HEGEL'S POLITICAL THEOLOGY

Andrew Shanks

This study sets out to grasp the continuing contemporary relevance of Hegel's political theology – as a uniquely radical critique of every sort of religious authoritarianism or other-worldliness. Hegel is presented here, in the first instance, as a religious reformer; and this essentially practical concern is shown to be central to his systematic theoretical project as a whole. On that basis, an attempt is made to widen the scope for creative dialogue between Hegel and a number of his later critics: theologians such as Barth and Metz, and philosophers such as Kierkegaard, Voegelin, Adorno, Foucault and Arendt.

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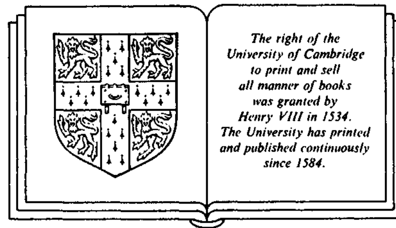

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In memory of my parents
Juliet Shanks
1929–1972
Michael Shanks
1927–1984

Contents

Preface		*page* xi
Abbreviations		xii
Introduction		1
	'Kitsch'	1
	'Inclusive' versus 'exclusive' approaches to christology	4
1	Hegel's christology: 'The speculative mid-point of philosophy'	16
	The broader context	16
	The polemic against theological reductionism	41
	Appendix: Gollwitzer's defence of 'exclusive' representation	68
2	Philosophy and dogmatics	71
	A Protestant Aquinas?	71
	Christology, immortality, 'pantheism'	77
	The boundary of pure dogmatics	90
3	Christology and history	103
	Hegel's path to the philosophy of history	104
	The new priorities – and the Hegelian state	108
	Towards a correspondingly enlarged dialectic	122
4	Hegel's political theology	148
	Comparison with contemporary 'political theology': J. B. Metz	148
	True citizenship: Hegel and Arendt	154
	Arendt contra Hegel, Hegel contra Arendt	173
5	Conclusion	183
	'To live within the truth...'	183
Notes		189
Bibliography		225
Index		232

Preface

This book was substantially completed at the end of 1989. In the end it took the form of a PhD thesis in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Leeds. Much of the thinking behind it, however, belongs to an earlier period of six years, during which I was working as a parish priest in this city. And my first attempt – in the event turned out to be a false start – was, in fact, to write something much more directly political in character.

No doubt there always will be tension between these three worlds: the world of academe, the domestic-religious world of the parish, the secular political world – each with its own quite distinct agenda. Yet it seems to me there is good reason to join with Hegel in lamenting the spiritual fragmentedness of our culture in particular, here. I only wish there were some more obviously effective way to try and set about dismantling the partitions.

I would especially like to thank my thesis supervisor, Haddon Willmer, for all the encouragement he has given me, his sympathy, his many useful suggestions relating to the text. I am grateful, too, to Professor Stephen Houlgate for a number of very helpful comments.

I would like to thank the people of St Martin's Potternewton, and Christ the Saviour, Swinnow, for all that I learnt from them, and for their kindness towards me.

And I would also like to thank Dian – whom I love.

Abbreviations

A	*Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox, Oxford University Press, 1975
EL	*Encyclopaedia Logic* (Vol. 1 of the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*), trans. W. Wallace, Oxford University Press, 1975
ETW	*Early Theological Writings*, trans. T. M. Knox, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971
FK	*Faith and Knowledge*, trans. Walter Cerf and H. S. Harris, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977
Letters	*Hegel: The Letters*, trans. C. Butler and C. Seiler, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984
L	*Science of Logic*, 2 vols., trans. W. H. Johnston and L. G. Struthers, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1929
LHP	*Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, 3 vols., trans. E. S. Haldane, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1892
LPH	*Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree, New York: Willey Book Co., 1944
LPR	*Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, 3 vols., ed. and trans. P. C. Hodgson, University of California Press, 1984–87
PM	*Philosophy of Mind* (Vol. 3 of the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*), trans. W. Wallace, Oxford University Press, 1971
PR	*Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Knox, Oxford University Press, 1967
PolW	*Hegel's Political Writings*, ed. Z. A. Pelczynski, Oxford University Press, 1964
Proofs	Vol. 3 of *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. E. B.

	Speirs and J. B. Sanderson, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962
PS	*Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller, Oxford University Press, 1977
SW	*Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Hermann Glockner, Stuttgart: Frommann, 1927–30

Introduction

'KITSCH'

The better to earth what follows, let me begin with an image from the novel, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, by Milan Kundera. The character described here, Sabina, is a Czech artist, one of those who emigrated in 1968. The passage from which this is taken is headed 'Parades'. It speaks of her feelings about political demonstrations.

> During her studies, Sabina lived in a dormitory. On May Day all the students had to report early in the morning for the parade. Student officials would comb the building to ensure that no one was missing. Sabina hid in the lavatory. Not until long after the building was empty would she go back to her room. It was quieter than anywhere she could remember. The only sound was the parade music echoing in the distance. It was as though she had found refuge inside a shell and the only sound she could hear was the sea of an inimical world.
>
> A year or two after emigrating, she happened to be in Paris on the anniversary of the Russian invasion of her country. A protest march had been scheduled, and she felt driven to take part. Fists raised high, the young Frenchmen shouted out slogans, but to her surprise she found herself unable to shout along with them. She lasted no more than a few minutes in the parade.
>
> When she told her French friends about it, they were amazed. 'You mean you don't want to fight the occupation of your country?' She would have liked to tell them that behind Communism, Fascism, behind all occupations and invasions lurks a more basic, pervasive evil and that the image of that evil was a parade of people marching by with raised fists and shouting identical syllables in unison. But she knew she would never be able to make them understand. Embarrassed, she changed the subject.[1]

Subsequently, Kundera goes on to associate this 'more basic, pervasive evil' with the phenomenon he terms 'kitsch'.

'Kitsch': for Kundera the term means more than just bad art *per*

se; it means the whole mentality out of which bad art springs, and to which it appeals.[2]

A largely self-censored perception of reality – governed by indulgence in a communal narcissism, the desire to feel good about what one is part of – kitsch is in the first instance the raw material of any form of *propaganda*. Indeed, Kundera tells us, 'Sabina's initial revolt against Communism was aesthetic rather than ethical in character. What repelled her was not nearly so much the ugliness of the Communist world (ruined castles transformed into cow sheds) as the mask of beauty it tried to wear – in other words, Communist Kitsch'[3]: the ideal expressed in the glowing joyousness of the May Day parade, or 'the incredible innocence and chastity' of Soviet films in the Stalinist era.

Later, in exile, she is the guest of an American senator. His children are running about on the grass, and 'gazing dreamily at them' the senator is moved to exclaim: 'Now that's what I call happiness'. 'Behind his words', Kundera goes on,

> there was more than joy at seeing children run and grass grow; there was a deep understanding of the plight of a refugee from a Communist country where, the senator was convinced, no grass grew or children ran...
>
> Kitsch causes two tears to flow in quick succession. The first tear says: How nice to see children running on the grass!
>
> The second tear says: How nice to be moved, together with all mankind, by children running on the grass!
>
> It is the second tear that makes kitsch kitsch.[4]

Kitsch, in short, is about feeling oneself to be, quite simply, on the side of everything natural and decent. It is what springs from, and feeds, that warmth of sentimental feeling. And in this sense it serves to express, as Kundera puts it 'a categorical agreement with being'. So too with the May Day ceremony: 'The unwritten, unsung motto of the parade was not "Long live Communism!" but "Long live life!" The power and cunning of Communist politics lay in the fact that it appropriated this slogan. For it was this idiotic tautology ("Long live life!") which attracted people indifferent to the theses of Communism to the Communist parade.'[5] In the same way the crowd of protesters feels good: for they too are taking part in the 'Grand March... on the road to brotherhood, equality, justice, happiness'.[6]

In a phrase which neatly captures both the regressive nature of kitsch and its intrinsic futility, Kundera defines it as: 'the absolute denial of shit'. In other words, 'kitsch excludes everything from its

purview which is essentially unacceptable in human existence'.[7] Similarly, he speaks of it as: 'a folding screen set up to curtain off death'.[8] In another work, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, he describes a crowd circle dancing in the centre of Prague on the occasion of some festivity. It is in June 1950, the day after Milada Horakova, a Socialist politician, and the artist Zavis Kalandra have been hanged: 'And knowing full well that the day before in their fair city one woman and one surrealist had been hanged by the neck, the young Czechs went on dancing and dancing, and they danced all the more frantically because their dance was the manifestation of their innocence, the purity which shone forth so brilliantly against the black villainy of the two public enemies who had betrayed the people and its hopes.'[9] Eventually (in Kundera's own surrealist vision) led by Paul Eluard intoning his poems, the dancers – still dancing – take off into the sky, like angels soaring above the earth.

In general, kitsch has to do with the affirmation of collective innocence – as, also, in the case of another group of circle dancers which Kundera describes, at a political demonstration in the west, facing the riot police: 'Their hearts are overflowing with an intense feeling of innocence: they are not united by a *march*, like soldiers or fascist commandos; they are united by a *dance*, like children. And they can't wait to spit their innocence in the cops' faces...'[10]

Clearly, the intrinsic dynamic of kitsch is deeply authoritarian – even when pitted against the riot police. Whatever shape its self-expression takes – whether parade, circle dance, religious liturgy, or whatever – the collective harmony kitsch offers is only to be bought at the price of an abandonment of free, critical thought. Kitsch is what inspires the crowd; it is the cliché which bonds the crowd together – over against the autonomous individual. It is the acceptable face of the will to suppress and destroy; the means by which the thought-control of the collective (the hierarchy or the peer group) is dressed up and internalized, rendered seductive.

How, then, is that seduction to be undone?

Sabina's distaste for kitsch is grounded, and finds expression, in her calling as an artist. Not everyone, however, is called to be an artist; nor, obviously, is kitsch a problem only for artists. What other effective basis for a spiritual community, truly free from kitsch, is there available? Where exactly would the lines of division have to be drawn, and how, in order to secure such a community? How far, one might ask, is our culture – as a whole – actually built upon foundations of ideological kitsch? Insofar as it was, emancipation

would have to mean a sort of despairing abandonment of all tradition. Or, to what extent is the ideological kitsch by which we are governed merely a superficial deformation of traditions which are in themselves quite alien to it; these traditions being therefore genuinely recoverable as potential resources for our moral education?

