

Hegel's Apotheosis of Logic

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Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



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This book first published 2017

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-4438-1684-1

ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-1684-7

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PREFACE

In the case of a philosophical work it seems not only superfluous, but, in view of the nature of philosophy, even inappropriate and misleading to begin, as writers usually do in a preface, by explaining the end the author had in mind, the circumstances which gave rise to the work, and the relation in which the writer takes it to stand to other treatises on the same subject, written by his predecessors or his contemporaries. For... by determining the relation which a philosophical work professes to have to other treatises on the same subject, an extraneous interest is introduced, and obscurity is thrown over the point at issue... To help to bring philosophy nearer to the form of science... that is what I have set before me.

Thus Hegel begins his celebrated *Preface* to his *The Phenomenology of Mind*.¹ It harmonises with this present essay in the philosophy of religion specifically in Hegelian spirit, where the universal, as authentic and concrete, is identically particular, the authentically particular universal. This is Hegel's most characteristic doctrine, that of the Notion or Concept (*Encyclopaedia Logic*, 160) of the Absolute Idea.

The Absolute Idea is the dialectical crystallisation of the concept of infinity. As such it enables speculative thinking. To deny divinity to the Absolute is to deny its absoluteness, its infinity. Infinity is that which absorbs all else, this "else" being just thereby, by infinity, nothing. The Absolute is thus separate or "holy" as separating away all that is not itself into nothingness. It is thus anyhow God. The distinguishing feature of God, however, is personality, on account of which "God" is generally reckoned a finite and hence un-philosophical conception, a representation. But personality, like number, admits an infinite extension or intensification indifferently. So God must contain it and the Absolute must be God. It follows that if it is true that personality essentially involves relation to its other, as to other than self within self, then God, the Absolute, is a unity in the sense of a community.

¹ *The Phenomenology of Mind*, Harper, New York, 1967, p.67, J.B. Baillie's translation.

Yet it is an absolute unity, the unity or One as such. Hence any self or member of this unity is identical with each and all of the others.² This is the condition of Love as a universal because actually and concretely universal, taking Love as quiescent or acquiescent union. So God is Love, that is, not merely system but, necessarily, and hence freely, systematic unity of the infinitely differentiated. This unity, as thus perfect, is within each self as constituting it. To each self, “closer than self”, belongs this universal love-relation of Self and other, its other, brought to light in the Trinitarian representation, in first picturing, first configuring, the Absolute thus revealing itself in such pictorial thinking, such as we call “religious”, for which, however, the Absolute remains mystery, other, holy. Devotion, as response to this holiness, is the necessary posture of individual consciousness and thus informs philosophy also.³ In sublating such individual consciousness, therefore, philosophy, or rather *Sophia*, which is thus *sancta Sophia*, becomes wisdom in discarding individuality (“my thoughts are not your thoughts”), thus completing or, Hegel says, accomplishing religion, finishing and/or perfecting it. Such wisdom, of course, is not the sole property of academic professors or of the proletariat or of any other social class. It may be spoken by a man hanging on a Cross, must indeed, we shall see, be thus particularly spoken. It ultimately requires just one Word, in unity. This will mean, however, that the Absolute, far from being immobile, is the unresting uttering or going forth of that one Word, while this becoming of self in other is revealed as the very essence of Spirit. Spirit is spiration “in act” as Spirit “is community”. “Spirit is its own community” (*Phenomenology of Mind*, p.778). “Spirit is Spirit knowing its own self” and “its figurative idea is the true absolute content”. “What moves itself, that is Spirit”. Its notion arises in “the sphere of religion”. Yet the “religious communion”, in its returning “out of its figurative thinking” is not yet “fulfilled in this its self-consciousness”. It is not “aware what it is”.

The Absolute cannot be only good. It must include Evil since Being, says Hegel, is “just as good as”, no better than, Non-Being and *vice versa*. Inasmuch as they are or may be seen as an interchangeable identity their equivalence is not restricted to a first, abstract moment of the Science of Logic. The Absolute is in fact the indifferent play between them in a proto-identity. Or, we can rather say, just this is absolute Goodness, including its negative. Hence, we hear in *King Lear*, we are as flies to the gods; they kill us for their sport. This is indeed a moment of Spirit’s own

² Cf. Daniel Kolak, *I Am You*, Pomona, New York, 2004, especially “Preliminary Acknowledgements”, pp. xiii-xxii (<http://www.springer.com/978-1-4020-2999-8>).

³ So Hegel speaks of philosophy as *Gottesdienst*.

play with itself, with which we ourselves must or should identify, thus sublating our conceptions of our finite self or, it is the same, sublating our finite selfhood. The God-man himself cries out “Why have you forsaken me?” and that in the very moment of victory, of impending resurrection. Or, in God’s forsaking him he himself becomes God, Spirit. Spirit thus proceeds “from the Son” or, again, God is realised, incarnated, in the lowest become highest. This is forgiveness and reconciliation, many become one “in us” but, again, “as you and I, Father, are one”.

At the same time as we, with Hegel, rate philosophy above religious representation, we are forced to acknowledge that a people formed in and by religion, the ancient Jews⁴, as “a nation of philosophers” (Porphyry, 234-301), here take from it, and hence from their own spiritual substance, in gradual development (flow from representation to concept) the power and means of forging new, that is, philosophical concepts of the highest order, as appears in the development of *theologia* thereafter, shown forth at least equally in the great Greek thinkers, however, whether in partial or complete independence, which is philosophy itself.⁵ In this way its concepts are after all abstracted from and built upon immediate historical experience and immediate experience generally, also called sense-experience, of all, namely, that is touched, heard, seen, tasted or smelt, inclusive of later but also immediate memory of these, as they are developed within “physical” Life as itself “the immediate Idea”.

