partial attribute. "Only wholes are predicated of wholes" wrote Aquinas in *De ente et essentia*³⁰, and this is why we say "Socrates is a man", whether he is or was a man or is anything at all or not.

This, again, that words are phenomenal, is something Husserl seems to have understood rather well. It is the basis of the Thomistic doctrine of a contrast posed by the *verbum interior* or concept, which, however, includes all three of the Aristotelian "acts of the understanding", *viz.* concept, judgment and syllogism, as being all three and equally such "words" or *organa*, instruments, analogically, of this understanding. One recognises Hegel's "subjective concept" here. The doctrine itself, however, is mere commentary upon Aristotle's *On Interpretation*. A further consequence of it is Bradley's conclusion that there are no real relations, that relation itself, therefore, is an abstract and final category. "The unreality of relations, for which Bradley argued, consists in the fact that relational thinking treats terms of relations as having a distinctness incompatible with the togetherness it also requires of them".³¹ Compare our remark, above, on nominalisation. For Josiah Royce, for example, "we, together with our objects, are aspects of an absolute mind who deliberately intends objects in an initially inadequate way via our finite minds". The kinship, in difference, with McTaggart is patent. For him "our finite minds", or we ourselves, are not ourselves in the way we first appear to ourselves. The abstract individual, in Hegel's words, is destined for "ruin", shipwreck, and this upon the rock of its inherent immortality,

³⁰ Cf., for an understanding of this, Henry B. Veatch: "St. Thomas's Doctrine of Subject and Predicate" in *St. Thomas Aquinas (1274-1974), Commemorative Studies*, Vol. II, Toronto 1974, referred to in earlier chapters here.

³¹ These quotations are from the late Timothy Sprigge's article, "The Absolute", in Burkhardt & Smith, *op. cit.* p. 1-2.

beyond relation, which is in fact the Absolute, itself the Idea as the Idea is the Absolute.³² Dialectically put, immortality reveals its necessity in the nothingness, the “ruin”, of the phenomenal ego. Hence no question as to whether it is my own or not, in a restrictedly abstract identity, can arise. Religious and artistic parallels abound.

The different systems which the history of philosophy presents are therefore not irreconcilable with unity. We may either say, that it is one philosophy at different degrees of maturity: or that the particular principle, which is the groundwork of each system, is but a branch of one and the same universe of thought. In philosophy the latest birth in time is the result of all the systems that have preceded it, and must include their principles; and so, if, on other grounds, it deserves the title of philosophy, will be the fullest, most comprehensive, and most adequate system of all.³³

The wisdom concerned here is one transcending the divide between theory and practice, as is shown in Hegel’s dialectic. It thus eludes the ancient condemnation of Gnosticism, at the same time as it gives the latter its true meaning. The same may be said of the more recent theologians’ appropriation of notions at one time rejected.³⁴

³² *Enc.* 213

³³ *Enc.* 13.

³⁴ See, for example, David B. Burrell’s “Aquinas’s Appropriation of *Liber de causis* to Articulate the Creator as Cause-of-Being”, in *Contemplating Aquinas*, ed. Fergus Kerr OP, SCM London 2003.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

IMMORTALITY

At the time of writing this, 2014, one of the two Voyager probes launched in the seventies of the last century now, having left our solar system, journeys on through empty space, sheer distance. It will be four (or was it forty?) thousand years of our solar time before it may possibly encounter anything more to photograph. It bears with it examples, on a “golden disc”, of some of the popular music of fifty years ago now.

Not only time but, in one and the same trajectory, space too seems here to be lengthened towards infinity for one individual (object), though like any stellar fragment, we now know, a moment of dissolution, of further fragmentation, awaits it, even though no longer subject to our local regime of evening and morning, of days.

One seasoned if fictive space-traveller expressed on or in film (Kubrick’s *2001*) his impression that the creation had been left unfinished at the frontiers of earth. The rest is an endless waste of “galactic junk”, in Anthony Kenny’s phrase¹. The suggestion arises that here first the Kantian paradox finds its instantiation, not, as he suggested, that reason has its limits, but that time and space, these *a priori* forms of understanding, are here illegitimately applied. The spacecraft, namely, passes into the realm of ideas without ceasing to be a concrete object or individual. It has thus become a representation merely, a figure², for that for which the notion of

¹ A. Kenny, *The Five Ways*, London 1969.

² The attempt to *represent* just this representation, in “second order”, inevitably became a bit laboured at moments, due, as in the Borges tale, to inconsistencies of which the Hegelian account is free. There is a similar negative effect in John Fowles’s novel *The Magus*, despite revision. Philosophy seems here to become more “entertaining” than art, as is in general not the case with the Narnia fables of C.S. Lewis. The realisation that art, without losing its special excellence, is not the *final* or univocal form of absolute spirit was here preserved. At issue here are the conditions for genuine or conscious allegory, as compared to symbolism. Aslan is not merely Christ or a pictured thought, as are, say, the three graces. Lewis’s background, therefore, is Hegelian, where “This also is thou; neither is this thou”., whereas *2001*’s space-traveller, or the Tlonians, are understood to be but figures.

immortality is itself a figure, ultimately the self-knowing Idea or Mind (*nous*) of Absolute Idealism, which Hegel designated as *the* philosophical stance or mind. “Let this mind be in you”, of self-emptying of self into other than self as self’s remaining “essence”, the situation, thus viewed, of the Voyager vehicle, deconstructing time, as any “time-machine” would do. For, in time, however fast she may travel, we are never going to encounter such a lady as the fictive Miss Bright who

Departed one day
In a relative way
And arrived on the previous night.

She will not be informing us that she left town tomorrow, such as we might then aspire to verify. This is of course different from the prophet saying he will rise from the dead tomorrow, or “on the third day”, however we may interpret the figure of “rising from the dead”. That is to say, such statements, made in popular or “serious” science indifferently, beg rational interpretation, like all our representations, *before* one can speak of their truth-conditions, truth being matter for the universal science, philosophy, alone. Thus one asks of any representation of truth, for example the “pragmatic”, if it *can be* true. Speculative mind, of child or adult, there reveals its presence and truth. Nothing forbids, however, the attempt to *think* the ideality of the finite, as did Hegel while Borges, in his parable of “Tlon”, did not come so far. The planet Tlon, namely, remains posited as a “real”, non-ideal place in non-Hegelian abstraction from the totality, a place where supposed “real” people falsely believe in their ideality. Alternatively, however, and in correction of this judgment, for the moment, we may designate the story as speculative or implying the opposite of itself.

Hence such machines are impossible in their concept, though their positing may be a speculative stirring requiring completion in art, religion or, ultimately, philosophy. Dialectic, however, exhibits the logical impossibility of *all* finite concepts, of all definition, that is to say, taken absolutely or in abstraction from infinite or free possibility, which is besides itself necessity and the Idea. Such is the infinite scope of the “law” of non-contradiction, which, as Reason itself, and not mere abstract Understanding, alone does not sublimate itself. As speculative it even allows and imposes a world where impossible, that is self-contradictory concepts, may be imagined or represented. Free imagination may even flout it openly, as in the *Alice* books, authored, not surprisingly, by a professional logician.

Thus for Being and Non-Being to be equated is not the sublation of logical contradiction but is logic's demonstration that they, like Good and Evil or Cause and Effect, are the same. We were too quick to find contradiction in the earlier, Humean moment, Hegel the "voyager" thus shows us. This Flying "Dutchman", however, finds, in the Absolute Idea, the resolution that the flying or fleeing Scotsman only found figured on a backgammon board, or so he tells us.

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The suggestion is that the first picture of immortality, as a spatio-temporal following-on of our personal cosmos, is not a candidate. Immortality, in fact, cannot be any kind of accidental property, of reason or of anything else. If reason precipitates as immortality, by its "natural desire", then such immortality must be reason itself, the final instance, embodiment and demonstration of that necessity we call logical. It is in fact, as by this route we see, a figurative term (all terms are figurative, along with the whole figure or skein, *Schein*, of language, whose metaphors have to be killed to be used) for the actually infinite, infinity itself, that is, as sole or entire actuality, truth and hence mind or spirit, *Geist*, one with this its habitation. *Veritas est in mente*. Truth is in the mind and not only truth, so to say, but everything else, for the simple reason that there is nothing else. In truth, as idea, we find the cipher for being and beings indifferently. "Reason" is a term drawn, through (old) French *raison*, from the Latin *ratio* (wherever this in turn was drawn from), and thus far it is one with this finite Hegelian category actually absorbed in the Idea, in the infinite. "The Absolute Idea is the Absolute".

"In God we live and move and have our being." For if we move, God does not (and hence we do not and are not), as, equally, the Idea transcends its own immediacy as life. Or, the Idea's life is more unlike than it is like our life.³ That is to say, our being is not had and is not ours.

³ This very precision, coincidentally, is to be found in a twelfth century conciliar definition (Lateran), innocent of Hegelian language, of the sense of analogies as applied to the infinite, to God. We may be like to God, but God is unlike us as having no real relation to us. For this reason Hegel's thought simply *is* the eschewing of analogies, is the mystical, where the Absolute, God, is one and "self-absorbed" without limit and hence "all in all". All the same we have, subsequently, to allow for and, indeed, to execute, the negation of the negation. "This also is thou: neither is this thou".

We are, equally, each one, “she who is not”⁴. What is immediate, without the immediacy’s being mediated, is abstract and unreal. To know finally or absolutely all has to be un-known, we here illustrate. If there is a cloud it consists of our previous or, rather, preliminary misrepresentation of knowledge, as all representation is misrepresentation, is itself counterweight in its idea to knowing. So God himself calls himself, in and as revelation, “He who is”, in condescension to our habitual manner of representation. He could only do that, however, if nothing else is. “The non-being of the finite is the being of the infinite”.

In so far as this preliminary habit is self-constitutive we are but representations of ourselves. So it will not be we, strictly, our untrue or phenomenal selves, who are immortal, but our true selves, even though by being thus mortal in appearance we project the necessity of immortality, destroy or transmute death (*mors*) in its notion within the Concept. Our true selves *are* immortal, as now is forever, eternally returning as never departing. Thus, ideally, in art too, music or poetry, or anything, is conceived or born and “born again”, it is the same, in every phrase or line, taking these nowas what is now and not abstracted notes or phonemes (letters). So too, in religion, natural birth elicits baptism, which thus declares it a birth, desired and effected in one, into the immortal community constituting and constituted by immortality or life in the spirit.

The Concept thus includes all consciousness as necessary. It is “full of eyes” as of ego. In view of this we may indeed from time to time meet “our own image walking in the garden”, only to discover that we ourselves are *its* image, our highest and sole mediator, from which we hide as ourselves hidden “with” or within it, thus one with all life’s riffraff, the lunatics, the crippled and so on, but as drawing them irresistibly to ourselves, not as being drawn down to them, a perverse idea indeed as Nietzsche saw.

This Hegel claims that philosophy demands as self-manifestation of the Idea itself, as manifestation itself, that is to say, and not of this or that. In religion and its documents it is represented as God or the godhead (they are the same) presenting self as themselves “closer than self to self”. Yet inasmuch as philosophy represents, clothes or *pictures itself* in language it becomes a representation, the least untrue one, however, of this representation. It becomes, as Aristotle had stated, *theologia*, self-knowing

⁴ “I am he who is, you are she who is not” (Catherine of Siena, *Dialogues*). Of course the Infinite, of necessity One in self-plurification, can actually thus address a person, should it so condescend, just as it can “create” a world in the self-manifestation its self-absorption as infinite cannot exclude but rather demands as this absorption’s self-manifestation.

knowledge as union of cognition and will in the Idea, which *is* freedom, love, blessedness, Spirit, that is, “in its totality” (*Enc.*159).

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Presenting this as a philosophical requirement, however, relativises time, since it must then be fulfilled before as after any event representing it. Philosophy thus vindicates not only a mystical interpretation of whatever scriptures may be considered relevant, and hence *revelant*, but abiding nature herself as a system of sign and sacrament. Nature *witnesses*, “the very stones cry out”. They cry, in Augustine’s representation at least, which is worth noting, *ipse fecit nos*. This figure of creation, like that of incarnation, has itself to be thematised in philosophy as theology’s continuation and ever-active perfection.

The necessary connection of reason and God can seem too close for comfort, since “God” is not itself a philosophical term, even though this proper name is, uniquely, one with the individualised nature, deity, thus named. Reason, once we get beyond the letter, *ratio*, to the “life-giving” spirit, as mentioned above, is absolute. This is the final sense, if there is any, in the saying “Man is God”, dear to both Christian religion and militant atheism, since although Christianity “only” declares that one man is God it goes on to situate a new humanity as a whole as in (one with) that man. Put logically, the individual is universal, the universal, as real and not abstract, is individual. The declaration “I am that” may be uttered from either vantage point. “This also is thou, neither is this thou”. These two respects, again, are one while remaining distinct. There is no contradiction in logic here. Rather, in demonstrating that our speech, our predications, cannot but have an appearance of contradiction (the speculative), we affirm something about speech, about judgment, such that, as Hegel affirms, “all judgments are false”, for, again, a “contradiction in performance” is precisely not logical contradiction but, rather, performance, praxis, here *showing* that “the non-being of the finite is the being of the infinite”. This is the office of language as logic. So, for example, in the debate on immortality the first candidate for identification with it, as itself identifying it, namely an eternal return as of time upon itself, itself eternally returns. Speculative contradiction, similarly, is never contradictory “in the same respect” since it is, as ubiquitous, the declaration rather that every respect has its opposite, its contrary, inhering in it. Hence even the speculative judgment, *qua* judgment, is finally false, even as the syllogism of necessity is finally all, is the Concept, which “everything is” (“Everything is a syllogism”) as Object, and *the* Object,

which is “God, the Absolute Object”, “*implicitly* the same” as “notion (or, if it be preferred, subjectivity)”. The two “modes of expression”, though, “are equally correct and incorrect” (speculatively). “The true state of the case can be presented in no expressions of this kind”, viz, linguistic, of “the letter”. It is the “implicit” itself that is an abstraction as assuming language, figurative and finite through and through, to be “explicit”. Only Spirit explicates itself in Nature so as to be re-absorbed, as result, into itself, while Logic itself has turned out to be language’s self-arrangement as “bewitchment of our intelligence” (Wittgenstein).

As in every case, speculative identity is not the above-mentioned triviality of an *implicit* identity of subject and object. (*Enc.*193)

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As I write this a pet cat, hinders me, insistent. I think, is she not as immortal as anything else? Why do I think that? Am I not “gathering up the fragments so that nothing be lost”? Or is she like the sins that God “will not remember any more” (I only said “like”). And what about me in that case? “I never knew you.” Well, if I were a cat I wouldn’t mind that, maybe. Such is the freedom of felinity, a blissful ignorance of one’s servitude.

The living being dies because it is a contradiction. Implicitly it is the universal or Kind, and yet immediately it exists as an individual only. Death shows the kind to be the power that rules the immediate individual. For the animal the process of kind is the highest point of its vitality. But the animal never gets so far in its Kind as to have a being of its own; it succumbs to the power of kind. In the process of kind the immediate living being mediates itself with itself, and thus rises above its immediacy, only however to sink back into it again. Life thus runs away, in the first instance, only into the false infinity of the progress ad infinitum.⁵

Well, this, this language, might seem an acceptable representation. One has little difficulty in applying it to ants or fleas, big or small. If one reads the lines more carefully, however, then one reads between them, thus: we get *further* in our kind than animals, making this Kind, the universal, our own being, the individual. Each is all, thereby. Thus, or in the *process* of kind, the mutual begetting, each “mediates itself with itself, and thus rises above its immediacy” in this begetting but, as he then adds, “only... to

⁵ G.W.F. Hegel, *Encyclopaedia* (“Logic”), 221 add.

sink back into it". I suggest there is an unmistakable sexual reference here. Each one of us, anyone whatever, as person, is the result of what is ideally a sexual transport, erotic or of love, *eros*.⁶ The implication is that it is from that, this mediating of self with self, that we "sink back". *That*, in other words, *represents* immortality as ideal, which is no limitation since it is the condition of the Idea itself. That is, the sense here is opposite to that in which the finite is declared to be ideal and yet both are the same. *Even* the finite is ideal, says Hegel (*Enc.95*). It is thus more than itself abstractly posited. Here, with Hegel, we restore in a measure, the role of the parents, and hence of sex, of the erotic, in the generation of spirit, absolute as itself initiating the process as its own method and order. To understand it fully we must confront erotic sexuality fair and square, the fact, for example, that auto-eroticism is its natural ground-form, before self is first found in its concrete maturity in the other, in others. It, sexuality, as thus many-faceted, takes its place as constitutive component of philosophy's first inchoate musings and indeed later development towards and fusion with the wisdom it loves, "mediating itself with itself" in that union of attraction and repulsion Hegel finds in ancient Atomism.