And how, in particular, does this apply to our Christian religious inheritance?

I have no doubt that – *in terms of its central logic* – there is that in the Christian gospel which is, indeed, eminently recoverable in this sense. But on the other hand, no spiritual tradition is immune from also being corrupted into kitsch; no matter how authentic in itself.

In this book I am basically concerned with the delineation of that whole issue, in theological terms. It is a book about Hegel, because I know of no other thinker who seems to me to come so close to the heart of the matter in this regard; no other who has grappled, as I hope to show, in such a radical way with the problem of Christian religious kitsch; or who has so decisive a grasp on the countervailing inner truth of the gospel, as an affirmation of (to use his own formula) 'the infinite value of the individual as such'.[11]

'INCLUSIVE' VERSUS 'EXCLUSIVE' APPROACHES TO CHRISTOLOGY

What is at stake here is how one understands the manner in which Christ 'represents' humanity. The key question is to what extent that understanding is a strong, or 'inclusive' one, where the main emphasis is on the *universal* truths about humanity and about God towards which the story points; or to what extent it is a weak, or 'exclusive' one, where on the contrary all the emphasis is on the distinctive *particularity* of Jesus, his set-apartness from the rest of us.

Thus, I do not just want to argue that the gospel can be presented in a way that is free of kitsch. I want to suggest that there is a certain sense in which the gospel itself is actually *centred*, precisely, on an image of the destructiveness of kitsch. That is how I would see the cross. Kitsch titillates; kitsch warms the heart; *in extremis* kitsch also crucifies, or justifies crucifixion.

In particular, it seems to me, this is what the Pharisees stand for in the story. It is surely vital that we should get beyond the traditional caricature of them (especially in Protestant polemic).[12] The spirituality the Pharisees propounded was *not* a peculiarly

legalistic one; that was not what led to Jesus' harsh words against them. Rather, his attack might far better be taken as being directed against the more or less universal phenomenon of the kitsch mentality, which they embody; not at all as an exceptional sort of religious establishment but, on the contrary, as a quite typical one. The destructiveness of the sanhedrin which consented to Christ's passion would, in that case, symbolize the latent destructiveness of all such thinking. And the Roman penal institution of crucifixion would further underline the point, inasmuch as the verdict of crucifixion is a verdict passed not only on the particular individual crucified, but at the same time on the very concept of 'the individual'.

For, after all, crucifixion had a very specific application. Let us recite the basic facts. It was pre-eminently the *servile supplicium*, the slaves' punishment:[13] its use thus both reflected and reinforced the institution of slavery in Roman society, with all that that meant. Whilst there were exceptional cases in which Roman citizens were crucified, this was generally frowned upon.[14] On the other hand, crucifixion was in very widespread use as the standard punishment for rebellious slaves, and for rebellious foreigners – who were reckoned, in this respect, to be on the same level as slaves. It was essentially 'a political and military punishment'.[15] Violent criminals, temple robbers, deserters might be crucified. But mass crucifixions also followed the great slave revolts, especially the last one, that of Spartacus which ended in 71 BC. And the crucifixion of Jesus takes its place historically as merely one in a whole multitude of crucifixions in Judaea, as the Romans battled with the nationalist insurgents there in the period from 4 AD to 70 AD. No elaborate legal process was required. Nor was there the slightest hint of a recognition of any respect due to the condemned man simply as a human individual – such as might have led to a softening of the punishment. On the contrary, crucifixion was supposed to involve a maximum both of obscene horror and of publicity, the better to serve as a deterrent. It was commonly accompanied by torture, a flogging at least, and the cross was erected at a crossroads, in a theatre, or, as in the case of Jesus, on high ground for all to see.

But what is done to one, in a symbolic ritual of this sort, is at a certain level of meaning done to all.

And if the Christian gospel in principle affirms 'the infinite value of the individual as such', then that is surely due, not least, to the way in which the counter-verdict of the resurrection directly reverses

this gruesome symbolism of the cross. Christ's role as representative of all humanity thus actually has its roots in the totalitarian logic of the Roman penal order. In proclaiming the *absolute* worthlessness of this particular slave or foreigner, reducing his body in this way to a display of the merest trash, crucifixion also constitutes an absolute denial of any value intrinsic to human individuality, which would transcend outward social distinctions or be independent of one's deeds as judged by those in power. And it thereby drastically devalues individual human life. This is what crucifixion says; and insofar as the story is understood representatively, this is what the resurrection of Christ turns right upside down.

Clearly, therefore, with Good Friday at its centre, there is that in the gospel which will always, at any rate, tend to resist the co-opting of Christian religious faith for use as (in Kundera's phrase) 'a folding screen to curtain off death'. Nor is it at all surprising if, from the point of view of a spirituality still stuck at the level of kitsch, the original proclamation of a crucified saviour should have appeared to be nothing but scandalous nonsense: 'Jews demand signs, Greeks look for wisdom, but we proclaim Christ nailed to the cross... an offence (*skandalon*) to Jews and folly to Gentiles' (1 Corinthians 1:22–3).[16]

This initial scandal is then, moreover, further reinforced by all that is involved in the paradoxical identification of Jesus as the Christ, or Messiah. For what is here superimposed upon the traditional expectation of the Messiah as a triumphant conquering king is, after all, just about the most discordant image conceivable. 'My kingdom does not belong to this world' (John 18: 36): if Jesus is 'lord' and 'king' – mediating to us, as the Christ, the 'lordship' and 'kingship' of God – this is in human, worldly terms precisely *not* as a king, but as a *prophet*.[17] And in the Hebrew tradition king and prophet appear in many respects as, so to speak, anti-types. The king is the symbolic embodiment and guarantor of national unity, while the prophet is the exact opposite: the God-inspired individual, the frequently marginalized, awkward critic. Thus the authority of the king, as commander in chief, rested in large measure on his claim to military glory. It rested also on his sacred, cultic role as the anointed ruler of God's people. True, the great majority of those who bore the title 'prophet' in ancient Judah and Israel no doubt fitted without difficulty into the established order. But in the great written works

of prophecy which have come down to us both these basic foundations of royal power appear to be swept away. To trust in military might, and to accumulate war horses and chariots, is taken in a number of texts as equivalent to a fundamental lack of trust in God.[18] As the God of Amos famously declares:

> I spurn with loathing your pilgrim-feasts;
> I take no pleasure in your sacred ceremonies.
> When you bring me your whole-offerings and your
> grain-offerings I shall not accept them,
> nor pay heed to your shared offerings of stall-fed beasts.
> Spare me the sound of your songs;
> I shall not listen to the strumming of your lutes.
> Instead let justice flow on like a river
> and righteousness like an never-failing torrent.
>
> (Amos 5: 21–4)

The importance of the national unity focussed on the king and on the priestly cult is by no means denied; but it is affirmed by Amos and those who followed him strictly on the basis of a profound reverence for the transcendent – to which the inspired individual prophet, ostensibly at least outside any loyalties of caste, is given direct, authoritative access.

The Hebrew scriptures as a whole reflect a wide range of opposing views about the nature of kingship, with one pole represented by the full-blown, cosmologically conceived imperialism to be found in texts like Psalm 2. The direct linkage of various messianic prophecies to the Davidic line belongs in this category. And there is also a good deal of militaristic nationalism and priestly advocacy of the cult to be found in this literature. But then, considering the norms of the surrounding world, this is nothing more than what one would expect – and what is surely far more remarkable is the simultaneous existence of another, quite contrary kind of tradition.[19] There is in fact a strand in 1 Samuel which presents the people's original choice to abandon their earlier ways and have a king rule over them 'like all the other peoples have' as being tantamount to a direct rejection of the kingship of God;[20] a notion also echoed in the words of Gideon, in Judges 8: 22–3; as well as in Hosea 13: 10–11.[21] And then, too, there is the acutely anti-monarchical satire of Jotham's fable (Judges 9: 7–15).[22]

How was this possible? It is not that any alternative constitutional system is seriously being advocated. It is quite simply that the

lordship of the God who speaks through the prophets contrasts with the lordship of earthly potentates far more than it reflects it; tends to relativize rather than confirm it. And the power of this tradition within the culture centred on the worship of Yahweh meant that one of the most peculiar features of that society was the space it evidently held open for even the most radical forms of dissent from the prevailing order. The kings could neither prevent subversive ideas from being written down, nor could they suppress what had been written. In such a compact and easily overseeable little society this is certainly remarkable. When one considers the divine status of the pharaohs in Egypt, or the semi-divine status of the monarchs of Babylonia, Assyria and Persia, the contrast is stark: the relationship between the prophet Nathan and King David illustrated by the story in 2 Samuel 11–12 would hardly have been possible under those other regimes, for instance; since the whole point of the story lies in the king's eventual recognition that he is, after all, nothing more than a man ('You are the man'); an individual with moral responsibility for his misdeeds like any other individual. This unique relativizing of worldly authority is indeed one of the most significant practical correlates to the uniqueness expressed, in cultic terms, by the rigorous prohibition of sacred images and of any form of syncretism. The continual 'relapses' of the kings, from Solomon onwards, into 'idolatry' were not perhaps altogether unnatural. And the 'scandalous' Christian appropriation of the tradition of messianic hope, which identifies it with the figure of the crucified rather than with any this-worldly king, might very well be seen as a decisive extension of that whole – from any sort of authoritarian viewpoint perennially scandalous – aspect of the Hebrew tradition.

The problem is, though, that the scandal here must in principle be a scandal to *any* group or institution possessing its own authoritarian orthodoxy – including, not least, *the church itself*, insofar as it has developed in that direction!

The affirmation of a crucified saviour is scandalous in this sense (a) to the extent that Christ is taken to represent the individual dissenter, the questioner, even the heretic, in general; and (b) to the extent that the suffering of Christ is taken as signifying a solidarity with all suffering – the suffering of our enemies as well.