⁴ This name, Latin *Judaei*, for the inhabitants of Judaea, a Roman province and seat of Judaism as a religion developed by this chief of the twelve “tribes” said to be developed from twelve sons, such as Judah, of the patriarch Jacob, renamed “Israel”, which can mean strong (*sarah*) either in or against God, after the night when Jacob was said to have “wrestled” with and hence against him (*Genesis* 32), thus seeing him “face to face” (32, verse 31), a kind of figure of philosophical method.

⁵ A different but related account should be given of the different but congruous developments of systems of thought and life away from the Mediterranean basin, some more strongly instancing the interflow, in proportions varying with their histories, between religion with its art(s) and philosophy proper, whether we consider Hindu-Buddhist traditions and systems or those of Australasian, African, (other) Semitic or American aboriginals, too often thoughtlessly dismissed as “primitive”. The same principle, of religious representation flowing towards the Concept, applies to later and derivative formations, such as Islam, separations within and without the basic tradition being yet profoundly identical in their proposed difference (of “inner and outer”, declared one in Hegel’s system of logic, as drawing an being drawn, in temporal representation, towards unity, as effect and cause in one, again.

That is, “the mediation of figurative thought is necessary” in order, namely, to come to Absolute Knowledge (*Phenomenology of Mind*, p.780). This is Hegel’s conclusion after at length addressing the difficulties inherent in saying “evil is inherently the same as what goodness is”, which means that “both are really done away with”. Even for Aquinas Goodness or the Good was no more than an *ens rationis*. The reality was being, called good as the fundamental desire, true as the knowable, one as contrasted with phenomena.⁶

Evil and goodness meet and unite in religious figuration. So the apostle Paul says that Christ “was made sin for us”, a curse even.⁷ In becoming thus he did not cease to be what he was, the “beloved son” and so on. Hegel knows this and it informs all his thought, such as his discussion of conscience under Objective Spirit, which when absolutised he finds to be wicked as contravening *Sittlichkeit* or the first principles of ethical tradition or custom which make of ethics a science, also Aristotle’s view. This view leads Hegel straight into, or comes straight out of, a discussion of angelology, recalling but not merely reproducing that substantial, richly philosophical treatise in the *Summa theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas, First Part.

Hegel may well have taken inspiration for his view here from the Biblical fiction of *Job*. There God allows Satan not merely to tempt Job but to utterly despoil him or, at least, his phenomenal existence “on earth”, as we say. Yet Christians pray, “Lead us not into temptation”. This, however, confirms the thesis, that God as well leads into temptation as he blesses, and this abandonment by God to evil is often represented in religion as itself punishment for or consequence of failure in the face of previous temptations, as in the Indian *karma* theory. This however presents thought with an infinite regress in the sense of Hegel’s “bad infinite”, bad because opposed to thought. The “original sin” cannot be reduced to a totally innocent deception.⁸ The solution to this surd presents

⁶ See our “The *bonum honestum* and the Lack of Moral Motive in Aquinas’s Ethical Theory”, *The Downside Review*, No. 411, April 2000, pp. 85-110; also the first three chapters of *Natural Law Reconsidered*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt-am-Main 2002, subtitled “The Ethics of Human Liberation”.

⁷ Cf. Hans Küng’s exposition of and remarks on Hegel’s text in his *Menschwerdung Gottes*, subtitled as an “Introduction to Hegel’s theological thought as prolegomena for a future Christology”, Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1970, esp. chapter V, 2 and 3.

⁸ At best it is, as essence of “what was to be”, failure of a necessary trial, as Abraham, later in *Genesis*, succeeded in his trial, accepting the pointless sacrifice as Eve refused the pointless prohibition (the fruit was “good to eat”).

itself, in the Greek figure reaffirmed later by Nietzsche, as the self-cancelling circularity of Time or, in a word, the "Eternal Return". This however cannot be thought of as falling short of affirmation of such a return not only of life, whether abstractly individual or in itself, but of each and any moment, yet *the same* time cannot be finally *represented* as *returning* upon itself afterwards, since it is not then the same. Hence there may be evil in God but evil as "redeemed" from its first inception, in Concept and knowledge, that is. Hence Hegel so to say deciphers it, phenomenal evil, as consequently one with the self-centredness inherent in knowledge. Since this cannot be evil in any straightforward phenomenal sense he effectively thematises or demythologises our everyday *abstract* notion of evil. This more profound, holistic view of it, he claims, was already present in religion as represented in the figure of Lucifer, bearer of light, who was, is, in fact the first and greatest of spirits. Even though he mentions his "fall" he later dismisses this concept as any kind of possible philosophical notion in the case of man. So the "other" created "at once" in the place of Lucifer is itself a pictorial representation of what we have expounded above. The non-thematised view, which takes the idea of evil straight from daily phenomenal life, leads eventually to the idea of an absolute evil or unredeemed Other in perpetual dualist opposition, thus robbing God of his own infinity.⁹ This is the final abstraction of the original abstraction itself.

So it is that when we see each moment, in the Concept, in the Absolute Idea, as utterly one with as containing in itself all and each moment, as we ourselves as persons contain and are the absolute unity of all persons, and this itself is the unity of possibility and being or Act, then, in pardon, of self or (its) other, we conceive and are infinity, the thought that thinks itself. This alone, says Hegel, is "blessedness" (EL 159). It will be found that this notion, as concretising evil at its root, is one with the idea of Evil as not merely non-being but, it is the same, "sham-being", as he calls it at EL35 *Zus.* So ultimately this conception is the same as saying, is a way of saying, that in God being and non-being are both transcended in their opposition, the very first thesis of Hegel's logic.