Under absolute idealism these considerations do not return us to the traducianism combated by Augustine and others, of the individual "soul" being handed down from the parents, who thus have absolute rights over their child, *instead of* coming from the Absolute itself, "from outside" (Aristotle). Rather, "I and my father are one" or, in a reversal of perspective, I am "no better" than my father, i.e. after all (this is the experience of life as lived).

So, Hegel continues:

The real result, however, of the process of life, in the point of its notion, is to merge and overcome that immediacy with which the idea, in the shape of life, is still beset.

Note he says this is the *result* of the process of Kind, i.e. of *our* human kind, we have just analysed. We recognise here the background of

⁶ Even if one day we shall have to accommodate, as we do now in idea, the fact of *cloned* people, as the mediator of mediators is traditionally put as a Marian clone, then in a Hegelian perspective this joyous circumstance will remain actual, as taking in the closeness in identity in difference of the cloned with his prototype, so to say. We simply cannot judge whether he or she will have been initially deprived or the contrary, ignoring now the real possibility of exploitation of such clones and even their production itself for this purpose, as explored in Ishiguru's negative novel imagining this theme.

philosophical or absolute idealism. It is not wrong to mark the background thus as proper to philosophy. Hegel himself “concedes” that philosophy is esoteric. It is not, as is religion, “for all men” (including philosophers).⁷ One might perhaps say the same of theology and this might be a pointer towards the eventual return of theology from its self-differentiation. For Aristotle the term was synonymous with metaphysics in its highest development. So Hegel took up the task, implicit in faith itself, of developing those earnestly repeated, not to say parroted, representations handed down in prophetic tradition. Analytical understanding had ordered them, according to its lights, in theology, working at best though speculatively but with figurative and metaphorical material. What remained to be done was for speculative reason itself to uncover, to discover, this whole scheme, the seamless garment, in its own truth and essence. This, Hegel remarks, “means very much the same as what, in special connexion with religious experience and doctrines, used to be called mysticism... the reason-world may equally be styled mystical”. The term is used, “not however because thought cannot both reach and comprehend it, but merely because it lies beyond the compass of understanding” or what he calls “abstract thinking”.⁸

One might ask, are the natural or finite sciences esoteric in this or an analogous sense? Are they still included in philosophy therefore, as the indiscriminate awarding of doctorates in or of philosophy⁹ might suggest. Awareness of the difference is also expressed as that drawn between the exact and the liberal sciences, such that philosophy, as infinite, can have no finitely technical (esoteric?) terminology. Philosophy is indeed free (*liber*) but this distinction can be misused to clip philosophy’s wings in favour of theology, though this, we noted, is not itself faith. Yet as speculative thought philosophy signals even a kind of return to the fluidity and greater freedom of immediate speech, surpassing it “at its own game”, so to say. “Unreasoned belief” is the first mode of “the true reason-

⁷ Cf. *Enc.* (“Philosophy of Spirit”), 573, final sentence: “The esoteric study of God and identity, as of cognitions, and notions, is philosophy itself.” He says earlier, at 573, as we noted: “religion is the truth for all men” (thus himself emphasising its universality). Philosophy, however, he claims, must, to be true to its own self, perfect or accomplish religion, in a philosophical *Gottesdienst*. Much turns here on how he “thematizes” the concept of revelation (*Phenomenology of Mind*, penultimate chapter), freeing it from thoughtless attributions of an abstractly finite externality. “Inward and Outward are identified” (*Enc.* 138).

⁸ *Enc.* (“Logic”) 82 add.

⁹ See our “The Position of Philosophy in a University Curriculum”, *The South African Journal of Philosophy*, 1991, 10(4), pp. 111-114.

world".¹⁰ Here is the analogy¹¹ with mysticism, defensible as the normal development of faith through the "gifts of the Spirit", reckoned as universally offered.¹² Philosophy's account of itself perfects or accomplishes this teaching, veiled under a narrative or popularly finite mode of representation of an intrinsically necessary development of reason as gifts, grace, corresponding to an original Fall (from grace) viewed historically. The notion of gift, *donum*, itself is, rather, thematised or "sublated" (*aufgehoben*). The saying "It is in giving that we receive", or are given to, teaches the same speculative lesson. Religion, Hegel affirms, "must come first" and here the rationalist dilemma of fideism or enlightenment is overcome. It is however no more than religion's own distinction between milk for babies (though milk remains salutary in adult life) and the true meat of spiritual understanding. If milk should cease to be available then no one would grow up. In this, however, one does not cancel but ever more fulfils those first promises. The Voltairean "infamy" is parasitic upon this deeper truth as ever falling short of it, in theory or practice indifferently.

Explaining further this "real result... of the process of life in the point of its notion" Hegel says the idea of life itself, this idea, "throws off" "this first immediacy as a whole". It is itself exposed as unreal abstraction rather than it being the case that we merely go forward to something more abstract. Thus life "comes to itself, to its truth". Death, moreover, as a fact of experience, of "nature", is itself phenomenal, as not showing its true face. "The death of merely immediate and individual vitality is the 'procession' of spirit".¹³ *Mors est ianua vitae*. This of course will hardly console a cat and there seems at this point little differentiation between a Teilhardian upward evolutionism and any individual immortality.

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¹⁰ *Ibid.* 82 add.

¹¹ Is it only analogy? McTaggart called Hegel "a mystical philosopher", suggesting he was "more mystical than he himself realised". This judgment, though, bears upon mysticism as much as it does upon Hegel, as he shows at 82, the addition or *Zusatz*, final paragraph. "Speculative truth... means very much the same as... Mysticism." The activity or praxis, namely, is that of "the Concept", which is Reason, itself.

¹² For an explicitly Catholic defence of this view compare David Knowles, *What is Mysticism?* Sheed and Ward Ltd., London and Sydney 1967, esp. ch. V: "Are there Two Ways to the Perfect Christian Life?"

¹³ *Ibid.* 222.

Regarding the Western commitment to the reality of matter, papally sponsored in the “Albigensian Crusade”, we can define this as indeed a commitment to the reality, but not to the materiality, of matter. Thus in the Hegelian philosophy Nature is truly or “spiritually” viewed as Idea and not as *natura materialiter spectata*.¹⁴

The Idea... is Perception or Intuition, and the percipient Idea is Nature. But as intuition the idea is, through an external ‘reflection’, invested with the one-sided characteristic of immediacy, or of negation. (*Enc.244*)

This is Hegel’s philosophical account of what is represented in faith and dogma as “creation” on the model of finite manufacture, paradoxically neutralised in the next breath by the equivocal phrase, “out of nothing”. In fact “out of” cannot belong to the concept of absolute thought. Already Aquinas made clear that this could only be by absolute knowing (cognition) as itself cause of its object, *verbum cordis* (i.e. concept) indeed. The Absolute knows “only” its own idea(s). For in this idea it, the Idea, knows all its own fugitive and ceaseless reflections, called “imitations”, their actual possibility, undeniable as included in the infinite and hence self-knowing Idea. Finite knowing by “intentional” ideas is the Idea’s representation, in nature, of its infinity as a preliminary moment of its all-comprehensive self-knowledge. *We* stand on the threshold (limen) merely, while the unfinite and hence absolute is itself ultimately the Idea having itself as Object. *Seen apart* from the Absolute, held abstract, the creation *out of* nothing remains nothing, as it is “made of” nothing. “In God we live and move and have our being.”

So in Nature too the Idea perceives itself. Nature is a moment or phase of its free self-alienation in otherness. This is also known only within itself, however. “This also is thou, neither is this thou.” This is Hegel’s famous philosophy of contradiction. It is also the routine staple of mystical writings and the consequent “ascetic theology”, though the latter will always philosophically “drag its feet”. Theology too though, ultimately, can live only “in God”.

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¹⁴ Cf. I. Kant, *Critique of pure Reason*, §26, cited in the note to W. Wallace’s translation of the final paragraph 244 of the *Encyclopaedia* (“The Logic of Hegel”, note to p.379).

We should note the equation above of immediacy and negation.¹⁵ In Hegel's "Doctrine of Essence" (the middle section of the *Logic of the Encyclopaedia*) all immediacy, e.g. of being, is consistently denied. The real and the true is essentially the opposite of the apparent. In this sense "He that has seen me has seen the Father". Without respect, or disrespect, for persons we may cite the line, "A fool sees not the same tree as the wise man sees." Where then is the tree, the realist or substance-philosopher will ask. The tree is not the true, we reply, citing, in opposition to Moore's confident "Here are two hands", Newman's saying he is more certain of the truth of God "than that I have hands and feet".¹⁶ Language was not "going on holiday" there but in deadly earnest, as when Wittgenstein says: "The world is everything that is the case." For the factual is an idealist notion, ultimately placing truth, "word", above being. Wittgenstein's phrase means, in itself at least, that everything "is thought", predicated even, whether this be taken as identification or as passive verb-form indifferently. So the great realists end by asserting "the truth of things", that *omne ens est verum*, as condition, in a certain consequent priority, for being *ens*.¹⁷ Being is not absolutely first, then, but the first that is being thought, i.e. "thought", *quod cadit in mentem* (Aquinas). Can it be applied then to what is *quodammodo omnia*, the soul or mind? "We shall see

¹⁵ It parallels the Pauline saying that "the things which are seen" are not eternal. But, we might well exclaim, and this is Hegel's own characterisation of the speculative: as if we hadn't known that! "The contrary of this rigidity is the characteristic of all Speculative truth" (*Enc.*, EL, 32).

¹⁶ Newman flourished before "the Thomist revival", reflected in a papal imposition. In "beatifying" him today the Papacy effectively acknowledges the limitations and consequent inherent contradiction latent (or patent) in the former or any mere policy-stroke. We are essentially "on the move". Hence all things can be forgiven, ourselves first, and even the denial of this. One can, must, even forgive the failure to forgive (oneself). For in endless time "whatever can happen does happen". Each one of us, for example, but Jews first (as St. Paul liked to say), will kill six million Jews or more, or "just the one" (*ecce homo*). They, as much as or more than the Greeks, were, in that one man as much as anywhere, "the chosen people of reason" (Maritain on the Greeks). In general, reason teaches, "I am you" (Daniel Kolak, *I am You*, Springer, New York 2004).

¹⁷ If philosophers will not learn from James Joyce the latter will have laboured in vain. In fact here too art, the "first" or most immediate "form of absolute spirit", "held up a mirror" to that particular natural phenomenon which is philosophising. Again, if the statement form, as composite, is finite and "Everything finite is false" then the difficulty this statement might present for "infallible statements" is first visited upon itself.

that... existence is by no means a merely positive term, but one which is too low for the Absolute Idea, and unworthy of God".¹⁸

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So any phenomenon too is thus far, like sparrows or individual head-hairs, real in its individuality. In this way "the individual is the universal". If one has two cats this is more apparent than with just one, as it were abstractly individual, animal. Their "personality" is inseparable from their mutual and habitual relation. Thus "the principle of personality is universality".¹⁹

And when the individual 'I', or in other words personality, is under discussion – not the 'I' of experience, or a single private person – above all, when the personality of God is before us, we are speaking of personality unalloyed, - of a personality in its own nature universal. Such personality is a thought...²⁰

The establishment of this truth removes the appearance of a dilemma between Teilhardian evolutionism and individual immortality, mentioned above. McTaggart, in his account of immortality, though written as exposition of Hegel, fights shy of this conclusion. He holds to the immediate conception of personal individuality, as essential to any genuine belief in immortality²¹, seeming not to notice that this goes against the import of Hegel's main theses. According to these the "abstractly" individual I, always wishing to "mean" things that can't be said, is indeed phenomenal, not the true I. This is easily understood from a religious background and the atheist McTaggart is maybe handicapped here. Augustine had long ago declared that "There is one closer to me than I am to myself" and this truly speculative pronouncement is merely in line with genuine New Testament doctrine as represented by Paul (e.g. "I live but not I") and John (e.g. "I in them and they in me"), as well as by the

¹⁸ Hegel, *Enc.* ("Logic") 28add., in criticism of the "finite" thinking of "the old metaphysical system" "as it subsisted among us previous to the philosophy of Kant", whom, however, Hegel criticises as roundly as does any neoscholastic (*Enc.* 40-60, "The Critical Philosophy").

¹⁹ Hegel, *Enc.* 163.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 63. Cp. 20.

²¹ He and the late Peter Geach are at one on this. See the chapter "Immortality" in the latter's *God and the Soul*, RKP London, 1969. The realism essential to their arguments is either naïve or dogmatic, if these are distinguishable.

synoptic evangelists (e.g. “Inasmuch as you did it to the least of these you did it unto me”).

There is no call to doubt the continuity, or substantive identity, in difference, of such absolute self-consciousness, with what we essentially are now, to whatever degree we realise the latter. In fact, despite his reservations, McTaggart pretty well describes how this turns out on the Hegelian model of thought. Such immortality is here represented as, while natural, exactly corresponding to what in Christianity is represented as the supernatural grace of sharing the divine life. Essentially involved is a critique of immediate present or temporal consciousness, as carried out in *The Phenomenology of Mind*, and of how we represent it, as carried out in Hegel’s “Doctrine of Essence” in his two expositions of logic, twice, that is to say.

Such immortality, McTaggart argues, on Hegelian premises, is a requirement of reason, requiring as its own foundation that reality, “the world”, be rational. It would not be rational for reason’s own foundation in the universal (ultimately the subject or “I”) to be denied as impossible or even not certain of fulfilment, and this in a sense, as Hegel particularly brings out, even at present or always (in his account of “realised end”), rather than in some “otherworldly” future specifically.²² We see here an instance of the classical Argument from Natural Desire, that “nature does nothing in vain”. That there is such a desire rests upon reason’s universality as being the “principle of personality”, again. In Hegel’s logic Will is the highest category of Cognition (succeeding upon “cognition proper”) prior to the absolute idea itself.²³ But we should rather say that this argument is here itself shown to be but an aspect or corollary of the more general Ontological Argument, which is itself an undifferentiated pre-apprehension, wherever it occurs, of Hegel’s logic as a systematic whole.

Although we suggested McTaggart might have been handicapped by atheism, by lack of practice in meditating on the religious sources, maybe, yet in related respects his vision of immortality is all the more powerfully presented. He argues indeed that it is not compatible with a supreme personal being, as this would make each one of us contingently dependent

²² To such realised eschatology corresponds the prophetic “To them that have shall be given”.

²³ In the earlier Greater Logic, *The Science of Logic*, the Good, rather than Will, had named this category. So, at *Enc.* 233, Hegel opens discussion of “Volition” by speaking of the Good’s own “impulse towards self-realisation”, *diffusivum sui* the Neo-Platonists had said. Every human action seeks the good, Aristotle and later Aquinas affirmed.

upon such a supreme will for existence. For McTaggart the immortals are necessary, without beginning or end. Each of them has the unity of all within him or her, though the sexual or any absolute difference would be and is an identity, and the unity could not be conceived abstracted from that. It cannot, that is to say, be conceived apart from me or you or any such subject, if we accept or carry through the identification of such subjectivity with ourselves, individual in its concrete universality.