But it is a temptation which any community faces, to take the easier path by both repressing internal divisions and restricting its concern to its own immediate interests And how much the more so

when, like the early church, it is a small body struggling to survive in an extremely hostile environment. There is, indeed, a profound ambiguity already discernible in Paul's presentation of the scandal of the cross. On the one hand, Paul is insistent that the scandal of the cross also leads further. The passage in 1 Corinthians 1 continues: 'My friends, think what sort of people you are, whom God has called. Few of you are wise, by any human standard, few powerful or of noble birth. Yet, to shame the wise, God has chosen what the world counts folly, and to shame what is strong, God has chosen what the world counts weakness. He has chosen things without rank or standing in the world, mere nothings, to overthrow the existing order.' In a world which divides individual from individual, and which links the self-esteem of certain social groups to their contempt for others, the church in principle stands for the opposite: 'Baptized into union with him, you have all put on Christ like a garment. There is no such thing as Jew and Greek, slave and freeman, male and female; for you are all one person in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3: 27–8).[23] And this then further gives rise to what one might perhaps term 'the Pauline theology of liberation':

> This is what I mean: so long as the heir is a minor, he is no better off than a slave, even though the whole estate is his; he is subject to guardians and trustees until the date fixed by his father. So it was with us: during our minority we were slaves, subject to the elemental spirits of the universe, but when the appointed time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to buy freedom for those who were under the law, in order that we might attain that status of sons.
>
> To prove that you are sons, God has sent into our hearts the Spirit of his Son, crying "Abba! Father!" You are therefore no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, an heir by God's own act. (Galatians 4: 1–7; and cf. Romans 8: 14–17)

On the other hand, the context of this experience was the little community's tenuous struggle for survival, faced by the natural hostility of what it perceived as the divisively oppressive surrounding world. For the Roman authorities it was, after all, crime enough that Paul and his followers were engaged in a mission actively to propagate Jewish 'atheism' among Gentiles: Jewish rejection of the imperial cult, along with all other 'idolatrous' worship, being from the official point of view tolerable only insofar as it was confined, in a peaceful way, to the one people among whom it had at least the justification of being traditional[24]. The God of the dissident prophets

was no more congenial to the upholders of the Roman imperial system than to the upholders of any other authoritarian regime; and the worship of one who had been crucified by the entirely legitimate order of a Roman procurator was scarcely calculated to soften the offence. To be sure, when brought before the justices Christians might make the sort of loyalty oath suggested in Romans 13.[25] But the dictates of their faith equally bound them, from the outset, to fail the more serious test of loyalty which consisted in an 'idolatrous' burning of incense before an image of the emperor. Paul of course had had personal experience of being on the receiving end of persecution; those to whom he wrote had, all of them, made the – no doubt often very painful – decision to reject the traditional faith of their families and their previous social circle.

They had been 'set free', he writes. Set free from what, exactly? Set free from sin; from the Jewish law (and its pagan equivalents); from death: these three basic ideas sit closely together in Paul's mind, recurring in various permutations.[26] The link at one level, no doubt, lies directly in the three-fold response of any authoritarian order to that which challenges it: moral condemnation, an appeal for loyalty to the wider group, threats. Baptism signifies that one has 'died' to sin, made a truly radical break from the surrounding world.[27] The harsh verdict on the world which this implies reciprocates the equally harsh condemnation which the basic project of the Christian community was always liable to evoke from those outside; whilst the Pauline concept of the forgiveness of sins can be seen as underpinning the essential self-confidence required for dissent: 'Who will bring a charge against those whom God has chosen? Not God, who acquits!' (Romans 8: 33). Again, the issue symbolically at stake for Paul in a question such as whether or not pagan converts should be circumcised, is the issue of how far the scandalous novelty of the gospel should be allowed free rein over traditional patterns of loyalty. And the whole apocalyptic element in his thinking, too, has to be seen against the background of a situation in which both he and those to whom he is writing actually faced an ever-present threat of torture and death. At all events, the imaginative leap required – across the dividing centuries – for us to comprehend what Paul is saying must, to a very large extent, be a matter of grasping just how scandalous the gospel he preached really was.

Yet it is not difficult to see how, in this context, the experience of

liberation of which Paul speaks might also quite quickly mutate into something very different: a set of defensive reactions to external pressure – which also tend to outlive their original justification. Giving rise to a new form of oppositional kitsch: a closing of ranks, a fanatical struggle of 'us' against 'them'; the ultimate success of which would only too naturally result in a thoroughly authoritarian set of church institutions, themselves quite inimical to the free spiritual and intellectual self-development of the individual.

Such ecclesiastical kitsch, however, then has to develop strategies to cope with the abiding potential scandal of the cross. And the simplest way to do this is to *lift the story right out of its original context* in the ordinary run of human history.

Thus, the scandal lies in the intrinsic symbolism of crucifixion as a penal *institution*. The obvious way to neutralize it is, therefore, for *this* particular crucifixion to be radically dissociated from any other.

No doubt the place that Jesus occupies in history is unique, in a whole range of ways which may either be affirmed (as expressing a genuinely unique authority) or deplored (as expressing a peculiarly potent illusion) but which it requires no special faith to recognize as a simple matter of fact. What the partisans of ecclesiastical kitsch need to do, though, is add to *that* uniqueness a certain *extra* uniqueness – a uniqueness not only of authority but also of nature – which will, as it were, sanitize the story by cordoning it off, rendering it surreal.

The first shock of the gospel actually also gave rise to the most extreme example of this sort of manoeuvre: namely, first and second century Docetism. Such a degrading death seemed utterly incompatible with the heavenly dignity of the saviour; Docetic theory therefore removed the difficulty in the simplest possible way, by suggesting that Jesus did not in fact suffer and die upon the cross but only appeared to.[28] True, this proposition proved just a little too absurd to survive intact as a mainstream doctrine; nevertheless – as has often been remarked – the outlawing of pure Docetic theory by no means precludes the flourishing of a certain 'practical Docetism' in the guise of orthodoxy; or, at any rate, distinct tendencies in that direction. And the orthodox protestation that Jesus was of course 'fully human' is no real guarantee to the contrary.

It is in this context, as well, that one perhaps needs to view the phenomenon of theological anti-Semitism: as just the ugliest, and most fateful consequence of this same need to neutralize the scandal

of the cross. After all, the deepest level of the scandal here lies in the way the cross confronts us with an image of *our own* potential destructiveness: its role as a symbol of the potential destructiveness of human crowds and organizations generally – including those to which we ourselves belong (the church itself as well).[29] But, again, the obvious way to neutralize that challenge is to insist upon the absolute uniqueness of Jesus in the above sense – and therefore the absolute uniqueness of this particular event. An event, that is to say, in which '*they*' were involved, and not 'us'.

At the same time, though, blaming the Jews needs to be understood as just one aspect of a more general strategy, which can still be pursued even without that particular twist. And in this respect the actual doctrine of the Incarnation itself may come to serve, it seems, two quite different – even opposing – functions.

On the one hand, it can serve to underline the scandal: as this event is recognized as *the* central event of salvation history, so the universal truth for which it stands is revealed as *the* basic yardstick against which all else is, from now on, to be measured. Yet on the other hand, it can also be taken as a formulation for just that extra bit of mythological uniqueness one wants to attribute to Christ in order to distance him from all those others who might in any way resemble him. In which case, it serves instead far more as a way out of the scandal. Thus, to the extent that the latter interpretation prevails, the verdict of the resurrection appears as a verdict, in the first instance, *exclusively* on this one particular case. It therefore becomes politically quite harmless: what the crucified Jesus stands for is, from this perspective, not so much a vocation which in principle includes us all; rather, the essential point appears to lie in his achieving something that, in principle, only he could ever do. *Imitatio Christi*, accordingly, tends to recede behind a form of devotion not unlike a 'cult of personality', adoration of the leader. And the special, exclusive status claimed for Christ now seems, more than anything else, to reflect and symbolize the special, exclusive status which the community of his worshippers wants to claim for itself, in the guise of borrowed glory. This 'exclusive' type of christology tends (in effect) to exclude Christ from participation in the common experience of humanity, so as (in effect) to exalt him to the function of a figurehead.

It has to be admitted that, at the level of theory, the issue is seldom so clear-cut. Nor, unfortunately, can it be readily resolved by resort

to the christological texts of the New Testament itself. For here, both types of understanding – both the 'inclusive' and the 'exclusive' approach – appear to lie latent, as equal possibilities of interpretation, within the same, in that sense profoundly ambiguous doctrine. The exceptions prove the rule. Certainly, for instance, nothing could more directly affirm the principle of an 'inclusive' understanding than the vision of the last judgement in Matthew 25: 31–46 – so far as it goes. But then that is just the question: how far can one take it? Do 'the brothers' of the Son of Man here stand for *all* innocently suffering men and women, or only the members of the Christian community? And, still more importantly, to what extent is the *whole* significance, for our salvation, of Christ's suffering bound up with this symbolic role of the Son of Man?[30] Is salvation to be identified with the basic shift in perception implied by this – or is there at the same time something extra involved, in addition to and somehow *apart from* that shift? An 'exclusive' christology would assume that there was; it would seek to emphasize that. An 'inclusive' christology would accord such a text a much more central role. Or then again, to take another example, the frequently repeated imagery of Christ's death as a sacrificial blood-offering no doubt does lend itself very readily to an 'exclusive' interpretation. But this does not have to be the case. For the question remains: how far it might also be legitimate, or in fact necessary, to interpret his death as, in this respect, symbolically representing the 'redemptiveness' (in some sense) of *all* suffering like his. The New Testament writings, in themselves, leave such questions wide open.

In terms of actual practice, however, the difference between the two approaches is, plainly, fundamental.

Just as the outward forms of authoritarian domination can vary enormously, in its degree of ceremonial pomp and ostentation, for example, or bureaucratic complexity, so the theological kitsch by which such domination legitimates itself takes on a whole range of different shapes in different types of cultural context – Catholic, Orthodox, Evangelical, etc. Yet at this level, insofar as the practical choice exists, whatever their other differences all the various brands of authoritarian theology will, quite clearly, tend to come down together on the same side.

The question therefore arises: how might one construct a theology which not only affirmed the opposite – but which in a systematic

way made that affirmation its absolutely central, constitutive principle, the effective basis for all else?

And what I am interested in exploring here is the uniquely radical way in which Hegel attempts to do just that. Hegel himself does not present the issue from the same biblical/church-historical angle as I have done in this introduction. Nor does he, as a matter of fact, use this particular terminology of 'inclusive' versus 'exclusive' types of christology. But it has its origins in the work of Philipp Marheineke, a friend and colleague of Hegel's in Berlin; and in speaking of 'the inclusive understanding' Marheineke is referring specifically to Hegel.