The conceptions of immortality or God, we might wish to say, are non-negotiable as requirements of Reason. Without them, that is, the world is not "perfect", McTaggart argues in his *Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology* (1903). This merely corresponds to the classical "argument from natural desire", which it thus convalidates. It lies behind Leibniz's *logical*

⁹ We find this in Hannah Arendt's account of the evils of our own or recent times, e.g. in her *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Vol. III.

conception of the “best of all possible worlds”. However, both conceptions are initially figurative, in a measure, and opinions differ as to whether rational thematisation of them can still pass under the same names or not. To appreciate this is to see that there is no call, from, say, a Christian or even a philosophical point of view, for absolute exclusion of systems denominated, often wrongly (as in the case of Spinoza, Hegel argues), atheist.

*

Omne ens est bonum, Aquinas taught. So if evil were a being, evil would be good, it follows. This is what Hegel is pointing out, in consideration of those, like C.G. Jung, wishing to emphasise the reality of evil. Evil is thus a “moment” of the Absolute Idea, which Hegel instances as “the wrath of God”. He adds that while this is somehow an “unspiritual” way of talking it serves to bring out the abstract unreality of both good and evil taken separately and so “cancels” both of them or, better, subsumes both into the highest or total good, in affirmation of the whole Method or System of the Idea. The gods “know good and evil” but as one, in the self-known Idea. In this sense evil is only known as eliciting some greater good, goodness remaining all the while absolute in appropriation of the contradictions we call evil. The Good is Being as presented to Will, this, “the voluntary”, itself crowning Cognition while Being, as finally envisioned and hence showing itself, is normative and the only possible ground for normativity. It is disclosed as the Absolute Idea, Act thinking itself in entire and *hence* all-inclusive transcendence. This then is the Good with which Being had previously been identified, the “all in all” of universal Love or “blessedness”, harmony, absolute System, Reason.

In becoming man God finally becomes God, as dying to any merely abstract conception of himself. This is merely Hegel’s teaching, in plasticity of concept, that the Last is really First, absolute and eternal, the End of history in every sense, last, time-destroying, eternal Act of “ungrateful Spirit”.

So Spirit, God, comes first to his perfect existence with the incarnation and finally death of “the mediator”. The identity of the latter as individual or universal is wholly indeterminate in terms of these abstract or formal divisions. This follows from Hegel’s whole teaching on the Subjective Notion, his account, in fact, of syllogistic. This death is equally the death of the initially abstract God-figure, but also, even, of the abstractly taken Idea of the *Logic*. The logical system or method is thus self-transcendent. Only thus does it preserve each and every moment of itself, as having no

existence and truth except as in the whole, which is the self-thinking Concept, not self-thought as in a past, that is, or as if lying dead and inert as a subject for anatomical science.

What is there first revealed, in Logic, is all-sufficient Act, subsuming in itself all abstract possibility as realised. Act without limit (what would limit it?) is self-consciousness in and for itself, act of all acts, simple or perfect unity in infinite diversity, each element or aspect having the unity of all within itself as one with that unity. All is there accomplished as movement itself, unperfected act, is perfected in Act as, again, act of all acts. Freedom is identity with Act, transcending mere magic in unreserved affirmation of the factual, where what historically becomes is advance and perfection, again, of the dialectic, as each philosophy, Hegel teaches, is perfect in its time, since, in fact, there is no time, no Nature, but dialectic rather and, finally, the Speculative Concept which is Spirit, the Absolute.

This is why, ultimately, the conception, the possibility or the dream of a thing and its actualisation are the same. This applies to Substance and is, incidentally, the pure Aristotelian doctrine. It means, incidentally, that there are no merely or abstractly possible persons. Ultimately it means that only persons are. If there are computers or, more probably, dogs then these are persons. Aquinas seems to deny this in teaching that plants and animals do not "partake in the resurrection", their absence being more than compensated for by or in "the beauty of the bodies of the redeemed". This may equally be taken, however, as saying that dogs are not abstractly or purely dogs and so on. If we want them they will be there, if we love them, rather, they are there. For Will, as rational, perfecting "Cognition proper" as included, in Hegel's two works of Logic, in Cognition generally, is universal (what would limit it?). That persons are sexed, furthermore, is no mere biological requirement and this teaching of Aquinas opens, brings home to us in our world of shadows, a self-reflexive vista of erotic love without limit. Only thus would love itself be freed from abstraction and unreal limit, as is proper to the Concept. Renunciation is nonetheless a genuine moment in the apprehension of this truth, of Truth. The same applies to the habitual abstract or exclusive opposition of *eros* and *agape* (charity) in general. This general principle, however, must apply equally to abstractly finite sexualisation itself. For Wisdom the outside is as well the inside as *vice versa*. "Spirit is its own community."

Substance then is realised in Person, conceptually, as it is dialectically realised historically in person so as to be realised in persons. "I and my Father are one". I is (hence am) "the universal of universals". The transcendental ego of Kant, Husserl and other abstract practitioners is here either quite subverted or in its implications fully explicated, thus "saving"

their own doctrines. In this way Substance becomes, is, Subject, as if coming to itself whether as concept or in actuality indifferently.