The truth is that insofar as we might be contingently dependent upon such an absolute will the latter is shown to be our own true will, the only one that can survive the ruin of finitude. This is what the doctrine of the *lumen gloriae*, in “beatific vision”, shows without saying so. “Whom ye worship in ignorance, him therefore declare I unto you.” The identity of God with the self can be called either atheism or the highest theism indifferently²⁴. Of Hegel’s view McTaggart writes:

We have his explicit statement that immortality is to be ascribed to the self. But – rather illogically – he seems never to have considered the individual persons as of much importance.²⁵

The “suspicion” is aroused, he says, that Hegel saw human persons as important only for the “display” (manifestation) of the Absolute Idea. We “know” we are each such persons, he adds, just as present consciousness represents it, it almost seems he means. McTaggart seems to fall back here upon an either/or dilemma, which it is the very nub of the Hegelian philosophy to deny or, rather, transcend. As Eckhart had said, and as Hegel quotes with approval, if God did not exist I would not exist but, equally, if I did not exist God would not exist. This is self-consciousness, as explored by the physicist Schrödinger and others:

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

²⁴ This was definitively established in the nineteenth century, to the merely immediate or temporary dismay of “the religious party”, by one named, with strange significance, the “brook of fire”, Feuerbach. Cf. Hebrews: “Our God is a consuming fire”, or Nijinsky’s Diaries: “God is fire in the head”, i.e. the all-consuming.

²⁵ J.M.E. McTaggart, *Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology* (Cambridge University Press, 1901), §5.

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...²⁶

McTaggart, however, continues, putting the objections before going on to make explicit what he mostly considers merely implicit in Hegel's expositions:

the doctrine of the Absolute Idea teaches us that all reality is spirit... this spirit is necessarily differentiated. Each... not being the whole... will be finite... It might be held that spirit was continually taking fresh shapes... and that each differentiation was temporary, though the succession... was eternal. And even if it were established that spirit possessed eternal differentiations, the philosophising human being would still have to determine whether he himself and other human beings... were among these eternal differentiations.²⁷

Being, however, “has no parts”, as Parmenides had said and as we find Schrödinger vindicating. So, in Hegel's Logic, the Part-Whole correlation is found to be a finite moment in the self-understanding of the Absolute which transcends it, as McTaggart himself will go on to show. So, it follows, each person, as principled universality, is an absolute End, realised as Manifestation itself, there being necessarily and uniquely just one such end, as worked out in the chapter on “Revealed Religion” in Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Mind*. The Kantian ethics in its final conclusions (the “Kingdom of Ends”) is here fulfilled, in a “unity of philosophical experience” more profound than Gilson seems to have glimpsed in his book of that title.

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The discovery or positing of immortality transforms or entails sublation of the phenomenal view of death. Death, Wittgenstein shows in his *Tractatus* (1918), is not part of experience but its end. The end of time cannot itself be treated temporally. The “passing away” is not a going on but a going out of time. Such an exit, however, cannot be a “going” anywhere, but is rather a being struck dead. Such a finality, or rather finitude, belongs

²⁶ Kolac: *op. cit.*, p. xv (“Preliminary Acknowledgements”).

²⁷ McTaggart: *op. cit.* §8.

though to each moment of time. Not merely do we “die daily”. We die as we live. “All that lives must die”, but in each and every living or *lived* “moment”. Not only so, but “if one dies all die” and today is tomorrow. Now death, as the realising or embodiment of this, is “the process of spirit”, in Hegel’s words. This process is dialectical, is our knowledge of the Idea as absolute, as the concept. It survives its own dissolution as being equally in its other, as moment. Nature, that is, is itself death. So death is not that apparent dissolution or unmaking, but self-alienation itself not merely resolved but cancelled and accomplished in one in unity of spirit. Death and resurrection, Hegel claims, are the same. The figure of resurrection shows this phenomenally. Unless one dies one does not flourish. In dying we are born to “eternal life” or, less figuratively, true blessedness, also called love (*Enc.* 159), named from experience maybe but in itself the absolute, to which the experience “more or less” corresponds. “To them that have shall be given”, since this, the “faith” in it, is the having of it. As dying they “live”. It is self-consciousness, the Idea in its absolute subjectivity. The having is itself a consciousness absorbed or transcended in self-consciousness. The latter is non-alienable and hence freedom. As such it is reason’s own upward leap in which “I lay down my life of myself”. An “objective” or individual mediator would be, would not lack, this final subjectivity, by this reasoning. This explains, too, why Hegel says that thinking is itself blessedness (*Enc.* 159). Everything concrete, conversely, is individual. His or her consciousness will be built up, therefore, in reverse correspondence, necessarily, from the individual units, parts outside parts, of spatio-temporal nature, the “mechanical”. Thus it is that this individual consciousness will not be other than its other, that the principle of incarnation over-runs and absorbs all. The absolute simply is the self-incarnating, is nature in nature’s “fullness of time”, which thus absorbs and cancels all time.

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Explanation, like death, is superseded in immortality. In Logic the analytic method is absorbed in the synthetic. Just as Goethe, say, saw the transcendence of explanation, of pulling apart and killing, in poetry, so religion as ecstatic belief grew to see itself as transcending philosophy. Philosophy itself, however, is conscious of an inherent duty to complete the insights of religion in its own final *Gottesdienst*, or absolute cult. This may not leave even the holy name of God unchanged. “Whom you worship in ignorance, him declare I unto you.” The Apostle’s words equally support both moments. Hence Hegel calls Christianity “the

absolute religion". He is really disclosing its inward sublation of the religious moment. This is his interpretation of its significance. But the whole intention of philosophy, he makes clear, is to sublimate the particular in the universal, the latter being likewise only realised in the former as producing it or the whole system indifferently in its self-constitutive act of self-concretisation. For in itself or concretely the universal is absolute subjectivity, finding itself entirely or without limit intensively in every particular.

As realised end, however, philosophy supersedes explanation in terms of causes. Causes can be nothing other than dialectical moments vanishing in dialectic's necessary self-transcendence. In this sense the thought of God, the Absolute, in its very conception is the annihilative transcendence of the finite "world". "The non-being of the finite is the being of the infinite". Causes, that is, cannot after all be separated from reasons while reasons are each and all identical with reason, the Concept having no parts. In the end philosophy leaves everything as it was before, which is now, however, known. Thus philosophy leaves untouched, unaltered, the credal conviction that "we shall rise again with our bodies". It simply brings out what this, taken as true, has to mean, a work begun by St. Paul, for example, when he wrote (if it was he), "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body" or, still more, when he described the constitutive movement of the Spirit in the believer as one of "interpreting spiritual things spiritually", in action as in thought or words (speech *acts*).

Scripture expresses these conclusions fully, even "before" it represents them as exemplified and fulfilled in the destiny of "the man" called "true God and true man", the epithet "true" transforming both correlates. It says, "I shall not die but live", "Though he slay me yet will I trust him", "The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God: in the eyes of the wicked they seem to have died", "One day in thy courts is better than a thousand", while Jeremiah speaks of the "time" when all shall "know the Lord". This "time" is reason itself. Later St. Paul will say "Even if we have known Christ after the flesh we know him so no more." This may have been originally an admonishment to his apostolic brethren, as himself "one born out of due time", i.e. later, but the saying applies to ourselves equally, to our knowledge of Christ or of ourselves indifferently. The subject, Aristotle had established at *Metaphysics* VII and following, is not a union, impossibly, of spirit and the flesh representing or figuring it. Man is not a union of soul and body. Hence man is not soul but spirit, identifiable with his specifying or "last" (final) difference. This anthropology, which was also in a measure Augustine's, undercuts the very possibility of Docetism and similar dualistic errors. Man, whether redeeming or redeemed, "has

become”, is, that is to say, living spirit. Here too we see the mutual sublation of the categories of cause and effect. History is itself what it brings forth in self-transcendence and so, again, “I shall not die but live”, since God, that is to say reason or absolute subjectivity, is not “of the dead but of the living”. Rather, in the “wondrous combat” of death and life, actually a conceptual or dialectical confrontation, a third arises, absolute knowledge. “This is eternal life, to know God...” It is also, or *ipso facto*, reason’s “capacity” to know and thus “embrace” the pain of its own non-being, of which Hegel speaks. “He endured the cross, despising the shame”. Of one “event” there are many “pictures” and there can even be a “canonical” one, as there are laws, themselves reckoned by Hegel as “pictures”. The “self-relation of the phenomenon is completely specified” or, as we say, necessary, as the **Law of the Phenomenon**, a logical category (*Enc.*133). The “so-called Laws of Thought”, by contrast, are “set aside” by “the true Identity, which contains Being and its characteristics entirely transfigured in it”, self-identity being simultaneously distinction (*Enc.*115 & add.).

So one contemplates the various televised representations of the “emergence” of the living things of experience in what is a succession of causes. Such explanation, namely, is pre-supposed to our immediate awareness of our selves as temporal beings, in an objectification not “yet” become self-awareness. Such an explanation there must be, in such a case. What remains is to find or identify it, merely. The abstractly religious mistake is to sidestep this moment without absorbing it. If, however, absolute spirit, of which religion is a transitional form, should thus absorb it then the abstract moments of cause and effect pass through reciprocity into transformed absorption in the Idea. “All nature is akin and the soul has learned everything.” Thus Plato, in the *Meno*, anticipated the whole of Hegel’s (systematic) thought and ours.

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The distinction between natural and supernaturally beatific immortality is rational but not real, as a scholastic might say. Immortal beings as such possess that unity in intimacy that Aquinas was content to call friendship, though it is in that case a friendship consummated not merely in marriage but in identity, traditionally called “spiritual marriage”. So when Augustine says, so finely, “You were with me but I was not with you” he does not instantiate the distinction in reality but affirms its unreality, the falsity of his separately finite being. Or, his consciousness was not self-consciousness. One cannot be a self in abstract individual separateness.

This appears first even biologically. The living individual, which “comports itself as intrinsically subject and notion”, through a process of assimilating its external objectivity “puts the character of reality into itself”, i.e. dialectically, becoming “implicitly a **Kind**, with essential universality of nature” (*Enc.* 220). Then, as the individual becomes kind, so the individual kinds are assimilated to the “universal of universals”, I, subject, the Idea.

This, then, the reference to species, is clearly dialectical and not a hastily stuffed in piece of empiricism. The living individual *is put*, by thought, that is, since it does not merely “put” itself, as “mediated and generated”. The implication is that the second term here represents or exemplifies the former. Immediate life thus is absorbed, superseded indeed, as it “sinks in the superior power” of the universality to which the individual first stood in a negative or, in representation again, hostile attitude. “The living being... is a contradiction”, Hegel affirms, as being both universal and individual, just as in the previous section, “The Subjective Notion”, the individual was syllogised away as being identified with the universal and hence no longer abstract. Therefore, at the phenomenal level (“the life I live now” is not my life: St. Paul) it dies, necessarily. That is, it is “the idea of life”, the “idea immediate” in fact, that “has thrown off... this first immediacy as a whole”. The “free Kind” it itself still only represents as “self-subsistent” is in fact “the ‘procession’ of spirit”. What it thus throws off is its self and this, doing this, in religious representation, is the true or eternal life. Our immediate apprehension is thus “scientifically” corrected or sublated, in variation of the old Cartesian theme, that of modern science. “Oh life that is no life at all”. The mystic, St. Teresa, speaks accurately here, echoing the earlier “I live, yet not I.” This pronoun stands as naming “the universal of universals”, Hegel declares. Still, “What’s in a name?” It is not thought or “the” thought as such, but something upon which the plurality of languages is mere froth in the eyes of “ungrateful spirit”.

If we murder we intend absolute death, of God and of ourselves too. The Christian narrative would show this or set it forth. God *qua* absolute, however, can neither be killed nor suffer. In speaking of “the death of God” Hegel does not mean to deny this. The term “God” is a representation, less than philosophical, though we may continue to employ it for our immediate apprehension of the Absolute. God as all, infinite (*Deus meus et omnia*), has no relation to the fictively external God. True religion, though continuing to use objectifying language, sees right through it. That is why the “prayer of St. Francis” goes on to say “It is in loving that we are loved” and so on. God is approached by our own

imitation of him, the leap “from shadows to reality” which philosophy, reason, typifies as its very exemplar. *Nous* has “set all in order” (Anaxagoras) as *nous* is itself all and all order, therefore. This is Aristotle’s final position in his *Metaphysics* and the utter converse of “pantheism”, just by the way. Universality, “the principle of personality”, is the absolute principle, as I am or is, as naming personality (the secondary or tertiary persons, like the derivative “cases” of noun or pronoun, are “oblique”), “the universal of universals” (Hegel).

Here we have come home, reached base, recovered what we always knew, as knowledge knows itself, absolutely. Self is the field where the treasure is hidden, our own primal garden we first traverse the world to find again. So in leaving ourselves behind we were not ourselves, as Hamlet tried to explain to Laertes when asking forgiveness.

The Absolute must be one, the One, in differentiation, however, which, once posited, must be infinite. This is how Trinitarian thought must be understood, Hegel seems to say, i.e. not “materially”. “It is useless to count.” Aquinas had said the same: *Numeri non ponuntur in divinis*. They are not “put”, not *gesetzt* or posited. This leads Hegel, however, to posit, experiment with, ideas of a Quaternity or Quinity. The specifically Trinitarian, all the same, is grounded in the triple nature of syllogistic reasoning, which it itself finds and which, *qua* reason, is nothing other than identity in difference. Nor, thus explained, even “theologically”, is it a specifically or exclusively religious concept. Reason, that is, is the absolute sense of the term “absolute”. Reason therefore is person, as principled universality, and an infinite unity of persons. Infinite unity is, necessarily, infinite plurality, the one hundred and forty four thousand of Scripture. Religion, that is, confirms philosophy in the same act as philosophy confirms religion. This is, again, the sublation of explanation in reciprocity²⁸ that we mentioned.

The Trinity, it follows, does not merely figure but is, without self-reduction, Mind’s necessary identity of form and content, as Mind, spirit, is the Trinity indifferently, though as necessary they both must transcend all thought of structure or composition, in freedom. Each of the persons is God, is absolute, as theology, interpreting faith, affirms. This is, though, the freedom that mind itself reflects and even *represents*. Logic, method, order, subtends what sustains and is it. Yet freedom as such is freedom from composition, simplicity, as (free) will is itself cognitive, rational, and not “indifferent”, but mind’s own inclination to itself in or as (self-) love.

²⁸ Catherine Malabou, in her *The Future of Hegel*, refers to this as a conceptual “plasticity”. The term is itself Hegelian, however.

Thus the Absolute cannot be said to *find itself*, contingently, in triplicity, as it were anteriorly. Simplicity is triplicity, as identity, Hegel states in the discussion of good and evil in *The Phenomenology of Mind*, is difference. God “decrees” the “laws of logic” or he is such a law, indifferently. This has consequences for our own styles of thinking. Reason, however, has here turned out to be proto-instance of love, the affinity of all beings with one another or, more simply, affinity as such (*Enc.* 159). Affinity arises under Chemism (the category) but is most immediately represented under Life as “of the sexes” (*Enc.*220). This universal affinity first gets represented as the shout of joy of the “sons of God”, itself necessitating the creation, upon which it is consequent, of “all nature” as “akin” (cf. Plato, *Meno*) in this affinity, which is Aquinas’s analogy of being, that each thing is equally its self, is equal in its being itself, and thus is all things or all being, as with Parmenides (being is not divided), though Parmenides simply denied our perceived plurality which Hegel “sublates”. This is the foundation, too, of McTaggart’s perfect unity, interpreting Hegel, of all with all in immortality. The Absolute is a shout as much as it is “a still small voice”, or anything. “O anything of nothing first create!” exclaims Shakespeare, again, in person of Romeo speaking of love, “whose view is muffled still”, yet “without eyes find(s) pathways to its will”, surely a picture of the Hegelian “cunning of reason”. Thus, of *any* “constituent element” of “the Notion” we affirm: “This also is thou, neither is this thou”. Compare and confer with Hegel at *Enc.* 160f. He is a faithful witness to tradition merely. In this lies his great originality. So, as he, or another, summed up, “Only one man understood me, and he didn’t understand me.” To understand the other one must be that other and this, it has been shown, is what is absolute, as it is the Absolute. “I am you”, so he that sees me sees you. The “one man” of the above saying disappears, is engulfed in the restless “flow” of understanding itself.

It was in fact inevitable that what was first taken as a unique exemplar should be thus generalised, as the more noble (*gnobilis*, knowable), once understood, replaces the less noble, this being the principle of progress in thought as anywhere else, to put new wine in new bottles. What we are analysing, in the end, is time itself. The end of time is time itself realised and hence “realised end” (Hegel’s phrase, *Enc.*210) too, ever-present, itself “the beginning”.