Perhaps the most interesting twentieth-century study of this particular issue is that of Dorothee Sölle, in her book *Christ the Representative*, and Sölle, too, acknowledges her indebtedness, above all, to Hegel.[31] Sölle's is a short book, and she does not consider the broad sweep of his thought in any detail. Yet it seems to me that she is completely right in her identification of Hegel's pivotal historical significance, in this respect.

Hegel's thought as a whole is of course very complex and extraordinarily wide-ranging. If, however, there is a single fresh insight around which, more than any other, the entire elaborate structure of his 'system' is built up, and on which it rests, then it is at least arguable that his 'inclusive' christology is it. At all events, that is what I want to argue in what follows. And so I begin by trying to outline the basic systematic rationale of his thinking from this perspective.

From there I go on to deal with some of the major criticisms that have been levelled against him; enquiring how far such a reading helps clarify the issues these raise. One obviously relevant area of controversy has to do with the problematic inter-relationship between philosophical theology, in Hegel's sense, and critical dogmatics; a vexed question which Hegel himself admittedly, I think, by no means resolves. Another has to do with the implications of his philosophy of history, and the undeniable difficulties this runs into when considered from the very different viewpoint of today. Certainly, Hegel's thought is incomplete. In both cases, though, I argue against readings which, in order to dismiss it, would tend to caricature it as much more rigid than it necessarily is.

Finally, we come to his general political doctrine. Here again I

want to show the decisive role played by his christology; and then to consider what an equivalent political theology might look like, reformulated in the light of the experience of the intervening century and a half. There can be no doubt that it would have to be very considerably adjusted in detail. But the basic challenge of the Hegelian approach, I think, nevertheless remains as valid as ever, even now.

CHAPTER I

Hegel's christology: 'the speculative mid-point of philosophy'

Hegel, it might be said, makes a two-fold contribution to christology 'inclusively' understood. This contribution lies

(1) in the profoundly original way in which he sets this particular issue into a broader context of systematic dialogue between philosophical thought and religious dogma in general; and

(2) in the way in which he then also goes on to underpin that with a radical polemic against any sort of theological reductionism – by which philosophy, in effect, tries to back off from the actual difficulties of such dialogue.

THE BROADER CONTEXT

Hegel places the Incarnation into a world-historical context. In his account the appearance of the Christian gospel features as a decisive turning point in the education of the human race; a definitive revelation of the true meaning of freedom. For him, God is to be grasped as being present throughout the whole length and breadth of human history, wherever there is some experience of liberation; as the Spirit which liberates. And where God is 'made flesh' in the individuality, and hence the mortality, of the particular historical individual Jesus, this is also, by virtue of the transformation it ought to effect in the way we conceive of the divine–human relationship in general, a profoundly political event; with, in principle, far deeper implications than traditional church theology has ever recognized, for the continuing political life of the present. A society properly based on the truth of the Christian gospel would be one which recognized the presence of God in each human individual, in a much more critical sense than the tradition tends to allow. In the end, it will require a complete re-thinking of the institutional basis of both church and state.

Beyond the Unhappy Consciousness

He writes as a philosopher. Indeed, the problem of the Incarnation is really a prime example of a much wider problem his thinking confronts: that is, how to bridge the gap between the two quite different modes of thought proper to religion and philosophy. These two modes of thought may differ entirely in their starting points: on the one hand, the particular stories and images of the sacred handed down to us by cultural tradition; and on the other, our own direct reflection on the experience of life as a whole. Yet they converge. The sacred stories and images function symbolically. And our general experience of life can be understood as positively inviting such symbolic articulation. In Hegelian terminology: religion provides an impressionistic mental representation (*Vorstellung*) of truths and falsehoods that philosophy seeks to think through and distinguish at the level of pure thinking (*Denken*). Religion and philosophy are, in the end, just two different 'forms' for the identical 'content'.[1]

In taking this view, of course, he stands in a venerable tradition of 'metaphysical' philosophy – which, up to a point, has always sought to reinterpret religious dogma along such lines. What is new with Hegel, however, is the decisive way in which he actually extends the whole perceived *scope* of that enterprise.

This is especially apparent when one compares his thinking, for example, with the most significant previous attempt at a non-reductive philosophical christology: namely, that of *Anselm of Canterbury* in his 'Cur Deus Homo'.[2]

Thus, by 'non-reductive philosophical christology' I mean an attempt to demonstrate the character of the Incarnation as a rationally *necessary* precondition for the full reconciliation of God with humanity. Anselm certainly attempts this, just as Hegel does. But for Anselm's argument to work, he has to abstract the Incarnation completely *out of the rest of human history*: his understanding of christology is thoroughly 'exclusive'. What counts in Anselm's theory is precisely the absolute uniqueness of Christ, as the 'God-man'; the way in which Christ's sufferings are supposed to have an infinite significance, quite unlike the sufferings of any other human being. For him, the necessity of the Incarnation lies in the requirement of divine justice that there should be some sort of 'satisfaction' made for human sin, in the form of retributive suffering. But, as an offence against God, he argues, the guilt of human sin is of infinite depth;

hence the only 'satisfaction' that will count is one which takes the commensurate form of just such infinite suffering as (he supposes) we see in Christ; therefore Christ dies for our sins. The rationality of the Incarnation, according to the Anselmian view, lies essentially in its power to bring home to us, in this way, both the sheer gravity of sin and also the sheer intensity of God's love.

Nothing, however, could more clearly illustrate the problem, for Anselm can only achieve this result by transforming the story into something purely mythological: in this theology the crucifixion is placed on the same plane as the fall of Adam, and really only on that plane. The relationship of this cosmic drama to the actual historical events in question – the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth, and the development of the Christian church on that basis – remains quite extraneous to the argument. Lacking this dimension, such christology adds nothing concrete to our understanding of what actually constitutes sin, or what divine love implies in practice; it speaks only of the gravity of the one, and the intensity of the other. It cannot do more. No simply 'exclusive' christology can.

Yet the fact remains that, in terms of attempting a properly systematic philosophical demonstration of the rationality of the Incarnation, no one prior to Hegel seriously gets beyond Anselm. (Thomas Aquinas, for instance, with his usual thoroughness, adds a list of further subsidiary benefits attributable to the Incarnation. But none of these amounts in strictly philosophical terms to an adequate explanation of its rationality – or, at any rate, not in the sketchy way he presents them. Then he simply echoes Anselm.)[3] For the most part, traditional Christian theology has been content to proceed from the Incarnation as an essentially contingent datum of faith. True, there have always been those who, following Abelard, have wanted to speak in a different way of the atonement from Anselm. Prior to Hegel, though, never with anything like Anselm's logical rigour.

Hegel, on the other hand, significantly extends the scope of philosophical enquiry in exactly this area, with an entirely original approach.

I am referring here, primarily, to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, for in the *Phenomenology* Hegel introduces a completely new basic question – or, rather, a completely new method as the foundation for philosophy in general; opening up whole tracts of new territory for philosophical reflection. He asks how we *learn* things. He asks – to put it in the simplest terms – what is involved in our becoming open

to any sort of new experience, or new insight. He sets out systematically to pose this question in relation to as wide a range of different phenomena as he possibly can: ranging all the way, in fact, from the level of the very simplest and most general forms of experience – our basic perception of physical objects and their qualities – right up to the highly complex, and culturally specific, level of a study of comparative religion.

The *Phenomenology*, therefore, consists of what has been called a series of 'flashbacks'[4] – in which the philosopher looks back with the wisdom of hindsight on the struggles of thought at each of these very different levels, tracing their necessary inter-connections. Hegel himself describes it as: 'the way of the Soul which journeys through the series of its own configurations as though they were the stations appointed for it by its own nature, so that it may purify itself for the life of Spirit, and achieve finally, through a completed experience of itself, the awareness of what it really is in itself'.[5] This way, however, can also be regarded 'as the pathway of *doubt*, or more precisely as the way of despair'.[6] For at each stage we are brought up face to face with the *limitations* of the particular point of view in question: the intellectual inhibitions, so to speak, which have got to be overcome in each case, in order for further learning to become possible. Each point of view – or 'pattern of consciousness'[7] – in turn, therefore, is seen to dissolve, so as to be reincorporated into some more open framework of thought, which allows us to develop our sensitivity to what is actually going on, both around us and within us.

But as soon as one starts systematically to ask this sort of question, it becomes apparent that one of the most vital issues is precisely that of the individual's basic confidence, or lack of it, to think *freely* – for him- or herself. And indeed the correlation between freedom, in this sense, and truth is really a crucial presupposition of Hegel's argument in the *Phenomenology* from chapter 4, B, where it first arises, onwards. If, after all, one is to learn new things, one often has to go beyond what one has learnt from others – and sometimes even go directly against the conventional wisdom of the surrounding world. And even where that conventional wisdom is true, its truth can only be properly appropriated insofar as it is exposed to the *risk* of questioning. In such situations the possibility of exploring new insights depends upon having the necessary inner freedom, or confidence in oneself as a questioning and developing individual, to cope with the ensuing conflicts.

What is most original in Hegel's philosophical christology is the way he founds it, entirely, on the basis of *this* necessity.

In fact, right at the outset we find his discussion of freedom in chapter 4, B inextricably bound up with his discussion of the phenomenon of Christianity. As with other parts of the *Phenomenology*, the interpretation of the passage on the 'Unhappy Consciousness' which forms the greater part of this chapter is bedevilled with uncertainty as to the status of the various historical allusions with which he illustrates his argument. In general, the veiled allusiveness of the specific illustrations he uses throughout the *Phenomenology*, and the consequent difficulty and slippery suggestiveness of the text, is Hegel's tribute to the intrinsic breadth of his subject matter, which always far transcends their scope. But here the allusions in question are all references to the history of Christianity. Although nothing is quite mentioned by name, there are fairly clear references to various features particularly of the mediaeval church and Roman Catholicism: the liturgy with its music and incense, the Crusades, the use of Latin, monastic asceticism, the confessional.