In this way Aristotle speaks indifferently of the soul as a substance (402a 23) and of the substance of the soul (402a 8). These both refer to “the *whole* living thing”, Gendlin comments. Substances “are explainable from themselves”, for Aristotle. They are their own essence or, indeed, being. Ultimately this will mean that there is just one substance with which any “other” substance can only be identical. This move will itself involve transition from Thing to Subject, from Existence to Idea and from Idea to Spirit, Mind, “setting in order all things” (Anaxagoras).¹⁰

A basic liturgical invocation begs, lays down and elicits that God has become man that man might become God. Not phenomenal man but mind, spirit, *nous*, is God, as Anaxagoras and the others, back down to the aboriginal tribe whose ancestors were said by them to have created the world, clearly saw.¹¹ For what is thus God is no longer abstractly phenomenal, but “becomes a living spirit”, as Paul said of “the second Adam”. Neither Adam nor anything else was ever simply Adam.

Here again the figure of “ungrateful Spirit” is central. It speaks figuratively of the actual as ungrateful. Spirit itself, however, is etymologically a figure from the blowing of the wind, something that the Hegelian distinction between figurative and philosophical language has still further to surmount. For it is just this mixing of figure and truth which he criticises in Trinitarian theology, for example, while acknowledging its necessity.

Spirit’s ingratitude lies in its forgetful climb “from shadows to reality”. Death to the phenomenal is itself eternal “life”, thought. Thus Life is and is not a figure corresponding to the category of “the idea immediate” (*viventibus vivere esse*). Every abstracted “thing”, such as the individual, is phenomenal, a partial and momentary appearance, *Schein*. The universal is concrete and, indeed, particular. In speaking of abstracted thing we come some way towards understanding Hegel’s use of or attitude to “reality”. *Realitas*, and the cognate German term *Realität* (as distinct from *Wirklichkeit*) derives from the Latin *res*, meaning very much matter and

¹⁰ Eugene Gendlin (Commentary on *De anima*, Endnote on 402a 8-23) refers here to Fernando Inciarte’s “The Unity of Aristotle’s Metaphysics” (English version as a chapter in Inciarte’s posthumous *Substance and Action*, Ohms, Hildersheim, 2002).

¹¹ This distinction recalls the dispute between Heidegger and Sartre on “humanism”. For anthropo-psychological background (and more) see articles by Axel Randrup on Internet. Randrup’s Humean perspective is, so to say, incipiently Hegelian.

thing, matter in the sense of an essentially particular conceptual content thus “materialised” (rather than literal *materia* or *hyle*, as we find also with *Stoff*: a unity in duality of meaning, cf. *res-publica*, republic). This sense of Thing, however, is transcended in the dialectic as finally abstract, like our everyday assumptions about “reality”.

This Spirit, first emerging after this death, as the birth of thought, is (also) the life of the (religious, believing) community in a Christian culture, such as Hegel lived in. Even that is just therefore not yet its full manifestation, a shadow, as the Church itself is figure and sacrament, though no doubt “effective” of what it figures, sacramental theology teaches.

A becoming God, as even or especially a God that becomes, is not literally an option. The becoming is internal to the dialectical System, its unfolding from within, for which time is a figure merely. It only unfolds as being “already” perfected, as the Form is seen in hylomorphism as directing development of the material composite (otherwise why would it unfold in either case?). Soul is unchanging and even, again, the whole substance.¹² The possibility and the actual being of Substance are the same. There are no merely possible substances. Our first apprehension of contingency, therefore, is surmounted in reflexive thought. Being, after all or as emerges “at the end”, is act and *actus actuus*. Time is seen as working as well or better backwards. That is, there is no time. It gets kicked away, “for Spirit that knows itself”. Time “appears as spirit’s destiny and necessity, where spirit is not yet complete within itself”. It is thus compelled by time itself, “the pure self in external form... not grasped and understood by the self” (*Phenomenology of Mind*, p.800).

So we witness the “realised End” (Hegel, EL210). Why is this so and not nothing? Because Nothing is what cannot be, since the Nothing that *is* is at once Being and so not Nothing, or both together rather, as evil good, falsity or contradiction truth (from some point of view, at some moment), the many one and this perfectly. As an old song says, “It had to be you, Wonderful you, Nobody else, Gave me a thrill, You always did, And you

¹² See, again, Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* VII. ‘Affectability is what Aristotle means by “matter”... If the soul as such also had an affectability, it would have still another body’ (Gendlin). Yet the soul is “the whole substance”. The Infinite, as such, has no body. This cannot mean it has to manage without a body, or without anything. Ungrateful spirit, again, kicks body away. In figure, “it is raised a spiritual body”.

always will.” Being, in a word, is friendly and worth knowing. It is, in fact, by the doctrine of the Concept, closer than self, *magis amicus*.¹³

¹³ “Plato is my friend but Truth is more my friend”. This is the sense in which Aquinas startlingly concludes that the “society of friends” is not essential, even if appropriate (*bene esse*), to eternal happiness. Identity transcends and fulfils likeness. “I am you”.

CHAPTER ONE

ARISTOTLE, HEGEL AND THE MEDIATING MEDIEVAL MOMENT

“This active emphasis is characteristic of Aristotle. 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” (Eugene Gendlin, *Line by Line Commentary on Aristotle’s De Anima*, Focusing Institute, Spring Valley, New York, Vol. 2, p.16).

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, when taken together, sabotage the division into active and passive just as does Hegel’s logic.