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1. The at least habitual immediate knowledge of God is essential to the human intellect in that nothing can be known without it, for it is the intellectual light itself.

2. *Esse commune* is the divine *esse* (by inclusion, though, and not by reduction of the latter: see our comment, later in this chapter).
3. Universals in themselves are not really distinct from God.
4. The innate knowledge of God as simply being implicitly involves all other knowledge *eminenti modo*.²⁹

These four propositions are not as such a summary of what we have written above, though they might easily seem to fit such a description. In fact they are among seven propositions condemned by the Roman Holy Office, in 1861, as “unsafe for teaching” (*tuto tradi non possunt*). That is, they are not here declared to be false, in this clash of the esoteric and the exoteric. The consequent alarm, however, can be judged a major cause of the pastorally sponsored revival of an older philosophical moment, Aristotelian Thomism, a few years later, judged, by some, “sufficient for the needs of the faithful” or, more immediately, in harmony with “correct” method in theology. This decidedly finite notion of method has no connection with the Speculative Method disclosed in *and as* Hegel’s thought, as “not an extraneous form, but the soul and notion of the content”. The idea is a “systematic totality which is only one idea, of which the several elements are each implicitly the idea” (*Enc.* 242, for example freedom. So thus far philosophy and this kind of finite theology are not comparable or on a par at all. As for the faithful, their needs, their “great desires”, will lead them ever closer to this form of thinking, this method, one with “the mystical” (*Enc.* 82 add.), of which he insists that we *can* speak and that logic as speculative demands of us that we speak, if only to make clear the relative inability of speech, as always “one-sided” or even “false”, even when “correct”, to do so. So there is here coincidence in difference with the close of the Wittgensteinian³⁰ *Tractatus*.

The movement of true philosophy, however, cannot be thus held back by such finite needs, as can be seen in the birth and spread of Christianity itself, its victory over the ancient imperial world and those attacking it. At this point that movement took shape in Italy and other places as Ontologism, as this particular identification with and of Hegel’s legacy became known as. As a recognition of the harmony with and correct

²⁹ For the original seven texts, freely translated here and to which I have added a parenthesis, see H. Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, Herder, Freiburg 1947, §1659-1665, pp. 465-6.

³⁰ In German this would be *wittgensteinsche* with a small initial letter, thus deferring better to the supra-individual sweep of the inward movement of philosophy as reflected historically, rather than pitting one abstract individual against another. Self-consciousness rubs out the abstract individual from which it ascends merely dialectically and hence “ungratefully”.

exposition of Christian tradition in Hegel's thought ontologism's main propagator, V. Gioberti, was a friend of and major influence upon Pio Nono, pope, while expressions typifying ontologism abound in such orthodox contemporaries as Orestes Brownson, Newman or Rosmini, two of whom have now been "raised to the altars" of the Catholic Church as "saints".

What is felt to be at stake, though this is not always acknowledged, is the long-lived distinction between nature and the supernatural, as it is expressed, while upon this the survival of an abstractly separate clerical order, as we now have it, is felt to depend. "No doctrine no dean." Such was Disraeli's comment in conversation with the Anglican Dean Inge, a mystic of absolute idealist stamp or an absolute idealist, simply, who "played down" doctrinal definitions.

The word translated above as "taught", teaching, is, again, *tradi*, from which *traditio*, tradition, derives, *tradere* meaning to hand down. What is handed down develops in its new reception. So this too is handed down and eventually thematised, e.g. as "development of doctrine". So, it follows, development too develops, without end and without loss. As carnivores we continue to drink milk with our meat, the better to digest it, we do not leave off reciting the "Our Father", say.

The substantial truth of the four propositions has been exhaustively canvassed in this present and previous work of ours taken together. The truth of what may *not* be safely handed down, however, poses a problem for religion, as a relativisation or further step foreign to its absoluteness. The problem is not new, however. It arises at every stage of Israel's history, Old and New, to be transcended first by prophecy and then by the transcendence of prophecy itself by self-conscious reason or, as well say, absolute self-revelation. We might cite the Gospel protagonist's repeated confounding of tradition's upholders,

In the above propositions all and everyone is gathered together into one. The One is the truth of the Many. This was and is the Pauline vision of, for example, the *Letter to the Ephesians*.³¹ That the one is the truth of the many is itself the truth of philosophy, in Parmenides, Heracleitus, Anaxagoras or Plato. Thus Aristotle arrives at the one infinite or universal substance, in the *Metaphysics* through books IV, VII to IX and XII. This is then reflected, or its meaning is disclosed, in the Israelitic apotheosis (the "remnant" as one person) which is Christianity, reflecting back again the eternal, and not merely perennial, vision, in Plotinus, Augustine, Eriugena,

³¹ This work is Pauline in essence, whether or not in authorship. This, too, is the sense in which we can accept Nietzsche's subtle analysis of the lastborn apostle as "the first Christian".

Anselm, Aquinas, Spinoza, Leibniz, Hegel, McTaggart and beyond, besides being found in the traditions, philosophical or prophetic, of “other” peoples, “not of this fold” at first blush at least. Now the other of self, Hegel taught, is the same as self. This truth is the foundation of thought and thinking, as it is of religion. “I and my Father are one.” “He that sees me sees my Father.”

This had first to be realised in and by just one. In the realising of it is realised, also actively, the necessary eternity of all in the Idea. It, truth, is, that is to say, accomplished. Contingent rational being is not thinkable, since reason consumes all else, in *esse* or *posse* indifferently, in its fire. “Even if I knew I were damned I would thank God for my creation”, G. K. Chesterton recalls, we noted, his doubtless Protestant grandfather as saying. This, the mind of *Job*, is indeed “invincible”, being itself the way of and to salvation. The way is the destination, the means the end realised, again. Thus we speak of the road to somewhere being finally found, its last mile or end of that mile, just there. The speculative, that is, is very ordinary. Yet only absolute knowledge knows it, in knowing itself alone, and this is itself a speculative statement of precisely the speculative. In that alone “we live and move and have our being”, not in ourselves and yet it, the Idea, is in ourselves mutually or is self since we have no other being outside of such knowing and being known in one as absolute act, not mere activity but act. The appearance of a transient or vanishing life, the Idea immemorial only, we are urged, by the founding principle and universality of logic itself, to “hate” and deny inasmuch as it might be anything abstractly separate from this. Or, in the prophetic and “tensed” picture, “to him that has shall be given”. There, in universality, lies personality, i.e. this is not (abstract) universality personified merely but itself absolute. One becomes one person as we become “all one person” in that. Nothing less would serve, or “fill up” the Concept, the Idea. So, “God is love”. Let us use eyes and ears for this, if we have them. So the artist or *Dichter*, tensed like the prophet, has his character ask, “How can the gods see us face to face till we have faces?”

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As to the truth of the unsafe propositions cited, we might, without loss of humility, help the holy officials along a bit. That is, we do not deny what they will finally say, we may believe that finally and of necessity they, or the tradition or “way” they represent will say truth, will arrive as evr

arriving.³² But meanwhile everyone needs help. It's mutual. Those advancing these propositions at that time often appealed to Malebranche (1638-1715), who in turn had appealed to Augustine, who himself used the vocabulary of Platonism, transforming it in the process, particularly in his doctrine of "divine ideas" which Aquinas reaffirms.³³ This is so, even if the nineteenth century ontologists tended to see themselves as opposed to "the Christian peripatetics" gaining ground in their own time, belittling, as these tended to do, the Augustinian doctrine of "the divine light".

The universal, the necessary, the eternal, the immutable, without the intuition of which the contingent and the particular are inconceivable, and no syllogism is possible, are identically the divine being, the *ens necessarium et reale*, or God himself.³⁴

Brownson's reference to syllogistic here, the fusion of universal and absolute, recalls Hegel's treatment of it as "the doctrine of the subjective concept"³⁵, itself not separable from his identification of "I" as the "universal of universals", since upon this is grounded the further identification of universal and particular, whether in logic, *logica docens*, or in his general discernment of universality as itself "the principle of personality".

Brownson's account here, however, might seem, as formulated, to restrict the divine being or mind still to the logically or abstractly universal. In fact, in the sense in which every notion whatever gives place to the Absolute Idea as participating in it in an identity preserving it from the finitude of compositeness, mind is unrestricted. The individual is the universal and *vice versa*. "I am the way, the truth..." Hegel indeed means that such speculative utterance mirrors how we normally talk and how, therefore, we talk in religion or, indeed, poetry. It is the very opposite of "dogmatism", refusing to "maintain half-truths in their isolation".³⁶

This answers the charge of confusing universals and divine ideas, since it is precisely an account of the logical universal in terms of the divine or absolute Idea, like everything in Hegel's Logic, "greater" or "little". So to

³² Hence our attitude is finally the same as that of Georges van Riet in his epoch-making three-part study delivered at a Roman Thomist Congress in the 1960s and published in French in *Revue de métaphysique et morale* (Louvain) and in English in *Philosophy Today* (USA), entitled "The Problem of God in Hegel".

³³ Aquinas, *Summa theol.* Ia Q15 summarises the doctrine.

³⁴ Orestes Brownson, in *The Boston Quarterly Review*, October 1860.

³⁵ Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*: §163-193, or the corresponding account in *The Science of Logic*.

³⁶ *Enc.* 32, add.

oppose it with an unreflected or “immediate” armoury of the older logic of the schools is to beg the whole question in disrespect. As a matter of fact the “ontologist” Hegelian grasps very well “the historical problem of universals” and in grasping it sublates it towards a profounder account. It is anyhow ridiculously self-stultifying to assert here that pantheism, the utter opposite or contrary of Hegelian thought, is here being asserted after all.³⁷ Not pantheism (all things are God) but *acosmism* (i.e. no world), Hegel had commented in reference to Spinoza, himself adhering to while transcending the Leibnizian criticism of the latter.

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Augustine had identified the Platonic forms with the divine ideas, as he called them. But in no case need we accuse anyone of confusing “natural reason” and this “divine light”, which rather cancels and absorbs the former in its own transcendent reality. Nature, that is, is the Idea in alienation, so reason is not to be limited to the natural or to anything else. Reason, said Cicero, is divine, adding “and therefore law” (in *De legibus*).

Nor, however, need we go along with those taking the comparison of the divine light with the sun, in Plato or Augustine, to an extreme limit. Just as we do not see, cannot indeed look at the universally illuminating sun, so we do not see God or the divine essence in our normal acts of cognition, they argue, and none more thoroughly than St. Thomas. He explains that we “cannot see God in this life” because

our souls... have their being in corporeal matter, hence they cannot by nature know anything except what has its form in matter or what can be known through such things.³⁸

For ontologism, however,

Nothing remains (to avoid pantheism) but to admit that the soul has, by one and the same act, an intuition of God and itself.³⁹

This recalls Newman’s utterances on God and the self (“God and myself”) as the only inner realities. Newman also claimed to be more certain of the truth of God “than that I have hands and feet”. Again though, the two

³⁷ R. P. Phillips takes this short way with ontologism in his *Modern Thomistic Philosophy* (Sheed & Ward, London 1932).

³⁸ Aquinas: *Summa theol.* Ia 12, 11 ad 3um.

³⁹ Brownson: *loc. cit.*

approaches need not be mutually exclusive. The intellect may take its “material” from the senses, but it pounds it “ungratefully”, says Hegel, into what the senses can no longer recognise, since they are themselves annihilated in this process of “nullifying” the world, of which “the ontological argument” is the most “popular” representation. Spirit throws away the ladder whereby it ascends to itself, rather as, in religion, the Apostle enjoins, or simply states: “even if we have known Christ after the flesh we know him so no more”. Such comparisons as we here make arise more naturally, indeed they must be admitted, once the dichotomy of nature and grace is transcended. Man transcends himself, becomes or “goes through” (John of the Cross) that which he is not, so as to be “all in all”. Finally, all trace of ancient Manichaeism is removed when Hegel finds place for non-abstract Evil within the divine Goodness, encouraged in this by Scriptural citation of the wrath of God, or of the divine mediator being made sin for us.⁴⁰ The “for us” is neither superfluous nor optional. As Eckhart had said, “The eye with which God sees me is the eye with which I see God.” The intimation of immortality at the dawn of philosophy was precisely this, a denial of a beginning for any conceivable subject. Indeed, the figure of a “dawn” of philosophy is just therefore a perspectival illusion.

This brings us up against Time, as the form of any possible appearance, as Kant had thus far made clear. So religion, in what Hegel judges its absolute instance and form, teaches, hands down, that the one who came must come again, as, philosophically, the Absolute must, as absolute, be “its own result”. We have here speculative truth expressed as and in contradiction, whether of category or of the predicative form as such. All predication, all judgements are false, Hegel definitively declares, in

⁴⁰ See his analysis of the *Genesis* “Fall” narrative at *Encyclopaedia* (“Logic”) 24, addition, or his remarks upon angelology, on Good and Evil, in the “Revealed Religion” chapter of *The Phenomenology of Mind*. Compare also *Enc.* 35add. Evil “really is... a negative... only the sham existence of negativity in itself.” Yet the gods, absolutely, “know good and evil” and these are even, he scandalously adds (in *Phen.*), “the same” (though one must also, in another sense, “strenuously” deny this, he adds). This anticipates his later (in *Enc.* III, “The Philosophy of Spirit”) designation of private conscience as “wicked” (cf. his negative analysis of “the beautiful soul” in *Phen.*). These passages must be read in the light of one another. The target is the dualistic or “abstract” isolation of evil, so his position associates well with the Thomistic *malum est semper in subjecto (bono)*. His thought, accordingly, leans less to static non-being, more to the theological dynamism, the voluntary *privatio*, of *kenosis*, not to be seen, however, he is clear, as an isolated or “one off” act. “Spirit” and “Mind”, incidentally, are alternative translations of *Geist*.

performative contradiction indeed. For we are bound to performance, as ancient scepticism had emphasised.

So, seen from our temporal perspective, and we have no other, eternity is indeed return. “To them that have shall be given”, to those, namely, who, dead or alive, “sit with Christ in the heavenly places”. “Dying we live”, for, equivalently, “we die daily”. These figurations of religion cannot be abstractly separated, within philosophical language, from the figurative nature of all and any language. For it is only upon this basis that the conventionality of the linguistic sign, an achievement of reason as Hegel stresses in *The Philosophy of Spirit*, can signify at all (*Enc.* 458-460). The “pure” sign or concept, *signum formale*⁴¹, is itself abstracted from the role of signification in the continuum of infinite self-signification. Or, in another idiom, words have always to have *suppositio materialis* as well, or to “stand for themselves”, prior to any dichotomy of meaning and reference. Reason, namely, substitutes them for the things themselves, which it cannot manipulate:

Since one cannot manipulate the things themselves in discourse about them but uses names in place of them we often think that the relations between the names are the same as those between the things. But there is no similarity: for names (words) are finite in number, things infinite. So it is necessary that the same sentence, or one name, should signify several things.⁴²

That is, philosophy comes to discern in this act reason itself. Wisdom, *Vernunft* (transcending the *Verstand* representing it), declares or *discerns* that “things themselves” are illusory. As using words, all the same, reason denies time while within time. Thus upon every utterance and finally upon all utterance there ensues silence, which is to say, as non-empty silence, thought. The very last thing thought could be is a continued talking to one’s self. It is rather presence to self of the other as sameness. Or self is this presence to self, self-consciousness. Itself is its “word”. *In* going out it returns.

Those binding themselves, like the Jews of old, to the finite categories, the “old bottles”, of yesterday’s orthodoxy, want to judge, in wilful verdict, that the ontologists “did not speak sufficiently exactly about the

⁴¹ The doctrine of John (“of St. Thomas”) Poinset, Descartes’ contemporary, in his *Ars logica*, discussed earlier in this present work, above.

⁴² Aristotle: *De soph. el.* 1, 165a 7-16. Aristotle remains here, of course, at the transient level of a finite category, viz. that of “the Thing”, in the Doctrine of Essence, if we take Hegel’s logic as normative. Words are thought’s own expression, being themselves first “interior”, as is everything “exterior”.

natural intuition of divine truth". Thus wrote the editor of the Leonine *Summa theologica* (Paris 1888), wanting, in what is all the same a true instinct, to "have it both ways". Nature is naturally graced and has been since the Flood, if we are to credit the Bible. "Yes, but this doesn't mean..." No, sorry, but in context it can and does so mean.