From Hegel's initial definition, it is straight away apparent that by the 'Unhappy Consciousness' he means the exact *opposite* to inner freedom. He describes it as the situation where 'the duplication which formerly was divided between two individuals, the lord and the bondsman, is now lodged in one'.[8] It is 'the consciousness of self as a dual-natured, merely contradictory being'.[9] The internal 'lord'-consciousness he terms 'the Unchangeable'.[10] It purports to represent the 'simple' unchanging first principles of truth; in fact it simply stands fixed as an obstacle in the way of any form of genuinely new learning; it will not be moved. The particular individual on the other hand, *as* a particular individual – each with his or her own little bundle of finite experiences (by contrast to 'the Unchangeable', 'the protean Changeable') – here becomes identified primarily with the opposite role: that of 'the unessential Being'. The Unhappy Consciousness aspires to a truth transcending its experience as this 'unessential Being'; it feels at one level constrained to identify with 'the Unchangeable'.[11] But, at the same time, it never fully can. It can not escape its sense of 'the Unchangeable' as a rigidly 'alien Being', restrictive of its autonomy. It is, in short, the unhappy condition of those who have chosen spiritual servitude – although, to be sure, by the very nature of things they are quite unaware of having ever made any actual choice at all.

Many commentators indeed take this to be intended primarily as a critical description of – the essence of Christianity! Or, at least, of Catholic Christianity. They thus focus upon the various historical allusions as providing the definitive clue to the interpretation of the passage as a whole. This is the approach, for example, of Jean Wahl:[12] Wahl sets the 'Unhappy Consciousness' passage against the background of Hegel's earlier, unpublished theological writings – in particular, Hegel's highly favourable account in these writings of the 'happy' religion of ancient Greece, as directly contrasted with the comparatively 'unhappy' religion of Judaism, and of mainstream Christianity.[13] Clearly, there is a continuity of theme here which is undeniable; and Wahl's work, systematically exploring and emphasizing this continuity, has been influential. Jean Hyppolite, in his classic commentary on the *Phenomenology*, refers approvingly to Wahl, and basically follows his approach.[14] And so too, for instance, do such commentators as J. N. Findlay,[15] Judith N. Shklar,[16] Robert C. Solomon:[17] Findlay actually identifies the subject-matter of the passage so specifically with mediaeval Catholic Christendom, even though this is never named, that he finds it necessary to chide Hegel here for showing his 'Lutheran' prejudices in the description; for Shklar, too, this is essentially Hegel's account of 'the sum of the spiritual history of mediaeval Europe'; while Solomon refers, in particular, to the spirituality of St Augustine, as *the* classic example.

Other commentators, however, point to the position of the passage in the overall scheme of *Phenomenology*; according to this overall scheme, they argue, what we are dealing with here must logically be understood as an extremely general phenomenon, susceptible in principle to the widest range of quite different sorts of illustration. That is why – as I have said – the historical allusions with which it is illustrated have to remain what they are, and can not really be discussed in any more explicit detail at this point: the Unhappy Consciousness must be a phenomenon far broader than any one particular religion. Perhaps the classic exposition of this line of interpretation is provided by Jacob Loewenberg in his commentary.[18]

Loewenberg's commentary (which is couched, colloquially, in the form of a dialogue) is, in general, an attempt to expound the substance of Hegel's thought, so far as possible, in purely non-technical terms and with a considerable degree of interpretative latitude; and his treatment of the Unhappy Consciousness is in

many ways a good example of both the potential strengths and the potential weaknesses of such an approach. The Unhappy Consciousness can be seen, he suggests, as a mentality very broadly typical of adolescence, for example (in any culture). And he also refers to certain aspects of Romantic literature. In order to grasp its sheer generality, on the other hand, he abstracts, so far as he can, almost entirely from Hegel's own religious illustrations: in his view, it is very much a failing in Hegel's argument here that he seems to confuse the general with the particular – a basic corrective is needed.[19]

But one has to ask: why, in that case, *does* Hegel do this? Is it simply a mistake? The trouble with Loewenberg's approach is that, for all its opening up of space for alternative readings, it only serves in the end to make the passage very much less interesting than it otherwise would be.

Another writer who takes a broadly similar line is Joseph L. Navickas: 'Though we must avoid the temptation to oversimplify', Navickas writes, 'we can say that Hegel's references to religion on this plane of the *Phenomenology* have no other purpose than to show that the subject's struggle for inner reconciliation is *analogous* to the quest of the religious for the Absolute.' He resists any closer identification than this. So too: 'once the unhappy ego recognizes that he has experiences *similar* to those of the religious, he awakens to a deeper knowledge of his true position'.[20] To speak in this way, though, makes it sound almost as if there were some great gulf fixed between the pure abstraction of this consciousness and the various forms – many if not all of which unquestionably *are* religious – in which it finds concrete embodiment. And how can that be? No doubt Loewenberg and Navickas are right as regards the logically primary sense of the Unhappy Consciousness; the question is, then: how does this relate to the secondary sense which Wahl and others have so distinctly identified and analysed? It seems to me that both senses need to be borne in mind – and held together as closely as possible – if the full meaning of the passage is to be properly grasped.

After all, no matter how broad the range of reference here, Hegel's chief concern surely is christological. He is setting out, in its broadest terms, the problem his christology will solve. The mixture of the general with the particular in his argument may at first sight be curious, but it is nevertheless vital to the point he is most anxious to make. For this has to do with his fundamental understanding of the

inner *truth* of Christian dogma. In his view, the Incarnation – as the central moment of truth in human history – represents the definitive divine response, precisely, to *our need for liberation from the constraints of this very general mentality*.

Essentially, Hegel is suggesting, *the rational necessity of the Incarnation lies right here*: in its character as a radical *antithesis* to the Unhappy Consciousness – in *all* of the many varied forms which that consciousness may adopt.

When the Unhappy Consciousness later reappears in the penultimate chapter of the *Phenomenology*, on 'Religion', it is in fact, in a context which is quite explicitly *pre-Christian*.[21] Here it takes the stage as the despairing 'counterpart and completion' of the 'Comic Consciousness' within the world of ancient paganism. It cries out – somewhat incongruously in the words of a Lutheran hymn, even though Christ has not yet been born, let alone been brought to Calvary – in that phrase, however, of which Hegel as a lover of paradox was always so fond: 'God is dead'. By 'God', in this particular context, is evidently meant, primarily, the pantheon of ancient Greece and Rome. In the Comic Consciousness, as represented for example by the plays of Aristophanes, the gods of that pantheon have already in effect lost all their sacred authority. In reaction to this, the Unhappy Consciousness, now, represents the serious-mindedness that can not rest content in such a sense of cosmic comedy, but which yearns for some new revelation to take its place.[22] The time being ripe – by virtue of this void that has opened up in the pagan heaven and the consequent lack of any real obstruction to what is new – then comes the Incarnation. Many of the previous levels of consciousness discussed in the *Phenomenology* are figuratively described here as 'a periphery of shapes which stands impatiently expectant round the birthplace of Spirit as it becomes self-consciousness' at Bethlehem; while, 'The grief and longing of the Unhappy Self-consciousness which permeates them all is their centre and the common birth-pang of its emergence'.[23] But when God 'becomes flesh' the objective correlates to the two sides of the Unhappy Consciousness, 'the Unchangeable' and 'the Changeable', are symbolically conjoined, so that the apparent opposition between the two is done away. In the place of division: at-onement.

Inevitably, however, explicit theological practice tends to lag behind implicit theological principle. This is the problem. This is what underlies the whole discussion of the matter in the earlier

passage. If the Judaeo-Christian tradition is *especially* afflicted by the Unhappy Consciousness, this is only in the sense that it is especially well equipped to articulate the experience, and so to deal with it. But Hegel's preoccupation here is with the problem of the practical *appropriation*, or *non-appropriation*, of the saving truth of the gospel in terms of actual Christian self-understanding. Nor, indeed, should the seriousness of the underlying critique of Christian tradition as a whole suggested here be minimized. (It seems to me, for example, that it is somewhat misleading to suggest, as Fr Quentin Lauer does, that Hegel's argument in this context 'concerns only religious consciousness pushed to the extreme of superstition', or to describe it as 'a burlesque, not a critique, of Christian religion'.[24] Lauer is reacting to the frequent exaggeration by commentators of Hegel's supposed animosity to ordinary religion.[25] But he is surely over-reacting here – and so in the end robs the passage of its real force. For, if I am right, what we have in this passage is nothing less than *the* fundamental criterion for any authentic philosophical appropriation, in Hegelian terms, of the truth of the gospel.)

And here, indeed, we come straight to the central theme of an 'inclusive' understanding. As Hegel himself puts it: with the Incarnation, 'Consciousness becomes aware of individuality in general in the Unchangeable, and at the same time [in principle] of its *own* individuality in the latter... This unity, however, in the first instance, becomes for it one in which the *difference* of both is still the dominant feature'.[26] Or, putting the same thing another way, he distinguishes 'three different ways in which individuality is linked with the Unchangeable':

> Firstly, it again appears to itself as opposed to the Unchangeable, and is thrown back to the beginning of the struggle which is throughout the element in which the whole relationship subsists. Secondly, consciousness learns that individuality belongs to the Unchangeable itself, so that it assumes the form of individuality into which the entire mode of existence passes. Thirdly, it finds its own self as this particular individual in the Unchangeable. The first Unchangeable it knows only as the alien Being who passes judgement on the particular individual; since, secondly, the Unchangeable is a form of individuality like itself, consciousness becomes, thirdly, Spirit, and experiences the joy of finding itself therein, and becomes aware of the reconciliation of its individuality with the universal.[27]

Despite its trinitarian shape, this is not to be misinterpreted as a definitive doctrine of the Trinity. As the later chapter on 'Revealed Religion' and, still more, his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* make

clear, Hegel is not a Marcionite. But the special association of the Spirit with the overcoming of exclusiveness in christology is a permanent feature of his thought and also recurs in those later lectures.[28] The remainder of the passage in the *Phenomenology* seems essentially to be concerned with forms of Christian faith which fall short of this, still stuck at the second level. And insofar as this is the case, Hegel acknowledges, it may well happen that 'through the Unchangeable's assuming a definite form, the moment of the beyond not only persists, but really is more firmly established; for if the beyond seems to have been brought closer to the individual consciousness through the form of an actuality that is individual, it henceforth on the other hand confronts him as an opaque sensuous *unit* with all the obstinacy of what is *actual*'.[29] Or, as he puts it in the later chapter: faith here still finds itself confronted with 'an exclusive One or unit which has the still unresolved form of a sensuous "other" for the consciousness for which it is immediately present... i.e. Spirit as an individual Self is not yet equally the universal Self, the Self of everyone'.[30] *This* is the real difference between a christology still locked into the framework of ordinary religious *Vorstellung* and one which is truly philosophical in character.