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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 confidently claimed that this is also the final “unity of Aristotle’s metaphysics”.¹

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 in *The Phenomenology of Mind*. If one only consulted the Logic of the *Encyclopaedia* one might miss this altogether, remaining puzzled as to why, in this Logic, “Force and its Expression” should be treated along with “the Whole and the Parts” and, thirdly, “Outward and Inward”, 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. Thinking thinks itself. Helmholtz, however, 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). “Force” refers 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*, perhaps 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

¹ Cf. F. Inciarte: “Die Einheit der aristotelischen Metaphysik”, *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 101, 1994, pp. 1-21. For the English version, see “The Unity of Aristotle’s Metaphysics” in Inciarte’s *Substance and Action*, Verlag Georg Ohms, Hildesheim 2002.

in front of the idea”² (EL205 add.). End as Idea excludes all projection beyond itself. There is no “and” 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” (EL208, section 2). 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” (EL212). 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”. The Good is “eternally... accomplished”. Thus, “the notion is pure play” indeed, “sport”. This sport of “the gods” (*King Lear*: they kill us for their sport”) is thus not finitely wanton.

So from this point of view force, even if it is a more general conception, does not get to the bottom of what thinking is or even, one might think, what understanding is as specified against speculative reason. 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”(EL 135 add.), as has to be faced, in fact “sublates” (*aufhebt*) also existence in the latter’s notion. 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, we cannot have to do with a composite whole, but only with an identical centre which, in the end, can be “neither one nor many”. Ex-istence then, any standing outside (*ex-*), is phenomenon, misperception. It appears, that

² *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* 207, referring to Hegel’s paragraph as found in *The Logic of Hegel*, a translation by William Wallace, Oxford University Press 1873, 1965, of *The Science of Logic*, Hegel’s own title for this first part of his *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. Future references to this work as a whole will be cited with “*Enc.*” and the paragraph number or, where particularised, for *The Science of Logic*, with “EL”, for *The Philosophy of Nature* with “EN”, for *The Philosophy of Spirit* with EG. References to the text of the “greater” Logic, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt 1972, will be made with “WL I” or “WL II” and page number.

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, which is intellect or spirit, as life, even 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 becomes later 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 143 with the addition) from which, as within which, Spirit, Mind, necessarily proceeds. Such procession, emanation, is in no way accidental. Evolution, that is, 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, on occasion at least, 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.³

The question whether we are “logicising” Trinity or “trinitising” Logic is not so much left open here as superseded. Logic as form of the world, of nature as mind considers it, is necessary as *absolute* Form. The absolute is the infinite and ideal⁴, compared with which Existence “is a poor category”, a category in fact in Hegel’s mediating Doctrine of Essence, placed between Being and the Concept in what is intended as a logical progression or Advance). 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 sublated. I am not that individual taken as “abstracted” from others, nor is there any such⁵. The thought, that is, is Pauline throughout, though free of what Hegel takes as its husk of narrative representation. 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

³ Cf. J.M.E. McTaggart: *Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology*, Cambridge 1901, Chapter Two.

⁴ My use of “ideal”, just here at least, is not to be confused with Hegel’s negative reference (EL95) to the “ideality” of all that is finite, meaning that it does not stand “in itself”, is precisely not absolute.

⁵ “A person is a person through persons” (Bantu proverb: *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*. This is supremely instanced in the Trinity or “absolute person” which, Hegel claims (EL151 add.), God is: “when the personality of God is before us, we are speaking of personality unalloyed”: EL63).

milliards. “All one body we”, as the hymn has it. This is not so much an “eclipse of grace” (title of the recent book by Nicholas Adams) as its Rahnerian identification, in true *theologia*, as universal.⁶ “Everything is grace”, Rahner declares as superseding or absorbing certain finite representations of the latter.

While Force and its Expression, the essential correlation, belong to categorial dialectic, as a stage in thinking, the understanding does not do so. Regarding “essential correlation”:

Everything that exists stands in correlation, and this correlation is the veritable nature of every existence. The existent thing in this way has no being of its own, but only in something else: in this other however it is self-relation; and correlation is the unity of the self-relation and relation-to-others.⁷

In the *Phenomenology of Mind* this category, Force, is used to explain understanding and, incidentally, to explain explanation. In the course of this explanation Hegel introduces the idea of an or, rather, the “inverted world”, implying that 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 there says, everything is literally the opposite of what first appears.

The inverted world recalls unmistakably the paradoxes of Christian proclamation, inclusive of the latter’s “first” or, better, fundamental picturing as *ethical* proclamation in 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. EL212 add.) of religion, itself philosophy’s only or exclusive object, as he states here and there. This requirement, however, of openness to philosophical accomplishment, must be *intrinsic* to any

⁶ Cf. Georges van Riet’s “The Problem of God in Hegel”, parts II and III, in *Philosophy Today* 2/4, Summer 1967, pp.75-195, originally a Latin work delivered at a “Thomistic Congress” held at Rome, though here translated from the French version, *Revue philosophique de Louvain* 63, August 1965, pp.353-418 (incl. Part I).

⁷ EL135 add. Hegel, one may note, might just as well be speaking of the Trinitarian persons as of anything else, were it not for context.

religion designated as absolute, as being a form (one of the three) of Absolute Spirit⁸. In abstract terms, that is to say, there cannot be an absolute religion as such. Religion is itself, like Art (first of the three), a mere moment of absolute spirit, of the development of philosophy, of Logic as “form of the world” (EL 162).

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 in relation to Non-Being, the Positive without “essential correlation” with the Negative “has no sense” (EL111 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 *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, about explanation).