To urge in depreciation that the roots of ontologism lie more immediately in Cartesian "angelism" (Maritain) than in Augustine is merely to specify the time or period when this movement, of ontologism, was to appear. Copleston (*History of Philosophy*) points out that Augustine's argument to God from eternal truths "presupposes" one can have the latter without the former, as if this shows that he was not "an ontologist". But it shows equally that the ontologists were not ontologists, since they too argued their case! This is the same argument as that used against Anselm long ago, Hegel remarks of an earlier version of it than Copleston's. It is only itself, however, that it thus itself reduces to the absurd.

Of course we have no "vision" of God if God is the light in or with which mind knows everything. We don't see anything. Rather, Hegel says, light itself is "nature's first ideality", nature which is itself ideal (as is the finite generally⁴³), the self-alienated Idea. So light and hence eyes and all flesh are but representations or, in "natural" terms, "as grass". This, for us at least, as we shape up to our dying, is perhaps the greatest drama of all. Flesh itself, carnality, seems to be born to express just this, in the self-transcendence of "fleshly" love.

God, as necessity, absolute, is necessarily his own unique act of being. So he is not reducible to *esse commune*, which is rather raised to identity with the former. "This also is thou". Of course as *commune* it is not yet this, implying, rather, a seeing of being as composite or material. This category of whole-and-parts is in Hegel's Logic a mere finite or momentary category, taken up, cancelled and absorbed (*aufgehoben*) in the Absolute Idea.

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Theologians have been very sensitive about defending the gratuitousness called grace. But philosophy shows this was a misplaced anxiety. Necessity and freedom anyhow finally converge, as witness God himself. "He who sees me sees the father." So he does not see me. I am a *signum formale* again. But this "sign" becomes at this point indistinguishable from

⁴³ This is "the chief maxim of philosophy" (*Enc.95*). The finite alone is "absorbed" in the infinite, with no reciprocity.

relation, the relation of identity which is in fact no relation since there are not two but one. It is unmistakable for reflection that the “in” relation of the New Testament is metaphor for identity, just as the power “clothing” one is really power possessing one since else it would be nothing and worse. We come yet closer with the speculative and hence self-contradictory expression, “members one of another”.

The misapprehension is that because of divine life in us we love our neighbour “as well”. Duplicity, duplicating, indicates falsity. Such love of “neighbour” is not mere sign, condition or proof of divine possession. It is the form it essentially takes, in terms of our perceptions at least, which may finally be misperceptions. What we thought we were doing to the neighbour we were more substantively or truly doing to and indeed in the Absolute. For the Absolute, Hegel makes clear, demonstrates, indeed *is* the Absolute Idea and *vice versa*. So “friends” *added* to this are not needed for absolute blessedness, Aquinas affirms. For thought the other is the same, Hegel more shortly says.

This is why we cannot dismiss McTaggart’s scheme of things as atheistic, or “because” it is atheistic. Atheism may be, without contradiction, the highest form of theism. “I and my father are one”. “He that sees me sees him.” So he or she does not see me and he does not see him, in abstraction from this.

And that a higher gift than grace
Should flesh and blood refine,
God’s presence and his very self
And essence all divine.

Well, how Newman, author of these lines, could see Infinity’s role here as limited to “refining” the finite I don’t pretend to unravel, though it makes a good rhyme. The Concept refines itself. He must increase while I must decrease, down to zero. But then, I will be he, he me. “These shall be the signs that shall follow them that believe”. One may think of Padre Pio stopping bomber planes in the sky, if one will. Myself, I write this.

Seen thus the divine act of being is indeed shared by no creature. We have our being “in” him. Grace, prevenient indeed, manifests its secret more and more, the end in the beginning and *vice versa*. The end is conceived as realised. The end, too, is “the kingdom of ends”, where none are superfluous, where each is king, “in” one another, whether vine or branch, “they in me and I in them” in this supra-organic, mystical or rational body.

Are we not all God’s friends, asks Suzuki the Zen Buddhist, commenting on the Johannine text, “I have called you friends”, which indeed represents

a situation prior to any resurrection, glorification etc. This friendship is expressed and exercised in the Hebrew *Psalms* at a yet earlier period, as in spiritual expression around the world independently, in time or space, of this revelation of it. In itself such spirituality entails that it would be thus manifested, Newman and others were right to see. It is “cause” of what has gone before, however, exclusively as being its hitherto concealed reality or “self-result”. Nor is it revelation of anything in particular. God is revelation as such, Hegel shows, and this is the revelation equally of man (Kant’s “rational creature”) as of spirit, called glory in religion.

Resurrection, then, occurred, but not as if it “had already” occurred, a view St. Paul condemns. Immediate life, rather, where past and future stand in mutual self-cancellation, is “no life at all” (St. Teresa). So, “dead to” it, “we know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren”, our brothers and sisters (*I John* 3:14), as is implicit in Paul too⁴⁴. Philosophy supplies the categories for this seeming contradiction of “realised end” we call faith. Only in “knowing as we are known” are we realised at all and this realisation, *viz.* that it is realised, is not potential merely but belongs to End as such. The self that lives under the contrary illusion is itself an illusion. For it, the “mass-man”, the resurrection has indeed not occurred either universally or, the same, individually and uniquely. His intrinsic self-satisfaction, however, with himself and with all things as phenomenal, is as evanescent as is he himself, or she. His resurrection is his being ever consumed in his own “Golgotha of the spirit”. For there is no such condition as this abstract representation of the mass-man, no mass-man in fact, and in wishing it we wish and effect its impossibility, seeking rather the last end, *finis ultimus*, and hence finding it inasmuch as we find that we have not found it, in every human act of anyone, outward or inward indifferently. “The non-being of the finite is the being of the infinite”, as dissatisfaction with time’s “petty pace” is the pledge and more of satisfaction, the having all things in having nothing.⁴⁵ Thus Hegel interprets the divine or absolute “peace passing understanding”.

⁴⁴ See *I Corinthians* 13. These were McTaggart’s favourite New Testament texts. One might also link it up with Marx’s messianism of the proletariat, i.e. of those who have nothing, enabling all to become “as having nothing yet having all things”, which it is natural to see phenomenally reflected in changing social conditions of one sort or another.

⁴⁵ *Macbeth* might thus be seen, like tragedy itself, as an “optimistic” play after all. MacIntyre, in *After Virtue*, misses this when he denigrates the Christian outlook as less than tragic. Cf. Hegel, *Enc.* 147, the whole addition or *Zusatz* on tragedy and consolation, on which a further appropriate comment might be Thérèse Martin’s “My only consolation is to have none” (c.1896)

The evil act is a sham-act, as nihilism is self-annihilating. It occurs in a “fictitious” world⁴⁶ down a wormhole on the fields of heaven, in C.S. Lewis’s image (*The Great Divorce*). The “time fork” Peter Geach imagines (*Providence and Evil*), of Hell from Heaven, is actually the abolition, the denial, of time itself. “Now”, like “God”, is an improper term philosophically, as suggesting an abstract particular. So there is no “already” about the resurrection, “realised” essentially in itself (cp. “I am the resurrection”). End names the End’s absolute actuality. Thus philosophy “leaves everything as it is”. Only,

The chalice of this realm of spirits
Foams forth to God His own Infinitude.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ H. Arendt’s delineation of totalitarianism, its possibility. This is the sense, the only sense, in which Auschwitz did not or rather does not occur. It is the Cross abstracted from the Resurrection, a representation entailing its own annihilation, with regard to those on all sides who suffered its “presentation”, in liturgical supersession. The glorification of the wounds suffered with and in love, penetration by the Teresian spear, is actually the *transitus* of self to Self, “from shadows to reality”, in ever new or actual “absolute subjectivity”, not knowable as something else, such that one shall “no sooner know than enjoy” it (Hobbes).

⁴⁷ Lines adapted from Schiller and quoted in termination of Hegel’s *The Phenomenology of Mind*.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

HEGEL AT CHRISTMAS: SOUNDINGS

Hegel's discovery of the Concept is paralleled by that of the Word as flesh and as *this* flesh, is indeed derivative therefrom, as is implicit in his own explorations of the two themes, his own contribution to *logica docens*¹. Where the Word becomes flesh speech stops. The very words stating it mean this, in a kind of “burnt offering” of self, of themselves, that the Object itself, any possible Object, becomes Subject, in inter-communication without limit, as is the nature, too, transcending Nature, of the Concept. They, if we now assume the Hegelian position² that the *verba exteriora* are identically *interiora*, are indeed a “formal sign” of the Idea, as final concept, as such imprinting this its formality upon all finite notions, namely that they are not for themselves but for, as mediating, another.

The Idea as unity of the Subjective and Objective Idea, is the concept of the Idea, - a concept whose object (*Gegenstand*) is the Idea as such, and for which the objective (*Objekt*) is Idea – an Object which embraces all characteristics in its unity. This unity is consequently the absolute and all truth, the Idea which thinks itself, - and here at least as a thinking and or Logical Idea. (*Enc.* 236)

The Absolute Idea, further, is indeed the Absolute as such, being as its own result, the end that was in the beginning, the beginning finding its true place in the end. That is to say it is its being, what it is (essence) and its own self-concept and/or conception. It is the unity of life and cognition, and as such its *own object*. Here Hegel echoes, indeed cites Aristotle. This end, moreover, is as such real and realised (*Enc.* 210).

¹ *Logica docens* was the Scholastic term for logical, inclusive of meta-logical theory. *Logica utens* was the exercise of the *ars logica*, of logic as an art.

² Cf. *Enc.* 137-140.

The Concept, that is, is the precipitate of revelation, of self-othering or “creation”, whether in idea or fact indifferently, since “the Absolute Idea is the Absolute”. Hence the saying, by “the first Christian” as Nietzsche called or diagnosed St. Paul, “Have we known Christ after the flesh we know him so no more”, also Rudolph Bultmann’s watchword, his “demythologisation”. Inter-communication without limit, anyhow, is necessarily mutual consumption or absorption in active identification, i.e. in Act without limit. Mind indeed, the Subject, maintains itself so in its own other, most typically in face of death, as locus of manifestation of such indestructible or necessary Life. This is in fact manifestation as such and not a particularised manifestation of this or that. Mind thus, as what it is, goes out of itself in order, uniquely, to return to self. Where there is one Word thus self-actualised in a necessarily primal freedom, not therefore to be opposed to necessity, words themselves find function no longer. Such speech, the Hegelian, as instancing Spirit’s own *excursus* (and no mere *discursus*), is a dispensing with speech. Since philosophy is in essence the transcendence of limits it cannot maintain the pseudo-respectful and even pseudo-Wittgensteinian silence here. The term “flesh”, incidentally, was used here, at the beginning of this chapter, metonymically, to stand, in the first place, for the human reality as Subject. That is, there is no Christian commitment to a particular philosophical epistemology, such as naive realism. The early heresy of Docetism was condemned by the community as claiming that Christ was man only in appearance, i.e. had not become one with us. It did not forbid the insight³ that *all* that is human is indeed appearance, phenomenal, in comparison with God, the self-Concept or absolute subject.

So Hegel infers, in discovering the Concept, that predication, i.e. speech as saying something about something other, namely that it *is* the same (the copula which is identically the “is” of identification⁴), is not suited to, is

³ Compare the Scriptural “All flesh is as grass”. We might also compare Aristotle who says in the *De anima* that flesh is the medium by deviation from which, in their proportions as mixtures of hot, cold, fluid and dry, all “solid” bodies are defined. So it is these bodies’ “subject” and not itself a sensed body in the same sense. Many systems of thought posit a further body (or several bodies) behind or beyond the phenomenal, not to mention the locus of the face, one’s “first appearance” (*prima facie*).

⁴ Cf. Aquinas, *In I peri Hermeneias*, lect 5, n.22. “For *is* 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...” This is the logic Hegel everywhere follows, as knowing no other. It is doubtful if Frege would have impressed him as a logician, except incidentally.

not therefore capable of, the expression of truth, but only of correctness (*Enc.* 171add. and 172). Logical truth, therefore, suspends or surpasses its being effected by *logoi* (in the dialectic). Truth, rather, expresses itself in or, precisely, *as* manifestation. Neither Hegel's disjunctive nor his apodictic judgment dialectically replacing it are ever actually made or spoken. Spoken judgments give way, rather, to "the oneness of subject and predicate". For these "are each the whole judgment" (*Enc.* 180). Subject in fact is the Concept, the Concept is absolute subjectivity or, it follows, thinking of thinking which is thus not itself a thinking of discursive stamp. It is *intuitus*, but not in the degenerate sense Hegel encountered in Jacobi's philosophy. The Concept is rather recapture in further development of the medieval *intueri* as summit of wisdom (*sapientia*) in contemplation, by a "connaturality" of subject and object. Here *sapientia* as an intellectual virtue transcends and perfects the (intellectual) virtue of *scientia*, as, in praxis, *epieicheia* or equity perfects the moral virtue of justice. It is itself recaptured simplicity, end and result of the whole process which it itself, wisdom as the Idea, initiated. Now the Concept is the Idea, and *vice versa*, just as the (percipient) Idea is Nature, thus viewed as in spirit (*Geist*) already (i.e. before we come to the Philosophy of Spirit) brought back from the inward, when posited as outward, mutual alienation of the two. The logical level is not finally abstract merely, therefore, since Thought is itself the reality manifesting itself. This, Hegel says, is philosophy's constitutive doctrine (of itself, moreover).

This view, we now note, is at one with⁵ the "mystical" teaching of John "of the Cross".⁶ When Mind, subject, first discovers its own self-constitutive inclination to contemplation, to self-knowledge or self-annihilation without limit as its constitutive End (obliterating the means) or destiny, as what it now and ever is, then this subject is "meant to cease all thinking".⁷ For it has conceived the Concept in "unknowing" or, it is the same, in incipiently absolute knowledge, no longer discursive or "thinking that", but the (Russellian) acquaintance here is one with the

⁵ To be "at one with" has not the same sense as to be "one with", though it may include it.

⁶ We may not be certain if Hegel knew the writings of this particular "mystic", as he knew others, but if he did it might shed light on his strange reference to "Spanish poetry" in the *Logic*. John's writings are commentaries, having a Thomistic base, upon his own poems.

⁷ A character in Haruki Murakami's most recent novel declares he just likes to think, not of this or that but "in depth", as "creating a kind of vacuum". The book's title refers to "the colourless Mr. Tazaki", recalling Musil's *The Man without Qualities* as well as Aristotle's "thought thinking itself".

acquainting, i.e. it is not acquainted with this acquainting but *is* it, actively. Mind now begins to participate in knowing absolutely, in consequent self-transcendence and/or annihilation, as "thought thinking itself", which is Aristotle's definition of *nous* as *theos*, as absolute or, a variant, divine.

This teaching, as immediately delivered to a group of Carmelite nuns, is often misread as a mere recommendation as to how the latter spend their statutory daily period of "meditation". It rather urges a permanent openness to God⁸, who "has spoken only one word", his own Son namely which is himself. In the Incarnation, Hegel teaches, God himself comes to full expression or manifestation, and that constitutively, of himself. Implicitly, here, the past, the "time of the sign" (Derrida), is annulled, since God, the Absolute, as infinitely actual, does not thus evolve. The parousial or end-time is, rather, the Being beyond the beginning, the "new creation" first actualising the first model, so to say. I am what I will be as, it is written that "before Abraham was I am". This, whatever else, is an exquisite human utterance, as is that other, "I and the Father are one". God's one word, then, is himself. This finds expression in Hegel's doctrine of absolute Subjectivity, in which each and all coincide. It is in fact always thought that thinks itself. This is both the grandeur and the humility of thinking, "alone desirable for itself" (Augustine), blessedness, says Hegel at *Enc.*159. This is the motive of belief. *Credo ut intelligam*, I believe in order to understand, and we should notice that this does not say merely that the subject believes in order to understand what he believes, but in order to understand simply or absolutely.⁹ Why should he specifically believe in order to do this? Well, there are many ways to kill a cat but at least an intrinsic connection is implied between attitude and final enjoyment. Mind, we might say, itself implies confidence in mind, rather

⁸ Openness to God, that is, to Being as that which *non est aliquo modo, sed est, est* (Augustine: "is not in some way or form, but is, is..."). The negativity is patent, as here the ultimately Actual, Act, becomes all that is possible as not being of some particular essence or "form". Sheer possibility *in abstracto*, however, is at the very opposite pole, as "prime matter", not actually anything but able to become anything. Is then prime matter too the Concept? Otherwise we make of it a second absolute, the Nothing eternally confronting Being. The dialectical process, however, is the annihilation of this nothing (*nihil*). In missing this Sartre remained a merely Cartesian dualist. Yet the holes in cheese are relative to the entire or whole cheese as defining its type (non-being as the ultimate difference precisely of being?). "The non-being of the finite is the being of the infinite".