Hegel's struggle to impart concrete form to the virtually formless generality of his subject matter is a bitter one – and the notoriously tortuous obscurity of his style reflects that struggle. This is the case throughout the *Phenomenology*. In the Unhappy Consciousness passage, moreover, matters are further complicated inasmuch as he sets out here to formulate the fundamental principles of his christology in terms so removed from those of ordinary religious *Vorstellung* that there is not even any explicit reference made either to Jesus or to God.

But then again that is just the point. And here we need to go back to Loewenberg's reminder about the place of the passage within the overall scheme of the *Phenomenology*, and what that signifies: for philosophy, the truth of christology is not exclusively grounded in any particularly *religious* form of experience. The condition of servitude to which it stands opposed is not only the sort that finds expression in the shape of theories about God. Much rather, Hegel is trying here to think matters through at an altogether deeper level, one at which the issues simply cut across the relatively superficial divide between religious belief and unbelief. This, after all, is why the general relationship of Hegelian philosophy to religion necessarily remains so open and ambivalent. The Unchangeable, here, is

in the first instance a term for *whatever* stands opposed to individuality: the Unhappy Consciousness is a radically trans-historical and cross-cultural phenomenon.

In its basic devaluation of individuality, in short, the Unhappy Consciousness is surely *just that which 'kitsch'*, in Milan Kundera's sense, *springs from and reinforces*. At first sight this might seem a curious proposition, in that whereas the Unhappy Consciousness is unhappy, kitsch is so often joyous. However, when Hegel calls the Unhappy Consciousness 'unhappy', he does so in the sense that that is the *truth* of this sort of divided self. It does not necessarily follow that it is always recognized as such. On the contrary, one might very precisely define the whole function of ideological kitsch as being to disguise the true unhappiness of the Unhappy Consciousness from itself, distracting it and soothing it: hence, indeed, the characteristically compulsory/compulsive nature of its joyousness – without which the 'unhappy' individual, in Hegel's sense, would feel as lost and isolated as in the terrible parables of Franz Kafka, for instance. (Herein lies the haunting truth of those parables.[31])

The Unhappy Consciousness, then, is that which underlies ideological kitsch – of any sort whatsoever. And in principle, therefore, the atheist kitsch associated with ideologies such as Jacobinism, Comtean Positivism or Marxism for example (in which the dictates of the Unchangeable become identified with 'the general will', 'Humanity', 'the objective laws of history' and so forth) just as much as the religious kitsch associated with traditional Christian, Jewish or any other type of theology.

Of course, just as unfreedom at this level can taken on such a variety of forms, so too can freedom. Obviously, it is by no means only in the outward form of Christian faith that liberation from the Unhappy Consciousness is possible: the point, rather, is surely that Christian dogma provides an outstandingly rich language for articulating such liberation, naming it and exploring its implications – and is in *that* sense to be seen as grounded in a genuinely 'revelatory' act of God.

For Hegel himself – writing in the cultural context of early nineteenth-century Germany – it was indeed inevitable that the primary comparison to impose itself in this connection should have been with the religion of Greek antiquity.

In the Romantic intellectual world to which he belonged there had developed, inspired by the scholarly researches of Winckelmann,

a widespread idealization of ancient Greece – as representing (in Charles Taylor's words) a unique 'era of unity and harmony within man, in which thought and feeling, morality and sensibility were one, in which the form which man stamped on his life whether moral, political or spiritual flowed from his own natural being, and was not imposed on it by the force of raw will'.[32] One finds this especially in the writings of Schiller, Friedrich Schlegel, and Hegel's own close friend Hölderlin; and, as is well known, Hegel too was in many ways caught up by this idealization of Greek antiquity, with the result that both in the final chapter of the *Phenomenology* and in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* we find ancient Greek religion and Christianity very closely juxtaposed. He seems to see the world of ancient Greece as one which had effectively minimized the scope for the positive expression of the Unhappy Consciousness, with a genuinely joyous religiousness; as the dignity of each individual citizen was affirmed through an intense participation in the free political life of the polis.[33] Indeed, in this respect at least, it is true that it remains for him an ideal with which the present reality of modern Christendom hardly seems to compare, so that his descriptions of that world often sound like an elegiac lament for what has been lost. At the same time, however, it never possessed the special resources which Christianity has to grasp and articulate the final theoretical *overcoming* of the Unhappy Consciousness. That is the vital difference.

With its naively anthropomorphic gods, Greek paganism is a profoundly human religion:

> This humanity of the gods is what appears in one respect (i.e., in its most external aspect) to be what is inadequate in this religion; but at the same time it is what is attractive in it, because there is here nothing unintelligible, nothing incomprehensible; there is in God no content that is not familiar to human beings, nothing they do not find, do not know within themselves.[34]

The beautiful human statues of the Greek gods prefigure the Incarnation; it is just that the Greeks failed to go far enough. Thus, in the first place: 'The main defect is not that there is too much of the anthropopathic in these gods, but that there is too little.'[35] The statues are still no more than statues. And, secondly, Greek religion still lacks that which – notwithstanding its greater vulnerability to the Unhappy Consciousness – Judaism first provides: a radically unitary concept of God, to match the intrinsic unity of reason.[36]

Moreover, Greek notions of freedom did not preclude the existence of slaves alongside the free. In Hegel's view, one of the most significant long-term consequences of the rise of Christianity was precisely the eventual disappearance of slavery in Christian Europe, which – the tacit acceptance of the institution in the New Testament notwithstanding – he sees very much as the direct and natural outcome of a faith centred on the Incarnation. (Colonial slavery, the enslavement of other races, was more resilient, but nevertheless clearly on the wane by his day; its formal abolition in the British Empire came in the very same year that he published the *Phenomenology*: 1807.)

Hence the famous contrast, around which he constructs his whole philosophy of history, between the three different views of freedom: that of 'the Orientals', who 'knew only that *one* is free', namely the despotic ruler; that of the Greeks and Romans who knew 'that *some* are free'; and the Christian view, 'that all human beings absolutely (the human being as *human being*) are free'.[37] Short of the dogma of the Incarnation, he wants to argue, there can be no fully adequate religious expression for this latter truth.

In the chapter on 'Freedom of Self-Consciousness' in the *Phenomenology* he approaches the matter from another angle in terms of a different sort of comparison. He leads into his original discussion of the Unhappy Consciousness here by way of a consideration of *Stoicism* and *Scepticism.*

Stoicism and Scepticism, too, are forms of freedom. In that respect the transition to the Unhappy Consciousness, which is a form of unfreedom, is clearly a step backwards. Yet at the same time they also fall short of the real fullness of freedom – and this above all because of their failure to deal adequately with the sort of problems which an examination of the Unhappy Consciousness serves to raise.[38] For the challenge of Stoicism and Scepticism is essentially the challenge of a freedom obtained only by way of a radical intellectual *withdrawal,* so to speak, into oneself. An effective withdrawal, that is, from the actual practical business of helping structure the ethical life (*die Sittlichkeit*) of a community; from the public realm as an arena of real moral passion in any truly innovative sense.[39]

By 'Stoicism' he seems to mean any sort of thinking insofar as it rests on and expresses a fundamental inability to deal with issues of social or political morality, except in the most abstract of terms. (How fair this would be as a criticism of the original Stoics is another

question: again, we are dealing here with ideal types.) The thinking of Stoicism lacks the sort of intrinsic 'content' which can only be derived from a concrete, principled engagement with such issues: 'Stoicism, therefore, was perplexed when it was asked for what was called a "criterion of truth as such", i.e. strictly speaking, for a *content* of thought itself. To the question, *What* is good and true, it again gave for answer the *contentless* thought: the True and the Good shall consist in reasonableness.'[40] In order to say anything more specific such thinking, lacking any content '*in its own self*', has to accept 'one that is *given* to it': given, presumably, by some external moral ideology, unassimilated in any systematic way, un-sifted through. So that here we have 'a truth lacking the fullness of life'; and a freedom which 'is only the Notion of freedom, not the living reality of freedom itself'.[41]

Following that, Scepticism is the next step forwards. Here Hegel seems to have in mind any sort of thinking insofar as it rests on and expresses a principled *rejection* of all received ideas, as such; and, hence, the active undermining of all social and political tradition. This is certainly thinking for oneself in an altogether more real sense than Stoicism is: 'Scepticism is the realization of that of which Stoicism was only the Notion, and is the actual experience of what the freedom of thought is'.[42] In place of the abstraction at the heart of Stoicism: 'In Scepticism ... thought becomes the concrete thinking which annihilates the being of the world in all its manifold determinateness'.[43] Every supposedly objective 'world' defined by a dominant ideology is seen by Scepticism for what it truly is, a subjective world view – a theory, in other words, always entirely open to question.

The trouble with Scepticism for Hegel, however, arises from its ultimate lack of *seriousness* in pressing the questions it raises. Thus, like the Unhappy Consciousness, it is a divided consciousness; the difference being that for Scepticism there is no pain attached to this. On the one hand there is the self which is all-questioning. On the other hand there is the self still, inevitably, deeply entangled in the questionable. 'It affirms the nullity of seeing, hearing, etc., yet it is itself seeing, hearing, etc. It affirms the nullity of ethical principles, and lets its conduct be governed by these very principles'.[44] After all, insofar as one's stance towards every sort of received wisdom is simply one of rejection *a priori*, one scarcely seems to be committed to anything more than a playful outrageousness. Life may be

meaningless – but, then, so what? There is a species of complacency here, which can itself potentially become an obstacle to thought. In the end, such a wholesale critique tends only in the direction of an undiscriminating triviality: 'Its talk is in fact like the squabbling of self-willed children, one of whom says A if the other says B, and in turn says B if the other says A, and who by contradicting *themselves* buy for themselves the pleasure of continually contradicting *one another*.'[45]

Therefore, neither Stoicism nor Scepticism, Hegel argues, can by themselves fully grasp the true nature of freedom. Once again, the comparison serves to highlight the necessity of what faith in the Incarnation provides, as an affirmation of true individuality – God being 'made flesh' in a particular individual. For even while still trapped within the limitations of the Unhappy Consciousness, he writes, such a faith 'has at the same time advanced beyond pure thinking in so far as this is the abstract thinking of Stoicism which turns its back on individuality altogether, and beyond the merely unsettled thinking of Scepticism – which is in fact only individuality in the form of an unconscious contradiction and ceaseless movement'.[46] Stoicism may indeed function as an expression of individuality; but it is not self-consciously or deliberately so. Scepticism perhaps is – yet neither has it fully thought through the claims of individuality. For fully to think through those claims must mean: not only a readiness to call every form of given moral ideology quite concretely into question, but also a truly *impassioned* concern to find some better spiritual basis for our living together, some more adequate form of embodiment for individual freedom in the ongoing life of a community. So, too, in another place, Hegel differentiates the inwardness of Christian spirituality from that of Stoicism, which 'seeks the reality of thought in the world, nature, natural things, and their comprehension', and which consequently is 'without infinite anguish, and has at the same time a thoroughly positive relation to the world'.[47] And while Scepticism (which he does not mention here) may stand in a somewhat less positive relation to the world, nevertheless it still lacks that emotional depth, that 'infinite anguish' in its questioning of the established order.