Here we recall that philosophy, as thinking, must transcend language. This is the meaning of speculation. So Hegel points out that the truth is inexpressible in language since predication inevitably distorts, wrecked upon the rock of the pseudo-principle of identity, 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) and the Trinitarian “Word” is only figure for essential self-manifestation to self, of what is thus, since essential, manifestation itself, not specific, in genuine *Inexistenz*⁹, proceeding *internally*, transcending its, word’s, 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”.

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 am you. This “leaves

⁸ See the final section of the *Encyclopaedia*’s “The Philosophy of Spirit”.

⁹ I borrow Brentano’s term. Compare the Scotist *esse obiectivum*, coinciding finally, in Hegel, with that simple or “absolute” Being to which the Idea determines itself, *in* which all “other” things “have” their being, which is thus non-being.

everything as it is” while, however, totally displacing it. This “movement”, 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* this 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 (*Phenomenology of Mind*, the “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 (*Verstand* as against *Vernunft*) misses is that, within thinking, notion and idea are each self-identical only as involving distinction (EL115 add.). In fact this is present, one may claim, even in what Hegel construes as abstract or “silly” predications of identity, just in virtue of the predication form he sees them as violating, so that they do not “mean” what these “silly” logicians would abstractly make them mean. Really, though, they do not and could not violate this form, which implies that in saying “Gold is gold” I do indeed say something further about this metal, whether I will or no, if only that it has the form that it has.¹⁰ This, for Hegel, must thus illustrate his thesis of the essential contradictoriness of predication, the falsity of “all judgments”, since, namely, I *cannot* thus state identity. The silliness he pretends to highlight here is really for him universal falsity as productive of this silliness. So he is here condescending somewhat to immediacy, as of “the true reason-world” or what “is indeed the truth for understanding”. Pretended seriousness becomes silly of itself.

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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, or of knowledge into love (EL159), where there is nothing for knowledge to know but itself.

¹⁰ Compare what Hegel says about uses of “I”. Cf. our “Subject and Predicate Logic”, *The Modern Schoolman*, January 1989, pp. 129-139.

Alternatively, they are a philosophical exposition, by chance or design (this does not concern us), 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 that other or eternal life that speculation, *contemplatio*, 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. To be more precise, contingent being is not being in its perfection, though it may be denominated as a kind of being. It adds nothing, is but our starting-point in finitude which “ungrateful spirit”, *sophia*, will kick away. 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 gets found to be unlike itself. The whole is a play, a commentary, upon the self-contradictoriness of predicative judgment as a linguistic representation, performed 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 Understanding¹¹, a power inseparable and yet

¹¹ 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.

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” is, as I am, “the universal of universals” and so it does not merely “exist”. It is. I am. In religious terms, as self is the legitimate and indeed necessary object of philosophy as science of the universal (the Socratic “Know thyself”), so personal salvation is regularly because too literally misread as abstractly individual salvation, which defeats its own purpose if the individual, as abstraction, must die, is philosophically “ruined”, so as to be found in the Idea, knowing only itself, “that they all may be one in us”, words hardly expressive of a purely moral aspiration, if one reflect on them, or on these: “I in them and they in me”).¹²

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What we call the medieval period in philosophy is not to be cordoned off as “The Age of Faith”. There is fluid continuity with, let us say, both its cause and its effect. The dialectical relation of philosophy to theology, of how the servant (but which one of these is that, if each is but moment when put as excluding the other?) not merely becomes but in essence *is* master, is not our immediate topic here. It underlies Marx’s conclusion to the slave-class as the bearer of the Idea, of Part as Whole, of the Whole as this Part, or, in “religious” terms, as Messianic, as he or that which is to come. Marx here interprets a section of Hegel’s dialectical account of phenomenal history in *The Phenomenology of Mind*. As making absolute what is essentially merely a moment of thought in Hegel’s conception he transforms or even deforms, according to taste, the philosophic *continuum*. This moment, that is, applies *equally* to the relation between philosophy and theology or to any relation whatever, *inclusive of the converse of this same relation*, instancing the principle that a subject is itself in its other.

In history, again, in the phenomenal world of immediate perception, revealed religion supplanted or superseded (*aufhebt*) previous philosophy. Philosophy returns and returned, however, to appropriate more fully to itself this concept of revelation. This is the truth underlying Joachim of

¹² “There is no science of the individual”, was the classical teaching. Inevitably, however, there arises the science of this non-being of such a science, and that not merely alongside but as superseding, in *Aufhebung*, the first negation.

Flora's perhaps less than concrete notion of an age of the Spirit. It imposes a task which theology, which is thus "revealed" as "first philosophy", revelation being now grasped in thematisation as divine essence, has yet to complete, thus becoming or *revealing itself*, in and as Reason (*Vernunft* and not merely Understanding or *Verstand*), to be philosophy or *sophia*, wisdom, lover become beloved. That this is that same divine foolishness the apostle Paul later *makes into a theme* is outlined already in the tale of Thales falling down a well while "foolishly" star-gazing and so is not extrinsic to philosophy. In Aquinas's writings, however, the conception (of knowledge as revelation) remains dualistic, as of grace and nature. Close study, all the same, reveals this as an external constraint. "Everything is grace", later theologians such as K. Rahner will teach and this might indeed be seen as "the eclipse of grace"¹³. Which is to say that nothing is grace in the old, ultimately negative sense. "Without me you can do nothing", true enough. In its depths though this means that without me you are nothing and, ultimately, therefore, you are me, I you. This identity is the Absolute, where all being is had since it is being, *der reine Begriff... welche Sein ist*.¹⁴