⁹ In this way too Aquinas treats of faith, *fides*, in his *Summa theologica*, not as an attitude required simply by the, as it might be, contingent teachings of a particular "positive" religion but as a virtue, that is as a perfected habit (*habitus*) actively and of necessity to be exercised in the attainment of perfect human flourishing *per se*.

than in, say, purely surface phenomena. For this Hegel "praises" it in the *Philosophy of Nature*, in apologia for the latter.

This ceasing of *ratio* or propositional discursus, in favour of excursus or the "going out on a dark night", unobserved (not precisely the "night in which all cows are black", though they would be), is an exercise of thinking, of the Concept. Hegel's philosophy would lack all universal interest if it were meant as instruction merely for academic, mainly salaried philosophers as to the method and essence of their particular subject at the Academy. John's works too would lack interest if taken as technical ascetic handbooks for nuns and suchlike. The peasant who, asked how he prayed, answered: "Well, I look at him and he looks at me", can well be taking as thinking the Concept rather adequately. He is not thus occupied in a specialised interest for times set aside, such as we often tend, rather thoughtlessly, to call "religious". So here philosophy fulfils religion, as Hegel says, and so, taken thus, does "religion" become a worthy candidate, like Art, for such fulfilment, as a form, in its content, of Absolute Spirit.

Regarding the ascetical, it is said that in order to have the All you must go through, deny yourself in all. The notoriously uncompromising teachings of this "mystical doctor" follow from the absoluteness of all Spirit, and Hegel yields nothing to him in this. It is the programme of the dialectic, no less, where all yields to the final absolute or "all in all", as the Son, the Word, yields up the kingdom to the Father, in the Apostle's representation of this.

So one thinking the final paragraphs of the Logic of Hegel, in either version of this logic, stands, in thought, at the end, end of the book as of his own thinking and being indifferently. Go to the utmost ends of the earth and I am there, I alone, that is (*Psalms* 139). In the film "2001", again, Stanley Kubrick intimated this well in our own time, as we should expect from art as Hegel explains it. The lost astronaut finds *himself*, eating, like Tennyson's Tithonus "at the quiet limit of the world", yet "not where he is eating but where he is being eaten" (*Hamlet*) or, rather, both at once in thought's self-constituting self-thought. Tennyson, Shakespeare, the film-*Dichter*, music above all surely, all these express but the one word which art itself, or religion or, finally, philosophy, is. It is it in person, *consolatrix*, as when visiting the condemned philosopher-witness in his cell at Mantua-Ravenna, or taking shape as a community in dialogue in that other cell of death at Athens. "Where two or three are together in my name there am I in the midst of them, in life's self-laying down of itself. Self-thought is necessarily personal without limit or obliquity and hence I, as founding all grammar. The pronoun is rather the proto-substantive and

trans-substantive subject. "In my name", that, precisely, of this living or incarnate word, we have the subject, the concept, truth silencing as sublating speech, *saving* all appearances. So the snake swallows his tail and digests himself, not merely failing thereby to find an end, necessarily, but so alone preserving himself as Tithonus, time's prisoner, fails to do, complaining that he "withers slowly" in Aurora's arms. He, like Aeneas and many others, could not at once comprehend love's gift.

This, the programme of the dialectic, gives the true issue of the absolute scepticism of Hume or, still more, of ancient, more radical scepticism, also a nullifying step away from the world. Extremes meet, thus including all finite elements as redeeming or fulfilling them as thus enclosed in this circle, their true situation.

So to think with the Concept, to think the Concept, means not to think, to actively "cease all thinking", or, rather, to think thinking itself, standing alone "on the shore of the wide, wide world, till love and fame to nothingness do sink".¹⁰ It is the actualisation of the possible *qua* possible, made actual just in thinking. What is possible is what is reasonable, the actual, in a word. Hence there is no need for a second step of actualising this or that possibility, such as we meet with, in act or demand, in phenomenal living.

The birth of this child, of consciousness, is birth of that which is only born as birth itself, never anything but new as purely and absolutely Act, incompatible (impassive) with any passivity to durational dissolution or, for that matter, growth.¹¹ Birth engulfs death in steady contemplation of

¹⁰ Aquinas might seem to echo this supposed nothingness of love, teaching that the "society of friends" is not necessary, even though appropriate (of the *bene esse* merely), to eternal blessedness (*beatitudo*). This, though, has nothing or very little to do with some imagined "Narcissism" but depends upon the absoluteness of the End, the *infinitas* of the *finis*! But what if this End, this Absolute, were itself a network of relations albeit in identity? Well, then the friends would be more than friends (cf. Daniel Kolac's recent *I am You*, cited above) and the position (of Aquinas) would remain.

¹¹ Theology deals or dealt empirically, yet speculatively, with the *vita Christi*, the life of Christ. Here though we are writing philosophy, according to which all such phenomena are precisely that. They find their truth "at home", and are only reflected in the wild and changeable weather of "this passing show". History, that is, does not come to fulfilment historically but dialectically. This is why Aristotle denied that it was a science. Similarly Hegel states that anyone who thinks that religion depends on whether or not a certain thing happened has not grasped what religion is. It is this very distinction of thought that he finds figuratively expressed in the triumphant "He is not here, he is risen".

nothing but Self, of Self as all in all, absolute, at home everywhere and even in separation from Self. Know thyself!

In Christian terms such birth is "the new creation", i.e. creation itself as ever new, hence dialectically signifying the nullity of the preparatory period, of the time of the sign, since now the word is "made flesh", manifest and not sign. Words, predication of and by words, discourse, these are external or finite objects, signs-through-which and yet themselves objects, *id quod* and not only *id quo*, though that be their signifying intention.¹² They are not identical with what they signify, unlike that Word of the Father.

This birth thus, in endless reproduction of the original triadic pattern, dialectically elicits, as transcending all dialectic, a second birth or Coming, a re-turn, of that Word in glory, i.e. as manifestation without figure, being actually trans-figured. The final figuration, that is, gives itself up to its own object as subject. We thus find ourselves "now" in an in-between time in which time is no more and yet it is. These are thus the "last days" after or, rather, consequent upon the suspension of days, something like Sunday as waiting for the eighth day. The Gospel account, by contrast, works within the figure of time. Thus one John is spoken of as witness to the light to come and not himself that light. Hence it is said that he that is least in the "kingdom of heaven" is greater than he. John the Baptist is the only unbaptised "saint" recognised as such.¹³ Ultimately, then, he is greater than himself and this is the truth of all of us, there being one greater "closer to us than we are to ourselves" (*intimior me mihi*, Augustine). "I live yet not I, but Christ lives in me". This "in" actually then stands for an identity closer than self-identity, we repeat, which can therefore be none other than Identity itself, or union of each with all and so of all with each. Any individual is the Concept, stands for Truth.

It is the uniqueness of Christ in particular, as Son of Man, to signify his non-uniqueness in total self-effacement. What you do to any you do to me. This is the basic Hegelian conception of the individual as universal. We assist, therefore, at Christmas, at our own birth, which no one remembers

¹² Cp. Aquinas, ST Ia 85, 2.

¹³ At least among those universally thus denominated. Thus local churches such as the Ethiopian, at least, regard, or so one has heard, Judas as a saint, and of course in general the holy men of old (*sancti*) are thus honoured. It is possible though that the practice of making "canonical" saints will fall into disuse, in accordance with the logic of the gradual spiritualisation of the theology of baptism itself, witness the recent setting aside (placing into limbo) of the doctrine of Limbo, as separate abode for unbaptised babies, worthy "pagans" and others.

since it never took place, or takes place eternally.¹⁴ Thought thinks itself, annuls the ego. If the other of myself is revealed as self of my self then I am my own other and that other's self as that other is self of my self. "The eye with which I see God is the eye with which God sees me" (Eckhart, quoted by Hegel). Any subject, in other words, is absolute subject or Subjectivity. I am you and you are I. There is no solipsism or any further opening for it where all coincide. There is ultimately no disparate plurality of personal pronouns. This is the meaning of the bearing of one another's burdens. If your burden is my burden it is not yours, as mine is not mine. "I love you" is thus the will to unite with the "you", to end the isolation of the "I" as rendering it unthinkable, "all one body we", but the "we" here is no longer oblique. The individual in his sublation is only positively "ruined", as where "death lies dead".

¹⁴ Some persons, all the same, do claim to remember it, as they remember various other nullities making up the phenomenal. "No birth, no death", then, the insight, is but a part of this "ruin of the individual" and all his perceptions and memories, which ungrateful spirit casts away.

SCIENTIFIC POSTSCRIPT

John Finnis's outline¹ of a *via media* between "historical consciousness" (Lonergan, Rahner) and "classical culture" turns out to be, like middle ways in general, an instance of *scientia media*, thereby falling short of the divine or absolute point of view required for any *theologia*, as his master, Thomas Aquinas, himself an implicit absolute idealist, had shown. The latter system, absolute idealism, is indeed philosophy itself. So as far as philosophy is concerned Finnis is a dabbler without knowing it. This fact shows something about theology as it has come down to us, divided, that is, as being dogmatic, moral, pastoral or ascetic. The labels show that it has been reduced to a mere open-ended genus, the concept of it taking the place of its absolute concrete reality as the Idea, as true and perfect being, as God, as that being in which all inheres, is absorbed, "lives and moves and has its being". Beside that there is nothing, least of all that collection of incommensurable goods Finnis has tried to popularise, in direct opposition to their ordered and dialectical self-exposition in a shared identity in the Idea, calling their exposition in Aquinas's account of the divine order, of natural law, an irrelevant "speculative appendage". This *impasse* arises chiefly from Finnis's impossible or muddled opposition of the speculative and the practical orders as two separate precipitates of an opposed and therefore finite speculative and practical reason respectively, each of which, in virtue of such finitude, must lack truth. This thesis, this unquestioned assumption or paradigm is more Kantian than Aristotelian or Hegelian. Finnis however eschews Kant as much as he does Dilthey. Their "self-referential inconsistencies" make them "worthless as a general guide to reflection". The phrase is significant. Behind it lies a procedural principle of opposition between philosophy and "revelation", nature and grace. This imagined fact downgrades philosophy forever to the finite. A rhetorical contrast employed in St. Paul's preaching has been thematised into what thus becomes less than systematic, more of a pictured representation in the self-bewitchment of the finite Understanding, *Verstand* and not *Vernunft*, regrettably.

¹ John Finnis, "'Historical Consciousness' and Theological Foundations", *The Etienne Gilson Series* 14, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto 1992.

The focus of his paper is indeed difficult to grasp, which as always raises the question how much it is in fact focussed. The title does not help us too much. Lonergan and Rahner, two theologians, are the targets of much of the criticism, particularly in their suggestions, as Finnis sees it, of a change in human nature being possible and indeed actual. However, and this is the ultimate focus of what I am writing here, the deeper target is what he sees as the necessitarianism of the “rationalist” philosophers. The reason for this is that he sees their stance as being a negation of what he, in Gilsonian mode, might call Christian freedom.

But there are certain realities which simply cannot be accounted for: e.g., in the case of free choices, *whether God’s or ours* (my emphasis), why just this choice *and not some other* was made. If that could be accounted for, *there would be no free choices* (my emphasis). So the erection of the rationality norm of sufficient reason into a principle by Leibniz and the rationalists was an epochal blunder (p. 21).

It is obvious that Finnis is working with the late-medieval faculty-paradigm of intellect and will. This is prepared for, or chimes in with, his non-Thomistic divorce between theoretical and practical reason as, in effect, again, two separate faculties. In other words, he fails to concretise his abstractions. He forgets the Thomist teaching, for example (“Is there will in God?”), that will is the natural inclination of intellect itself to the understood good, of knowing to its own knowledge, rather, since the known is good (an *ens rationis*) only as itself known in relation to just this inclination, *viz.* will. So Finnis stresses just “choice”, using this word to abstract from all reason or wisdom, though this makes of it, in the hands of any potentate, absolute or finite, mere tyranny. If we, or the Prince, could account for it, in terms of causes, for example, then “there would be no free choices”, he claims. To call the pointing out of the contrary, that wisdom itself, precisely in its freedom, knows necessities, which are the staple of philosophy, an “epochal blunder” is, I fear, bluster.

That’s one thing. However, this point too has a dialectical aspect. That is to say, it must not be treated in abstraction from the whole, and this should mitigate the criticism I here make, introducing a “dialogic” element. Finnis points to this himself when he speaks here of free choices, “whether God’s or ours”. He envisages with that, though, I fear, a kind of interplay between God and other agents on a flat level, thus making of God, impossibly, something finite. He could be taken, however, though out of his own context, regrettably, as pointing to the *identity* in infinity of all rational agency, following the path developed by Hegel especially. In

this way he would rejoin the company of his imagined epochal blunderers, in certain respects at least.

Finnis does not give much evidence of having studied Hegel in any kind of depth. Otherwise he could not have made such sweeping, even cocksure use of his “self-referential” criterion, “the norm that self-referentially inconsistent theses are to be abandoned” (p.18). Now this principle, and not Leibniz or Hegel (or Aquinas, we shall see), is mere rationalism of the understanding.

Examples of self-referentially inconsistent assertions of the first sort are: “It can be proved that nothing can be proved”, “All propositions are false”, “All propositions are true”; examples of the second sort are “No-one can communicate by language,” “I do not exist,” “No concept can be understood without tracing its history,” “Knowledge is not worthwhile,” “No-one can make a free choice,” and so on.

Finnis shows no awareness that some of these assertions, the making of them, are treated by Hegel, who himself declares that “All judgments are false”, for reasons he goes on to give, as instancing the third and highest “side” of reason, the speculative, “or that of positive reason”.² Consistently Finnis might have included in his list Aristotle’s saying that “Theory is the highest praxis”, a saying overthrowing the absolute distinction, which thus, as absolute, becomes a separation, that Finnis makes between theory and praxis and, consequently, between theoretical and practical reason, though the latter, for Aquinas, is simply common reason *ordinata ad opus*.

There may indeed be something incomplete about that saying, “Theory is the highest praxis”. Scotus had tried to indicate this in arguing that theology is a practical and not a theoretical science, effectively implying that praxis, or love, is the highest knowledge. This is fully in accord with Hegel’s insights (cf. *Encyclopaedia* 159) but also Aristotle’s, inasmuch as he declared that even a little contemplation or knowledge is *worth* more than all else and hence evokes as its own natural right, so to say, a practice of death, of the denial of immediate life (*athanatizein*). Life, says Hegel, “is only the immediate Idea”. What is clearly wrong, however, is the opposite of this identification, namely the abstract separation, of the two.

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² Hegel, *Enc.* 79. The first two sides are the Abstract, followed by the Dialectical.

I began with mention of *scientia media*. This sixteenth century scholastic phrase, discussed in a previous chapter here, represents an attempt to deny, out of an abstractly practical, perhaps “missionary” interest, the determining character of absolute knowledge. Things are as they are, however, philosophy has ever declared, because Mind or God thus knows and “moves” them. This is just what does not enter the heads of “the religious party”. These become philosophical only inasmuch as and when they espouse mysticism or spirituality. In this ultimate sense it is clear that “the factual is normative” (Hegel). The will to controvert this is natural to the abstractly moral, rather than ethical, consciousness, as this is found within the vestigial “unhappy consciousness” of “the religious party” as such. This leads to the question whether Christianity, which Hegel calls, in deliberate or speculative “self-referential inconsistency”³, the absolute religion, is indeed not more than a religion.