But, he goes on: it is only in the negativity of 'the infinite anguish of love', as this is articulated in the gospel, that 'the possibility and the root of truly universal justice and of the actualisation of freedom' is found.[48] It is only out of that negation that 'subjectivity' finally

comes to understand 'its infinite value' and manages to abandon decisively 'all distinctions of mastery, power, position, even of sex and wealth', with the affirmation that 'before God all human beings are equal'.[49] In other words: what is lacking in both Stoicism and Scepticism, for Hegel, is any means of articulating the true *pathos* of inner freedom, in its inevitable conflict with the not-yet-free world. They fail to grasp the sheer urgency of transcendence. In that sense, what the unhappiness of the Unhappy Consciousness expresses but distorts, Stoicism and Scepticism have no means even to express.

The fundamental problem to which christology is potentially the solution, in Hegel's thought, might thus be defined in these two ways: (a) it is the question of finding a basis on which something like the 'beautiful' harmony of ancient Greece could ideally be recreated, only at a decisively deeper level of freedom. (b) It is also a question of recapturing the real inner freedom of Stoicism and Scepticism, only in terms that would actually give that freedom, so far as possible, a real political potency as well – through its embodiment in the sacred doctrine of a 'Spiritual Community'.

The bulk of the Unhappy Consciousness passage, however, is the description of three different levels of failure in terms of actual Christian practice to realize this potential of christology. And here – notwithstanding the Catholic flavour of the allusions – he clearly is speaking about features common, in varying degrees, to every denominational form of Christianity, and every period of Christian history. These are, essentially, three different levels of 'exclusive' christology in action.

At its most primitive, such christology takes the form of a 'devotion' which is almost entirely unreflective: at this level, the significance of one's faith is seen only within the immediate context of the specifically sacred, in the simple practice of a liturgy; so that, 'Its thinking as such is no more than the chaotic jingling of bells, or a mist of warm incense, a musical thinking.'[50] What is lacking in such devotion is any sort of reflection that would explicitly relate this particular sphere of experience to the rest of life. In terms of its practical consequences, faith in the Incarnation therefore serves only to provide a particular object for the 'infinite yearning' of the devotee – which could, however, perfectly well have any other object and remain substantially the same. The fact that this yearning is focussed on a particular historical individual may give rise to such

distinctive phenomena as pilgrimages or crusades. But all that is gained in that way is access to – 'a grave'. A grave which is, for Hegel, symbolic of the sheer futility of this kind of radical unreflectiveness in general.

Obviously, though, the overcoming of the Unhappy Consciousness involves more than simply relating what one does liturgically to one's experience of life as a whole; for that can still be done in ways which, to all intents and purposes, leave out christology, as happens on the second level.[51] At this stage, the whole realm of 'desire and work' does indeed become the object of explicit reflection; but the yawning gulf between the particular individual and the universal 'Unchangeable' is on the other hand merely traversed, from the one side by the operations of (in theological terms) providence and grace, and from the other by a response of humble thanksgiving. It is in no sense called into question.

Only at the third level does the real issue at stake grow clear: for whereas both the two preceding stages, in their different ways, represent levels of consciousness at which the essential unhappiness of the Unhappy Consciousness is left unformulated, 'Here', as Hegel puts it, 'the enemy is met with in his most characteristic form.'[52] The unhappiness is now made explicit in the self-loathing of a rigid asceticism; and further results in a rigidly authoritarian dependence on some 'mediating' other, in order to be able to enter into any sort of real relationship with 'the Unchangeable' at all. The role of 'mediator' might be taken by a father confessor; more generally, by any form of institutional church as a whole; or indeed by simply any authoritarian body. 'Through [three] moments of surrender, first of its right to decide for itself, then of its property and enjoyment and finally through the positive moment of practising what it does not understand', the Unhappy Consciousness at this level 'truly and completely deprives itself of the consciousness of inner and outer freedom, or the actuality in which consciousness exists *for itself*.'[53] By means of this sacrifice of submission to the will of 'the Unchangeable', as supposedly represented by the 'mediator', the Unhappy Consciousness has no doubt '*in principle* obtained relief from its *misery*',[54] namely, in the absolution which the 'mediator' pronounces. But the 'relief' is obtained only 'in principle': absolution is still perceived as entirely dependant on that sort of authoritarian mediation, rather than as grounded immediately in the intrinsic nature of Spirit. For 'principle' to become reality, in

short – and for this to find its true expression in the doctrine of the Incarnation – the mediation of Christ would have to be understood in quite the opposite sense; and at the same time as altogether relativizing and calling into question every other such subordinate form of mediation.

But this entails, for Hegel, a radical *christocentricity*. The liberation from the Unhappy Consciousness, for which faith in the Incarnation stands, can only become reality insofar as all other preconceptions are set aside, and the Incarnation is allowed to be absolutely definitive of the nature of God. For the Unhappy Consciousness to be transcended, it has to be brought to that pitch of despair where it cries out that 'God' – its God – 'is dead'.

In the *Phenomenology* that cry is set in the context of classical antiquity. In the earlier text on *Faith and Knowledge* the same formula appears at the conclusion of an extended discussion of post-Enlightenment theology, this time as encapsulating (however paradoxically) 'the feeling... upon which the religion of more recent times rests; the same feeling that Pascal expressed in so to speak sheerly empirical form: "la nature est telle qu'elle *marque* partout un Dieu *perdu* et dans l'homme et hors de l'homme"'.[55] In both cases Hegel is talking about the more or less complete collapse of every previous theological certainty. Yet in linking that experience to the story of Good Friday he is actually presenting it as being, itself, a necessary moment in the overall process of divine revelation. Only in a culture whose gods had 'died' could a new faith like Christianity ever initially have spread. And so too the radically critical philosophical reappropriation of Christian dogma which Hegel himself is attempting is only possible in the wake of the Enlightenment, with its profound challenge to every sort of received religious tradition.

The Unhappy Consciousness maintains itself, basically, by not questioning what it projects on to God. When it cries out that 'God is dead', what has in fact died is 'the *abstraction* of the divine Being'.[56] A picture of God, in other words, which has hitherto been kept safe from any serious questioning in terms of actual concrete experience. The *Phenomenology* as a whole, may be regarded as a systematic analysis of the various levels of actual concrete experience which are relevant to such a questioning: it is in that sense that, in his conclusion, Hegel describes it as an account of – 'the Calvary of absolute Spirit'.[57] And this is what he means in *Faith and Knowledge*

where he speaks of the need to 're-establish for philosophy... the speculative Good Friday in place of the historic Good Friday'; urging that, 'Good Friday must be speculatively re-established in the whole truth and harshness of its God-forsakenness.'[58]

The juxtaposition of the 'speculative' and the 'historic' here, does not mean that the original historical context of the metaphor is just to disappear from view. But the point is that the historic, revelatory truth of Good Friday is henceforth to be inscribed right at the very heart not only of the gospel story itself, but also of the whole enterprise of philosophical theology – in an altogether new way.[59]

Conscience, action, forgiveness

'The Unhappy Consciousness', Hyppolite writes, 'is the fundamental theme of the *Phenomenology*.'[60] And certainly, from chapter 4 on Freedom of Self-Consciousness onwards, there is a sense in which the whole subsequent argument of the *Phenomenology* has to do with clarifying, from various different angles, the basic issue which is introduced here: of what it might mean to achieve a full reconciliation between the two poles which the Unhappy Consciousness holds apart. Partly, this is a matter of further clarifying what such a reconciliation does *not* mean, in terms of moral practice.

In the latter half of chapter 5 Hegel compares various potential modes of relationship between the individual and society in which the issue is *oversimplified*. These oversimplifications, each one developing out of the other, include: (a) ruthless hedonism; (b) the 'Law of the Heart', or the sentimental but aggressive pursuit of purely idiosyncratic causes; (c) 'Virtue', in the sense of a merely abstract general condemnation of egoism; (d) the 'Honest Consciousness', self-expression in the shape of a narrow dedication to some chosen specialized task (*die Sache Selbst*), which allows the same to others, but lacks any broader vision; (e) a broader vision ('Reason as Lawgiver'), still, however, without any adequately concrete analysis of differing moral situations or callings. In each of these forms of consciousness the particular individual rationalizes his or her own conduct, understanding it therefore to be in accordance with the 'universal' good; and to that extent it is, it is true, practically reconciled with 'the Unchangeable' of the Unhappy Consciousness. In none of them, on the other hand, is the reconciliation at all complete, inasmuch as they each leave whole aspects of experience out of account, and so untouched – a point

Hegel seeks to demonstrate with a good deal of characteristically intricate argument.