In religion, then, this wisdom is *represented* as "coming from above". Yet, as correcting this picture, we must grant that there is no contrasted wisdom coming from below. That would be finite, which contradicts all notion of wisdom. In the Apostle's words, again, "In God we live and move and have our being" while, contrariwise, Aquinas clearly affirms, every idea, every notion, as viewed in its truth (i.e. by God), is "one with the divine essence". The whole, *ipsum esse subsistens*, has no parts, as Parmenides apodictically laid down from and as philosophy's beginning. That he did this also *at* philosophy's beginning, thus indicating philosophy's end in and as *the* End, can be no mere accident, is in fact an indication of the history of philosophy's dialectical character, which is impossible without history itself being dialectical, that is to say not, absolutely speaking, temporal. On this dialectical view this is no mere equivocation, as between two putative senses of "end", *finis*. As in Natural Law theory, the actual (not merely the "factual") is itself normative and we are exhorted, in speculative self-contradiction, to "become what we are". As Hegel demonstrates in his *Logic*, end as end is as such realised. This is affirmed in the *faith* that "all shall be well and all manner of thing"

¹³ This is the title of a recent study by Nicholas Adams.

¹⁴ *Wissenschaft der Logik* II, Suhrkamp Verlag, *Werke* 6, p.572, penultimate page of this work, where, in the German, only *Sein* is italicised, and where this concept (*Begriff*) is equally identified with what Hegel calls *die Methode* of Logic, *der sich nur zu sich selbst verhält*.

or that “all things work together for good to them that love God”, to those who see truly, that is to say. In my beginning is my end and conversely. There is not really such a thing as philosophy’s beginning, whatever may be the case with “philosophical science”, given that we distinguish science from wisdom as two different intellectual virtues.¹⁵

Hegel claims to see this philosophical situating of (revealed) religion as the second, transitory form of Absolute Spirit (philosophy is spirit’s final, third form as art is its first, immediate form¹⁶) touched on in the Pauline conception of “the fullness of time”, when, necessarily, “God sent forth his son”. The later writing this as “Son”, with a capital, is the first, Athanasian step towards incorporating revelation into the unity that is *sophia*, where, in Johannine form, “the Word” is God. God *is* his revelation. This, however, as God’s, as absolute, is revelation itself of itself, and not of this or that. Intentionality is here sublated in what works itself out towards the later name of Absolute Idealism, the Idea as absolute freedom coincident with necessity. To necessary manifestation corresponds divine *glory* in religion. This is clearly asserted and not merely figured in the doctrine of the Divine Ideas, which Aquinas did not just treat as an awkward inheritance from Augustine but saw it, in union with the latter and with Plato, as necessary truth.¹⁷ *Bonum est diffusivum sui*.

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Eugene Gendlin, whom we cited at the beginning, in his commentary also points out that Aristotle consistently avoids differentiating between mind and minds, between, in a later terminology, the absolute and the created mind or spirit. This marks a sharp divergence from at least some medieval thinking. “It is evident that it is this man who thinks”, St. Thomas confidently declares¹⁸. But “man” is after all a phenomenal term, while thought is thought. What do we mean by speaking of a created spirit? To answer that we must begin by acknowledging that the term “created” is taken from the finite and hence phenomenal conception of making *from* something else, from a *material*. That this is contrary to the intention is declared when we go on to add: “made out of nothing”, a sheer contradiction,

¹⁵ See Hegel’s essay at the beginning of *The Science of Logic* (WL), “With What Must Science Begin?” Cf. also Aquinas, following Aristotle, on the “intellectual Virtues”.

¹⁶ See the final section on “Absolute Spirit” at the end of the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* III, or of “The Philosophy of Spirit” (EG 556-563).

¹⁷ Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Ia 15.

¹⁸ Aquinas, *opusculum*: “On a Common Intellect”.

however, in true speculative style. So Trinitarians “believe” the Son to be “begotten not made”, *genitum non factum*.

Characteristic of medieval writing, however, is the doctrine of the special creation of *each* “soul”. This is generally presented as a departure from Greek thinking under the impact of a divine revelation coming “from outside”. This expression is, however, already found in Aristotle when he declares that we must say that intellect *as such* comes “from outside”, is not, that is to say, integrated *into* nature (*De partibus animalium*). Only so, as he explains in the *De anima*, is any understanding possible, taken as the power to know the “natures of all bodies”. Anything natural, any *thing* or organ at all, would get in the way of or “appear beside” (*paremphenomenon*) knowing, rendering it not merely impossible but unthinkable, since knowing is self’s becoming other and remaining self just therein. This is conclusively explored in his *Metaphysics*, Book Seven. The soul, or ultimate difference of “a thing”, of animal, plant or man, is the “form” of all as *giving* or formally causing all that that thing is and not merely a crowning part. This is crucial for our account of matter, of bodies and of Nature as a whole. It lies behind Hegel’s conclusion that the Method of “the system of Logic” as content of the Absolute Idea is itself the *form* “for the idea”. Thus “each of the stages hitherto reviewed is an image of the absolute, but at first in a limited mode, and thus it is forced onwards to the whole, the evolution of which we termed Method”.¹⁹ In the end, it is demonstrated in Absolute Idealism, it is not merely Mind that comes, dualistically, from outside but nature as a whole that is neither outside nor inside but *ideal* (*Enc.* 95), and hence nothing except *as* mind.

Now St. Thomas Aquinas knew all this perfectly well when he wrote theologically of the “separated” soul, in truth the substantive form of the person²⁰, explaining, with some difficulty, how such an apparent fragment could be happy, *beatus*, prayed to or invoked and so on. This, surely, is not a failure of integration in his thinking. He just had no other language to hand, and so the richer conception continually pokes through. It pokes through when he says that the fellowship of friends is not necessary for eternal happiness, or when he says that God has no real relation to his creatures, any of them. All there, the blessed, are contained in or, less

¹⁹ Hegel, EL 237 and add.