In view of this universal determining agency, Aquinas, again, goes on to outline, God cannot be thought as having any real relation with anything outside of or other than himself. This will lead Hegel to the position, in his logic, that the other as such, as other is to be logically conceived, is itself not abstractly opposed to self but is rather the self’s *own* indwelling other. To differ is to relate oneself to what one differs from, equivalently the same in its difference. Aquinas, for his part, concludes that however much the creature is related to God, yet God cannot be related to the creature. Here, surely, we have “self-referential inconsistency”, the speculative.

³ Hegel teaches there are three forms of absolute spirit, art, religion and philosophy, of which only the third is truly the absolute as such (“The absolute idea is the absolute”). Philosophy, therefore, as finally wisdom, *sophia*, the loved one (*philia*) herself, is presented (not represented), as a person, e.g. as *consolatrix*, by Boethius. Her constitutive act is thus to present herself, though she may first make herself known to and so desired by the lover in some finite disguise, however. Such a disguise, however, we have been urging, is our immediate notion of a person, is our first apprehension of ourselves and of others, as of life itself. But since as absolute spirit philosophy thus surpasses religion, as it does art, there cannot be an absolute *religion* as such, such as Hegel calls Christianity. He might better have called it, though with less differentiation than “religion” suggests (religions have to be plural, he had argued), “the wisdom from above” (St. Paul). To resolve the paradox, of an “absolute religion” (Christianity’s own self-estimate: it is “religion itself”, Henri de Lubac, later Cardinal, declares in his *The Drama of Atheistic Humanism*) we have to recall Hegel’s acceptance of the Heraclitean flow, that there is “a Bacchanalian whirl” of concepts, not finally separate from one another, since there is only one concept, the Idea. Compare John “of the Cross”, praising silence: “God has spoken only one word”.

For Finnis this is the death of freedom, the denial of real choice. He does not conceive, or will not, that “God makes a man’s actions his own” as, indeed, “grace perfects nature”, makes it more itself, removing the opposition, the abstraction. “Everything is grace”, Rahner had remarked. That is, it has to be, this being the condition for finitude as such, that total dependence upon which Schleiermacher had dilated, not seeing that this totality of dependence is itself self-annihilation, “the ruin of the individual” (Hegel) abstractly taken.

Newman now, in the next generation after Hegel, comes to mind here. He had lived for many years before the ecclesiastically sponsored and directed “Thomist revival” of 1879 was launched, as something at least to be once more taught, as was indeed then stated, in the relevant schools, not more, not, for example, a “definition” of Thomism as “the truth”. For one can hardly imagine the self-guaranteed infallibility as seeking to direct the movement of the Spirit itself, philosophy, blowing where it will.⁴ In Newman’s earlier day the topical theological movements⁵ had been such as “traditionalism” (an original “positive” revelation to Adam), liberal Catholicism (Lamennais) and, above all, “ontologism” (discussed above), as the main Catholic post-Hegelian movement (Gioberti, Brownson, Ubaghs) was called and which Newman and Rosmini both in a measure reflect, though the “Holy Office”, we noted, clamped down on a number of ontologist (and Hegelian) propositions in 1860 as “not safe for teaching”, something hardly of concern for free philosophy, whether then or in the days of Malebranche, Eckhart, Eriugena. Augustine or Plato, who all taught, no doubt unsafely, that, *mutatis mutandis*, “there is one closer to me than I am to myself” (Augustine).⁶

⁴ It was surely rather as realising this that the most Christian Emperor, Justinian, no doubt abetted by his court prelates, had once elected to close down the first Academy at Athens rather than attempt to direct it, whether or not this was an “epochal blunder”. Ultimately, speculative reason makes plain, there can be no such thing, such a blunder, and even evil must have its “hour”. This is the mystical root of liberalism too, which a puzzled papacy (*Mirari vos*, 1832) had declared “overthrows the nature of an opinion”. It certainly sets it in a new light.

⁵ Apart, that is, from Protestantism, which continues to bring forth Hegelian fruits, up to and beyond Bultmann, one reason why Catholics such as Heidegger or Adorno turned out such bad Hegelians. It was against their aesthetic, evoking a “gut reaction”.

⁶ Regarding such unsafeness one might profitably consider Rudolph Steiner’s thesis, treating Rome under the eight century Pope Nicholas “the Great” as first pursuing a policy of suppressing mystical religion as such. Such is the ancestor of the “conservative” or rather defensive form of Catholicism such as is pilloried in Dostoyevsky’s Legend of the Grand Inquisitor, who re-condemns Christ himself,

Finnis (p.20) cites Newman thus:

The question is not about miracles in general, or men in general, but definitely whether these particular miracles... are more likely to have been or not; whether they are unlikely, supposing that there is a Power, external to the world, who can bring them about, supposing they are the only means by which He can reveal Himself to those who need a revelation; supposing He is likely to reveal Himself; that He has a great end in doing so; so that the professed miracles in question are like His natural works, and such as He is likely to work, in case He wrought miracles....⁷

The citation occurs within a passage where Finnis urges clarification of what he calls “rationality norms”. Here though he simply ignores the Hegelian doctrine which had for its theme precisely such “norms” of rationality. His apparently citing Hegel as an “Enlightenment philosopher” suggests indeed a measure either of ignorance or, in Fr. Lawrence Dewan’s characterisation of Finnis’s expositions of Aquinas, of “disinformation”⁸. But why we should rate Finnis’s rationality norms above those, “with their own disabling but insouciantly tolerated self-referential inconsistencies”, of the towering genius of Hegel is not made plain. It is easy to see that Finnis’s mind has never engaged with Hegel’s logic in either version of it. Let it not be too late for this uplifting experience!

Regarding Newman now, we can see the same fault at work as is found on the “Jesuit” side in the controversy (1607, *De auxiliis*)⁹ referred to

along with St. Joan of Arc and others. It lies behind the possibility of raising the question whether the mystical way of the Spirit, the “gifts of the Holy Spirit” of the “Penny Catechism”, is and are for all Christians or just a special vocation (cf. David Knowles, *What is Mysticism?* Sheed & Ward, London 1966, ch. 5: “Are there Two Ways to the Perfect Christian Life?”).

⁷ J.H. Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, 1870.

⁸ Lawrence Dewan, OP: “St. Thomas, Our Natural Lights and the Moral Order, *Angelicum* LXVII (1990), pp. 285-308.

⁹ The controversy was primarily concerned with “grace” and its irresistibility or otherwise, as this title implies. But the absolute character of religious representation as such, in its opposition to philosophy and prior to all interpretation or development, authoritative or otherwise, was at stake. On their side the Dominicans had the Pauline, Augustinian and Thomist doctrine of the active character of absolute knowledge, visionary *Revelations of Divine Love* that “all shall be well and all manner of thing” or, from the future, Hegel’s doctrine of “realised end”. The point concerns *all* representation, up to that of Peter Geach that God is *like* a chess-player who will checkmate the finite opponent in his own chosen way, however the latter thinks to move or act. More fundamental is Hegel’s philosophical statement, employing the figure of “absolute cunning”, which he

insofar as this concerned the divine pre-motion (*praemotio physica*), the “pre” of this phrase being logical, not temporal. The fault is the speaking of absolutes in humanly finite or pictured terms in apparent unconsciousness that one is doing it. Thus Molina and others assumed there must be a kind of knowing between active divine knowing and passive creaturely knowing. But there is and can be no such medium, else God is not God but a finite projection like that of the deists or of the Platonic Demiurge¹⁰. Basically, there can be no matter, no finite set of possibilities, antecedent to God, a notion often smuggled into evolutionary theories, for example. So the papal failure to decide between the two parties at that time (they were not to call one another heretics) can seem to have fostered the entrance of a relatively new form of practical atheism into the Christian world and that at the heart of religious conformism. *Omnia in bonum diligentibus Deum*, however, Hegel would be pleased to note.

Thus Newman represents God as “external to the world”, which thus, as being there independently, must limit his infinity. God is also pronounced limited in “means by which he can reveal himself”, though in truth he is, must be, rather revelation and manifestation itself and not, in real terms, a hidden God, something impossible namely. What is hidden, rather, is our own life in him. The “appearing with him” of which Scripture speaks is not a distracting would-be addition to him. “Christ is your life”, Christ here being essentially Son as the Father is essentially Father, each therefore being only in function of its other: *ipsae relationes sunt personae*. The relations themselves are the persons and conversely. This, Hegel shows, is in the end a *philosophical* truth, since there can be no other. “Universality is the principle of personality”. He remarks somewhere on how theology characteristically uses representational or figurative terms to communicate actual truths transcending them, the very “method” of Scripture, but not of philosophy as the latter’s and

designates correctly as appearance (*Enc.* 209), that the end is “really secured”, beyond all finite sight or experience (*Enc.* 212 add.). “The consummation of the infinite End, therefore, consists merely in removing the illusion which makes it seem yet unaccomplished” and this is the Idea, itself both creating and removing this illusion. “Only out of this error does the truth arise”, which “can only be where it makes itself its own result”.

¹⁰ Compare, however, the penetrating remarks on Plato, finitude and alteration at *Enc.* 92add. “In these words we have in general terms a statement of the nature of the finite, which, as something, does not meet the nature of the other as if it had no affinity to it, but, being implicitly the other of itself, thus undergoes alteration. Alteration thus exhibits the inherent contradiction which originally attaches to determinate being, and which forces it out of its own bounds... mutability lies in the notion of existence...”

everything's spiritual interpretation, having no other office. Theologians go so far as to speak of their own language, where truly applied to divine things, as necessarily analogical, a mere "trying to mean", in Herbert McCabe's words.¹¹ Philosophy will have none of this and so it is that Hegel will develop the thesis that God just *is* revelation, the Idea, not of this or that but of "thought thinking itself", *noesis noeseos* (*Enc.* 236, citing Aristotle). Anselm had shown, *mutatis mutandis*, the same necessity, he claims. Thus he and we may develop Newman's final meaning in the text cited.

That Absolute Spirit has taken on the shape of self-consciousness inherently, and therefore also 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.¹² Taken thus it is not imagination, not a fancy; it is actual in the believer.¹³ Consciousness in that case does not set out from its own inner life, does not start from thought, and in itself combine the thought of God with existence; rather it sets out from immediate present existence, and recognises God in it... This incarnation of the Divine Being, its having essentially and directly the shape of self-consciousness, is the simple content of Absolute Religion... In this form of religion the Divine Being is, on that account, *revealed*. Its being revealed obviously consists in this, that what it is, is known.¹⁴

Nor does God need means for anything he does, if we were to take Newman literally, since God is rather the End absolutely speaking, "realised end" in Hegel's carefully concluded to words (*Enc.* 204, 210). Therefore God has no "great end" beyond himself.

One can of course say that Newman, in using such traditional pictures, is inviting us to understand spiritual things spiritually, in the Pauline

¹¹ Herbert McCabe OP, appendix on "analogy" in the Blackfriars translation of the *Summa theologiae* of Aquinas, Part One.

¹² Hegel's word for "spirit" is *Geist*, cognate with "ghost" (as found in the older Anglican formulations), which also denotes *mind*. In switching to the Latin term for religious purposes our consciousness becomes more vulnerable to unprocessed abstractions.

¹³ Far from reducing faith's object to "subjectivity", this rather raises faith's dignity to a higher (analogical) form of knowledge consonant with the Idea itself, which as Absolute Idea is just the Absolute simply (*Enc.* 213: "The definition which declares the Absolute to be the Idea..."). We may compare the Buddhist "No birth, no death" as reaching for the same truth.

¹⁴ Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind* (Baillie version), New York 1966, pp. 757-758.

phrase. But firstly, this is inappropriate in what purports to be a philosophical treatise; secondly, this enlightenment should then be carried through by the religious mind at all levels. If this cannot be reasonably ever hoped to be more than an ideal, yet we are presenting that ideal in the confidence that it can and must become more and more the reality and “norm”, such as Finnis is appealing for. Today’s imaginations are tomorrow’s realities, Blake truly declared. It is the very notion of prophecy, called self-fulfilling not in mere afterthought, but in respect of the active character of all word and form.

Aristotle calls the Platonic idea a mere *dynamis*, and establishes in opposition to Plato that the idea, which both equally recognise to be the only truth, is essentially to be viewed as an *energeia*, in other words, as the inward which is quite to the fore, or as the unity of inner and outer, or as actuality, in the emphatic sense here given to the word. (*Enc.*142 add.)

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On questions of creaturely freedom, morals and what have you, I recall, irresistibly, the conference held on *Lex et libertas* at Rolduc, Holland, in November in 1978, in which Finnis and I both actively participated. It was pointed out by Leo Elders and other “professional” Thomists there that for St. Thomas conscience was an act of speculative or theoretical reason, not of practical reason. Finnis was for a moment visibly disconcerted, even disorientated¹⁵, due, I supposed, to his attachment to the rationalist account of practical reason which he and Germain Grisez have extensively popularised in not so recent years now as “the new natural law theory”, built upon an uncritical acceptance of the Hume-Moore principle of “no ‘ought’ from an ‘is’” as also upon several other assumptions. The fact is, practical reason plays no role, is not exercised, that is to say, in works of moral theology, as they seem to assume, any more than in philosophical ethics. These, like conscience, are speculative, theoretical, in essence and not less actual for that. Thus it is that for St. Thomas the *bonum honestum* is more truly the Absolute or, for him, God, than it is any set of moral values or principles, and this just in function of the Absolute’s own

¹⁵ This experience is perhaps reflected in Note 69 of his article now under discussion, referring to J. Fuchs’s work on natural law from 1960. The distinction Finnis makes or reports here as “real and important” does not bring us closer to Aristotle’s insight that the practical syllogism concludes in (and not merely to) an action.

absoluteness. Virtue is called *honestum* by courtesy simply as leading to “absolute knowledge” (Hegel’s term), or to God, as Aquinas says.

Aquinas writes that in human living ends take the place held by principles in speculative matters. That is, the ends *are* the principles, which however they are quite unlike, in contrast to so-called maxims, propositional in form. An end has no form in that sense. In another sense it is *forma formarum*. Hence: *In humanis autem actibus se habent fines sicut principia in speculativis*.¹⁶ It follows immediately that “practical principles” (“ought” *statements* and the like) do not play this role, since these are not ends. So such principles or maxims are not the same kind of thing as speculative principles. There must therefore be an analogy in operation in St. Thomas’s paralleling of the two sets of principles at 1a-2ae 94, 2, sufficiently indicated, after all, by the fact that practical reasoning employs the “speculative” (theoretical) principle of non-contradiction, whereas theoretical reasoning does not *employ* the practical principle *bonum est persequendum*, however this may *guide* the person choosing to reason. It follows that it is primarily the end that is obligatory.

These ends can only be those things to which we are by nature inclined, bearing in mind the “unity” of the person’s “spiritual and biological inclinations”¹⁷. These ends are the *ius* and *iustum* within nature itself, without which legislative reason (*lex*) would be falsified or made irrelevant to the good life. So *lex non est ipsum ius sed aliqualis ratio iuris*, not the just or right thing itself but a certain formal intelligibility of the right, Aquinas concludes (*Ibid.* 1a-2ae, 57, 1 ad 2). It is in that sense that Hegel can say that all judgments are false: they fall short of the *ius*, the Concept, this second “instrument of reason” (Aristotle), viz. judgment as proposition (*enuntiatio*) actually being self-contradictory, inasmuch as the predicate both is and is not the subject, he reasons. These things are precisely what Hegelian dialectical thought will recall to mind, his reaching them by an independent route to that of Aquinas lending these theses all the more strength, since the kinship between the two thinkers is so plain.

¹⁶ Aquinas: ST 2a-2ae, 57, 4.

¹⁷ John Paul II (Pope), alias K. Wojtyła, philosopher, *Veritatis splendorem*, “encyclical” letter, 1993. He adds that man’s “rational soul... is *per se et essentialiter* the form of his body” (this applies, whatever account we give of “the body”, rated by Aquinas as a term for logicians rather than for metaphysicians). Therefore the bodily inclinations are rational, concluded this philosopher and Pope. The salient point is the unity of self-consciousness, bearing in mind Hegel’s critique of soul-talk, as indeed, to go further, that of “God” and “world”.