²⁰ Yet Aquinas writes, in a Scriptural commentary: *anima mea non est ego*, a view, however, not confirmed in Aristotle and indeed overcome in Hegel’s logic, e.g. at *Enc.* 127-130. The view seems to depend on equating, in “reflective understanding”, the “absolute picture idea” of “resurrection”, *re-surrectio* (on which Aquinas was here commenting), with the content of this dogma, of spirit with its appearance(s). Or, *anima* is itself a finite and hence “momentary” concept.

metaphorically, identical with each, recalling though that all real, non-abstract identity is essentially differentiated in order to be identical at all, as Hegel works out in detail and more than once. The real relations are the Trinitarian, though just these are not absolutely relations but ultimately three “persons” or substances, by the Scholastic definition of “person” at least, which are one (hence Hegel can still speak of God as “the absolute person”, whom we address in prayer, for example), though this again is a making finite of the object by the language perforce used, a necessary picturing or “picture-form”, as Hegel will himself acknowledge. Words, after all, “are like the film on deep water” (Wittgenstein). They never, that is to say, entirely capture thought.²¹ Three is not one or, as Hegel says in this context, “It is useless to count”, echoing St. Thomas’s *numeri non ponuntur in divinis* (in his treatise on just the Trinity). In my individuality I am, as (divine) idea, i.e. just as idea, one with the divine essence, “universal of universals”, and only thus does God know or relate to me, as himself namely. This is Hegel’s characterisation of I (one’s self) as what is named by the pronoun “I”, whatever we may wish to “mean” (*meinen*: there is a play on words here in Hegel’s German). It is the same with my or any particular specificity. Each is the form, the exemplar, as that in turn is mode of the absolute, “the absolute in modified form”. Hence “everything is a syllogism” because everything is, precisely, the Concept. Hence, again, all judgments are false, demanding syllogistic redemption, which, however, does not stop short of the one and final syllogism, really a form of the Concept. This at first strange sequence of thoughts actually exemplifies Aquinas’s Aristotelian doctrine of the *verbum interius*, which takes the form of this one word, i.e. as a concept, over each of these three “instruments of reason” indifferently, though thus giving the first, the Concept, *verbum* namely, a *conceptual* priority.

This final self-ablating syllogism he mentions, then, that of Necessity, itself modulates into the category of the Object (finally the Idea): “the syllogistic process may be described as essentially involving the negation of the characters through which its course runs”. One and the same universal “is in these forms, and... explicitly put as their identity.”²² As Henry Veatch once or many times said, identity is *the* logical relation. This transition itself, in Hegel, of the syllogism into its other, the Object in this case, shows we are not concerned only with the abstract “syllogism of

²¹ One should keep silent, wrote the young Wittgenstein, I can write no more, said the mature Aquinas (not only because he had recently hurt his head). “God has spoken only one word” (John of the Cross, meaning *the* Word). Words as such were initially pictured as pictured hieroglyphs.

²² Hegel, EL 192. See also 193.

Understanding” but with it as the rational principle in itself. Nor is syllogism “only an act of consciousness” (EL193). As St. Thomas truly and profoundly says, the premises *cause* the conclusion. It is ridiculous to read this as a primitive or “medieval” confusion of “reasons and causes”, recurring error, until not long ago at least, of a self-styled “analytical Thomism”²³. Things *flow* or return into one another, lower into higher, not as literally absorbed but as returning into the unity from which they were first alienated. Such *exitus* and *reditus* is also St. Thomas’s whole scheme, as it is St. Paul’s, of reality as, in Hegel’s terms, a perpetual “movement” of becoming which thus in itself is one, assured and at peace. As Aristotle had put it, time, as movement itself, does not move.²⁴ As absolute, as Act, however, such movement or “life” escapes Aristotle’s criticism of *finite* movement (or life) as “imperfect act”. It is the rational character of everything as thought or Spirit, itself as its other, namely, or as attraction *in* repulsion. “God is love”, *is* that, in consequent suspension of abstract being in favour of *actus (essendi)*, of the “word” *in* the beginning as itself ever beginning. So, in Hegel’s final summing up, “It is the lesson of Christianity that God is spirit”.

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We need, then, in general, to distinguish medieval thought from medieval language, which did not limit their world, any more than Biblical language, its limitations, limits the message it carries. The limitations of my language would only be the limits of my world (Wittgenstein) if I were limited to my language, as I, being the Concept in identity, am not. Or, conversely, again, “words are like the film on deep water”. It is a matter, recalling St. Paul again, of “understanding spiritual things spiritually”. For Hegel, the mystical and the philosophical are ultimately one, we noted, the mediated as opposed to the immediate. It is therefore plausible to argue that his and Aristotle’s thought thinking itself, or absolute knowing in just this sense, is the final knowing by not-knowing or is the “unknowing” of “the mystics”, preferably, of all of us as mystical or, using Hegel’s term, speculative. “There is one closer to me than I am to myself”, declares Augustine, philosophically in the Hegelian manner. That Augustine speaks frequently with the informality of express devotion, professionally excluded where possible in the later professorial writers, Aquinas and Hegel, is a

²³ Cf. the issue of *The Monist* for October 1997 dedicated to “Analytical Thomism”. It includes articles by the present author, the late Hilary Putnam and others.

²⁴ Aristotle: *Metaphysics*, 1071b.