By this means we finally overcome, in some measure at least, a too abstract contrast, a “great divorce”, even of good and evil. Finnis recognises that we find this fluid interplay in Scriptural writing (Hegel’s example is “the wrath of God”), but ascribes it exclusively to a primitive or defective means of distinctive expression. “So, since God creates everything, the Old Testament seems to assert that he causes evil” (p. 29). Well, doesn’t he, or what is evil? We can distinguish it, but is it finally and not merely abstractly separable from good. Finnis shows no awareness either of Hegel’s subtle analysis of evil in relation to knowledge, especially as reflected in the Mosaic narrative of the “Fall of Man” (*Enc.* 24, add: “The Mosaic legend...” *et f.*), or of his discussion of good and evil, relating it to angelology, in *The Phenomenology of Mind* (Baillie translation, p.773 f.). “The other aspect, that of evil, is taken by *imagination* (my stress) as an event extraneous and alien to the Divine Being” and to grasp its role is beyond the capacity of “figurative thought”. This must be read in conjunction with recall of the role of the negative in Hegel’s system of thought (cp. *Enc.*35 add.). Good and evil as determinate notions, falling therefore short of the Concept, “essentially exist merely in the relation of opposition”, as do God and the self, which turn out to be a figure of the Father-Son Trinitarian relation. We recall, in the so-called economic Trinity, that the Son was “made sin for us”. It is impossible to summarise this text of Hegel’s in the Revealed Religion chapter. Finnis, however, remains innocent of this dialectical relation, which the rationalistic double effect doctrine he gives so much weight to strives in vain to overcome or set aside, rather. Evil is, rather, or essentially “that good can come” and not merely in these special instances where it is excused. “Evil be thou my good” (Milton’s Satan) is an instance of Aquinas’s *malum est semper in subjecto*. Milton was indeed “of the Devil’s party without knowing it”¹⁸ and the Devil of his. The sources,

¹⁸ W. Blake, “The Marriage of Heaven and Hell”. C.S. Lewis, imaginative and philosophical apologist, wrote his fascinating *The Great Divorce* (of Heaven and Hell) in express contrast to this poem. Yet Hegel’s point about good and evil as essentially correlate stands. Non-being, that is to say, is finally being, as “the non-being of the finite *is* the being of the infinite” or, in Biblical terms, as “in God we live and move and have our being”. There is thus, after all, a difference between the “relation of opposition” in which “good and evil exist merely” and mere correlation. Implied here is Hegel’s recognition of the finitude of existence as a category, not “worthily” applicable to the Idea or God, as also his recognition of the “ideality” of the finite *in toto*, the truth. That is, of the finite or of the false. We may recall Anselm’s distinction of the false from the nonsensical (dialogue *De veritate*). In so far as there is mere reciprocal correlation between self and God, between subject and subjectivity, then self is no longer self, has both dialectically

then, are not confused on this point but are as good instances of speculative reason as any other instance of it (cf. *Enc.82* on the “true reason-world”).

*

“And this is the Idea”, viz. that “the implicit unity of subjective and objective is now realised”. This (212) has to be read together with the passage on Plato at *Enc.92* (the addition) so as not to miss the role of negation in Hegel, as applied to all finitude, which is thus, again, “merely ideal” in this negative sense:

Plato says: God made the world out of the nature of the ‘one’ and the ‘other’ (*tou heterou*): having brought these together, he formed from them a third, which is of the nature of the ‘one’ and the ‘other.’ In these words we have in general terms a statement of the nature of the finite, which, as something, does not meet the nature of the other as if it had no affinity to it, but, being implicitly the other of itself, thus undergoes alteration.¹⁹

Finitude even includes all existence within its compass, as assertion of object *against* subject:

To materialised conception existence stands in the character of something solely positive, and quietly abiding within its own limits... But the fact is, mutability lies in the notion of existence, and change is only the manifestation of what it implicitly is.

Existence belongs, that is, only to “the idea immediate”, which is life. Change is the only evidence of life, Newman would later observe. The Idea, as unity “of subject and object”, transcends life and existence and, indeed, objectivity. Objectivity, the “*Gegen-stand*”, is our great error, in “our” finitude, about reality, which can only be seen with God’s own eyes,

and, the further moment, united here in one entirely rational “leap”, speculatively passed over. I am what I am not. On Lewis, see Chapter One of our *New Hegelian Essays*, CSP, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 2012 (the first book of our series of five books on “Hegel the New Theologian” of which this present one is the fifth), “No Regress from the Hegelian Wood”.

¹⁹ See and compare Plato, *Timaeus*, 35. The translation found in the Hamilton and Cairns edition (Bollingen Foundation, New York, 1961, 1966, p.1165) of Plato’s Dialogues harmonises better with Hegel’s report of this text than does the version W. Wallace gives in his note to page 174 of his translation of the *Encyclopaedia Logic*.

or absolutely. This is the sense of the religious figure of “the beatific vision” as it is explained, and indeed of all “grace”. For God himself, again, is “the Idea”. This is the difficulty felt in Thomistic or Aristotelian philosophy, when it is said that “the soul is all things”, is all. Is it then anything? This, Hegel explains, is precisely the freedom of the Idea, which, more fundamentally, the Idea is. Eternal life, for its part then, has to be a matter of knowing and not, except as a concession, of being, categorically our first approach to the knowing of knowing, to the Idea, as its first “figure” even. It is in this sense that the various “figures” of the syllogism stand apart as figurations of the syllogism itself, which, Hegel finally declares, and he means it, “everything is”. This means that the Understanding itself figures, in itself as not in itself, a figuration of. being, of the Idea, which speculative thought must leave behind in its self-knowing, in self-consciousness. It declares, with Butler, “Everything is itself and not another thing”, words blindly adopted as motto for G.E. Moore’s *Principia Ethica* (1903). The scholastics call the Idea, any Idea, a “being of reason” (*ens rationis*), understanding the qualification as negative. It is though, rather, negation of negation and hence just as much positive. For it is negation not to be able to be, in love as one might say, what one knows and then, further, not to be all things or the all, in the Idea. The dying is not so much cast off as finally (as *finis*) accomplished, overcoming the immediacy of life, the Idea immediate only, as itself an intrinsic subjection, of the subject, to death. Yet “the death of merely immediate and individual vitality is the ‘procession’ of spirit” (*Enc.* 222). But dying that dies lives. “And this is the Idea” as annihilating abstract objectivity along with subjectivity as we imagine it, transcending all opposition, even, to speak truth, that of good and evil, as Hegel obliges himself to declare in *The Phenomenology of Mind*, knowing that it will appear as “unspiritual”. We ought to accept this result as a first step to being able to think it. For Hegel it is the true being of forgiveness, leading into the liberty of absolute knowing where we are “members one of another”. “The absolute idea is the absolute”. It follows that evil contains, embodies, its own confession, shameless amid its blushing. In the moment of yielding to it, and not in immediately subsequent self-justification, since it is in fact this yielding, the sinner or “evil-doer” knows he or she must follow, accept, his role, his destiny. This is the metaphysical twist of the most exquisite of pleasures, the knowing, as gods, of good and evil, as it presents itself at any stage of life. As pure *libido* it is life’s own self-denial in the acceptance of dying. The rose is not sick but a rose merely, the idea immediate. In the words of C. S. Lewis, though or just because put as words of a devil, “He’s a hedonist at heart”. But over what form the final

orgiastic dance (“Bacchanalian whirl”) may take, *macabre*, an innocent riot of elves, or what we have always wanted in general, it is pointless to speculate, since one “shall no sooner know than enjoy it” (Hobbes), as we do now.

*

How central this vein, at once Dionysian and Apollonian, is for Hegel we can see if we compare what I have here drawn from the first part, “The Science of Logic”, of his *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, that rather neglected unique exposition of his whole system as such, with the final, third part of that work, *viz.* “The Philosophy of Mind”, identified by him with God (“the lesson of Christianity”) and spirit or *Geist*. In English we speak more of a person’s spirit, his or hers, than we do of spirit in itself. The question has to be asked, however, as to what it is, and so Hegel begins this third part with a section headed, in the translation I have to hand, *What Mind (or Spirit) is* (*Enc.* 381-384), upon which I will now comment in order to show its complete coherence with the doctrine of “The Science of Logic”, this Hegel’s own subtitle, incidentally or deliberately duplicating that of his earlier account of the same, the “greater” Logic.

Mind “has for its presupposition Nature, of which it is the truth, and for that reason its *absolute prius*” (381). This is his version, in all exactitude, of Plato’s “All nature is akin and the soul has learned everything” (*Meno*). It is exact as making explicit that Nature comes from mind, “the soul”, which thus knows it as making it, so that Nature is thus akin in all its parts to mind and thus to and with itself, “parts outside parts” in what is, just therefore, embodied “analogy of being”, as the Renaissance scholastics, up to the “baroque” Leibniz in particular, understood.

“In this its truth”, however, “Nature is vanished”. This echoes his words in the Logic (*Enc.* 89f.) on the absorption of Becoming into Being Determinate as “the vanishing of the vanishing”. Here, though, Nature as a whole, not a mere category, vanishes “in its truth” as having Mind as its *prius*. It is Mind’s self-revelation, which is to say self-revelation itself and not revelation of this or that.

This universality is also its determinate sphere of being. Having a being of its own the universal is self-particularizing, whilst it still remains self-identical.²⁰ Hence the special mode of mental being is “*manifestation*”. The spirit is not some one mode of meaning which finds utterance or externality

²⁰ “This also is thou: neither is this thou” in the medieval version.

only in a form distinct from itself: it does not manifest or reveal *something*, but its very mode and meaning is this revelation. And thus in its mere possibility mind is at the same moment an infinite, “absolute” actuality. (383).

Mind “has resulted”, as being Nature’s *prius*, “as the ‘Idea’ entered on possession of itself”. That is, it is not part of anything else, since it takes all that is other to itself, it really does. “Here the subject and object of the Idea are one” as, again, we noted earlier from the Logic. “The definition which declares the Absolute to be the Idea, is itself absolute.” “The Absolute is the universal and one idea, which, by an act of ‘judgment’, particularises itself to the system of specific ideas” (213).

Here again “the subject and object of the Idea are one”, either is the Concept, “the intelligent unity”, God or Nature, so to say, the Word or self-revelation. Hence the oracular “Know yourself”, with which Hegel begins, is, as he says, accepting this figure, the “absolute commandment” (377, at the beginning of this beginning). Concerning subject and object, however, “This identity is absolute negativity” and Hegel never goes back upon this. Nature, in its “objectivity perfect but externalised”, is “nullified”. After all, the Logic had shown that the external is the internal, the part the whole, the effect the cause (of the cause), in general reciprocity. The negativity is in regard to substance, as opposed, at first, or in its conceptual inception, to relation. This nullification reflects, again, that nullification of the world Hegel refers to in the early prolegomena of the *Encyclopaedia* as involved intrinsically in Mind’s upward and wholly rational “leap” to the truth of God as Absolute, impossibly less than personal on the value-scale, even if trans-personal. Just *in* this nullification, Hegel adds, the unity, of subject and object, for mind, “has... been made one and the same with itself”. Yet it “*is* this identity only so far as it is a return out of nature” (381), since it presupposes it, as he began by saying.

“For this reason the essential, but formally essential, feature of mind is Liberty” (382). Liberty, that is, “is the notion’s absolute negativity or self-identity”. The “or” is the key word here, for an understanding of negativity. It is also the key to an understanding of liberty (*Freiheit*), such as we discussed it above in connection with absolute knowledge. There we recapitulated Aquinas’s and associated teaching that will is Mind’s *own* inclination to the understood good and not something added on. The contrast there is between Mind as *ad opposita*, standing in free judgment between positive and negative, i.e. standing in negative freedom between opposites in order to arrive at a *rational* verdict, and nature as *determinatum ad unum*, which is precisely the opposite of any pair of

opposites. It is not Nature's *own* decision to be thus rather than otherwise, in any one of the particular or "many" cases. Rather it is Mind itself which "resolves", there is no better word, to "go forth freely as Nature" (244), as it were Mind's "laying its life down of itself" (in order to return to itself as "its own result"). As we understand that the Idea, the concept, is "absolute negativity or self-identity" so we understand that Mind "*may* withdraw itself from everything external and from its own externality, its very existence". Hegel calls this the "formal aspect" of Mind. Liberty here is theoretically formal as happiness, defined as attainment of the last and yet "realised" end, is practically formal, as neither this nor that. Yet we have seen that theory and practice are one as the best instances of one another. Thus liberty of mind is happiness, as and therefore not to be "taken away", the "better part" which is the whole.

Mind, as withdrawn, as withdrawing itself, Hegel says, from "its very existence", can thus "submit to infinite pain", the key word here being "infinite". Mind can do this, so Mind, we must add the corollary, transcends individual finite self. This may seem to reflect the medieval controversy concerning "one intellect" and even to come down on the "wrong" or Averroistic side. It is not so, however, since Hegel can concede, with Aquinas, that "it is evident that it is this man who thinks". What he does, rather, is to place this man, or any individual, in the context of the whole mutually reciprocal body of conscious mind everywhere, apart from which, or as taken in abstraction, the individual, along with individual life itself, as only "the immediate idea", is "ruined" in inception or conception indifferently. The medieval "Arab" concept, at bottom a true intuition, of oneness of intellect had abstracted from this. Each participates in the unity and is as necessary to it as the unity is to her or him, in a reciprocal identity affirmed in Hegel's favourite Eckhartian tag, which come out as the unity of subject and object, which is the Idea, which is the Absolute or spirit.

It is Mind itself, though, that is "the negation of its individual immediacy" that it submits to, and not some external necessity. So and only so can it "keep itself affirmative in this negativity and possess its own identity". As an apparently inspired Biblical translation into English has it, whose lives, believing or knowing this, "though he were dead, yet shall he live", i.e. as if life and death were the same. The words are apparently chosen so as to transcend a mere quasi-temporal representation, and this is Hegelian *ante litteram*. Mind says, effectively, using the spiritual iconography that has come down to us, "I am the resurrection", yesterday, today and forever, just as I am self-revelation, Hegel says, but "formally", not of this or that.

“All this is possible so long as it (Mind) is considered in its abstract self-contained universality.” This looks like a disclaimer of these dizzy prospects, but if we follow Hegel’s own German text more literally the comment appears as intensification, rather. It reads, very simply: “The possibility is this universality”. It is this universality that he goes on (383) more closely to particularise. It is “also its determinate sphere of being”, i.e. Mind is determined not to mere indeterminacy in its indeterminateness but to freedom, as being all things and even, or most characteristically, its own self-negation of its negativity as otherwise a mere negation “abiding by itself alone” (Johannine quote once more). Rather, and as “Having a being of its own, the universal is self-particularising”. The term “being” reminds us of the “ontology of logical forms” (Henry B. Veatch). In this it, Mind, “still remains self-identical” (cp. 382) and hence, Hegel adds, “the special mode of mental being is ‘manifestation’”. Again,

The spirit is not some one mode or meaning which finds utterance or externality only in a form distinct from itself: it does not manifest or reveal something, but its very mode and meaning is this revelation. And thus in its mere possibility mind is at the same moment (*unmittelbar*) an infinite, ‘absolute’, actuality. (383)

Here our more literal rendering of the German text above finds its justification. The possibility mentioned is shown to be one with actuality, as the corresponding text in the Logic had established.

Revelation, taken to mean the revelation of the abstract Idea, is an unmediated transition, is Nature’s coming to be. As mind is free, its manifestation is to set forth Nature as its world; but because it is reflection, it, in thus setting forth its world, at the same time presupposes the world as a nature independently existing. In the intellectual sphere to reveal is thus to create a world as its being – a being in which the mind procures the affirmation and truth of its freedom (384, cp. 381: I have again emended Wallace’s translation slightly)

So Mind, it seems, is not the world, but this, the world, is its being and nothing else, i.e. Nature is not to be taken *materialiter*. That is not “its truth”. “*The Absolute is Mind (Spirit) – this is the supreme definition of the Absolute*” (384).

Stockholm. July 2014.