This process of clarifying the issue is also partly a matter of analyzing the ways in which specific sorts of *cultural environment* come into play. And that, then, is the central theme of chapter 6 ('Spirit'), in which Hegel contrasts different levels of cultural openness to the questioning of tradition, In this chapter it is first and foremost a question of the cultural scope provided for an *explicit* working out of freedom. At the most elementary level – as illustrated by the story of Creon and Antigone – one sphere of tradition can only be called in question on the basis of another: the traditional claims of the state, as represented by Creon, are confronted by the equally traditional claims of the family, as represented by Antigone; so that the issue of the Unhappy Consciousness, the freedom of the individual as such, can not really be posed in explicit terms at all. But from that starting point Hegel proceeds to trace a progressive opening up of the cultural world. This begins with the deliberate rationalization and codification of tradition in the form of a universal system of law, such as that of the Roman Empire. It continues with the development of conscious theoretical reflection on the political and economic requirements of society, and the 'enlightened' calling into question of traditionally given religious beliefs; processes richly illustrated by allusion to European history from the Renaissance onwards. As the argument unfolds, all the various inherited cultural inhibitions constraining the free expression of individuality are being stripped away; until none are left.

And here we arrive at another key passage, from a christological point of view, namely, the discussion of the concept of *Conscience*. Hegel places this right at the end of chapter 6: the cultural context here in principle bars no question at all. In that sense it represents a return – after a long but necessary detour – to the point reached, at a more abstract level, at the end of the previous chapter, on 'Reason'. In some ways it resembles (d), the Honest Consciousness: it manifests a similar basic pluralism, allowing each individual an equal right to determine what is for them *die Sache Selbst*. What has changed is simply the scope of what is involved: *die Sache Selbst* 'was there [namely, at the level of the 'Honest Consciousness'] *predicate*; but... in conscience... is for the first time a *subject*'.[61] In other words, the specialized task of the Honest Consciousness has now given way to the more general vocation to be true to one's own self, an enterprise encompassing one's whole life.

This, however, also presents us with a new problem. For a radical adherence to the standpoint of Conscience leaves one with no strictly definable or objectively observable criteria for what is right or wrong in any particular case; so how is genuine conscientiousness ever to be *recognized* as such? How is it to be differentiated from hypocrisy? After all, social harmony largely depends on people's mutual recognition of one another's moral integrity. But does not the principle of Conscience render this impossible?

Arising out of this problem, are we not faced with a great temptation here? Obviously, if one wants to maintain a harmonious relationship with other people on the basis of mutual respect for the dictates of one another's conscience, it will be far easier to do so if the actual expression of Conscience just confines itself to private *talk*. The difficulties only come to the surface when it leads to something more, to controversial public *action*. Far easier, then, to abstain – to find conscientious grounds that render such action always out of the question. This is the position of what Hegel terms the 'Beautiful Soul'.[62] The Beautiful Soul is conscientious to a fault: it 'lives in dread of besmirching the splendour of its inner being by action and an existence; and, in order to preserve the purity of its heart... flees from contact with the actual world'.[63] Supposing it were possible (which, in any strict sense, it surely is not) to put a whole community of Beautiful Souls together, and you would end up with a rather elevated sort of mutual admiration society. Hegel in fact lays it on quite thick, in his portrayal of this: 'The spirit and substance of their association are thus the mutual assurance of their conscientiousness, good intentions, the rejoicing over this mutual purity, and the refreshing of themselves in the glory of knowing and uttering, of cherishing and fostering, such an excellent state of affairs.'[64] The Beautiful Soul does indeed feel reconciled with God; it has set aside any authoritarian image of God, and in that sense has transcended the Unhappy Consciousness. Yet in another sense it has simply transferred the 'fluctuating attitude to itself of the Unhappy Consciousness' on to another level.[65] The split within the Unhappy Consciousness is reproduced, now, in terms of the conflict between two sharply opposed types of motivation: the purely conscientious, and the impure. Between these two, for the Beautiful Soul, there can be no reconciliation: mixed motives, of any sort, are simply disallowed. In that sense, the Beautiful Soul remains 'unhappy'.

No doubt it *is* possible for the principle of Conscience to become

the basis of a genuinely social spirit. But not like this. So how, then? The answer comes in the form of a sort of dialogue between two different 'consciousnesses': one of them the Beautiful Soul, now transformed into the figure of the 'Judging Consciousness'; the other being the diametrically opposite figure of one who places all value in action and the achievement of concrete results – and who in the sight of the Judging Consciousness therefore becomes the unscrupulous 'Evil Consciousness'.

This dialogue passes through three phases. (1) The Judging Consciousness denounces the 'evil' one in quite general terms for hypocrisy, in that it pretends to act conscientiously, out of 'pure duty', whilst in fact remaining completely indifferent to the question of good or evil motives, as such. To which the Evil Consciousness at first responds by brazening it out: sometimes hypocrisy is necessary, even justifiable on conscientious grounds. And, besides, is not the Judging Consciousness itself hypocritical – professing as it does to seek the good, yet always too fine in actual practice to *do* anything effective for the sake of the good.[66] (2) The Judging Consciousness then becomes somewhat more specific in detailing its suspicions as to the other's real motives for what it does, pointing out how it is perhaps at least to some extent affected by the desire for fame, ambition, a sense of self-righteousness, etc. And this the Evil Consciousness can not deny. It confesses its sinfulness. Nonetheless, it persists in its complaint: such a continual, unrelieved and hypocritically un-self-critical suspiciousness as to the baseness of others is surely *itself* a thoroughly 'base' attitude (as Hyppolite comments, one might well be reminded here of Nietzsche, with his critique of '*ressentiment*'-morality).[67] (3) The fundamental problem is thus, in the end, identified as being the obstinacy of the Judging Consciousness, which at first just entirely refuses either to listen or to forgive. 'It thereby reveals itself', Hegel writes, 'as a consciousness which is forsaken by and which itself denies Spirit.'[68] The point is: only insofar as this last obstacle has been removed, will a true community of Conscience ever in the end be feasible. The solution must, somehow, lie in the reconciliation of these two opposing 'consciousnesses', with the confession of the one eventually being met by the forgiveness of the other.

'Confession' and 'forgiveness': what is really interesting is the way Hegel interweaves into the discussion here these *christological* themes. That both sides of the dialogue – at a level of pure

abstraction – do represent basic aspects of truth is surely clear enough. On the one hand, it is obvious that the affirmation of individuality by appeal to Conscience can not be allowed to become *carte blanche* for just any kind of arbitrary self-assertion. On the other hand, mixed motives are almost inevitable, and must therefore be allowable, at least up to a point, if any sort of controversial or dissenting action is ever to be possible. But what is remarkable is the particular *place* Hegel accords to these observations. For this passage functions as the vital transition point, from which he at last turns directly to consider the whole phenomenon of 'Religion'. At several points earlier on in his discussion of the realm of 'Spirit' he has touched on the question of religion; but it is only here that he is ready to move on to discuss the truth of religion as such. The possibility of so doing emerges precisely at the point where the Judging Consciousness drops its defences, acknowledging its ultimate one-ness with the Evil Consciousness, and where the Evil Consciousness reciprocates: for *this* is the essential content that now has to be unfolded in the form of religious *Vorstellung*, above all in terms of the Incarnation.[69]

It is a truth about 'forgiveness': forgiveness both human and *divine* – as human forgiveness serves to mediate and express the love of God. 'Forgiveness' in a very definite sense, however. Such forgiveness, after all, has nothing in common with what the authoritarian 'mediator' proffers to the Unhappy Consciousness. And neither could the corresponding confession be more different from the self-abasement of the Unhappy Consciousness. This drama of confession and forgiveness is decisively set in a context of freedom.

One might perhaps illustrate the fundamental distinction involved here in terms of the actual history of the Christian preaching of forgiveness: it is, surely, just like the difference between what was originally implied when Paul spoke of the forgiveness of sins – and what his words so often come to mean when taken up into the safer context of established Christendom. Thus, in terms of that contrast, the experience of forgiveness which Hegel is describing here might be said to be the experience of Romans 8: 33: 'Who will bring a charge against those whom God has chosen? Not God, who acquits!' It is a vindication of the sort of bold and controversial *act* of conscience involved in abandoning the religion of one's ancestors and one's neighbours, and braving the bitter reproaches of the surrounding world – reproaches playing upon one's own inevitable sense of guilt

– in order to enter into a new faith. And as such it is plainly quite different from that experience of forgiveness-through-conformity – whether this be 'mediated' through the authoritarian penitential discipline of a great established ecclesiastical institution, or through one's approved adherence to the norms of some tight little authoritarian sect – which is basically all that the Unhappy Consciousness is capable of rising to. The same language (of Christ's atoning death and so forth) can be used in both of these diametrically opposite kinds of sense; the two possibilities continue to exist side by side. But it is the vital task of philosophy to clarify the underlying issues at stake in this contrast, and to highlight it.[70]

Dorothee Sölle, in her brief account of the Hegelian doctrine,[71] stresses what she sees as its essential mediating character between two traditionally opposing approaches to the Christian concepts of atonement and forgiveness. What is at stake here is the balance between the divine initiative and the necessary human response. She finds such a balance already present, in a paradigmatic way, in the thought of Martin Luther; and she directly contrasts Luther's doctrine of 'imputation' with the Anselmian doctrine of 'satisfaction'. Like Anselm, and against any merely moralistic view, Luther stresses the element of divine initiative, in the sense of the sheer unconditionality of grace, the objective given-ness of atonement, irrespective of merit. But whereas in the Anselmian theory 'Christ as it were stands facing God, but with his back turned on us',[72] the Lutheran idea of atonement through 'imputed righteousness' does at least have the capacity to express a more 'inclusive' view; whereby Christ stands as the pioneer of a new relationship with God, one into which we too are being invited to enter: that is, as having the same relationship as his 'imputed' to us. In later Protestant theology, however, Sölle suggests, the two sides can be seen to have fallen apart:

The Enthusiasts and Anabaptists failed to grasp what Luther meant by imputed righteousness, fearing it would inevitably lead to moral laxity or, in theological language, 'cheap grace'. Nor was it understood by those who, like Melanchthon, stressed the forensic character of imputation as a divine verdict pronounced and in force in heaven. The unity of imputed and effective righteousness, which Luther at least sought to safeguard, broke up. While orthodox Lutheranism put all the emphasis on imputation, interpreting it lop-sidedly as non-imputation of sins, and therefore

negatively, the emphasis in Thomas Müntzer is on effective righteousness, which is so important as to debar the Christian from 'boozing at Christ's expense'... On the left wing of the Reformation, soon driven into the underground of sects and groups, representation disappeared into discipleship, while the victorious right wing slipped back into the satisfaction theory of Christ's work.[73]

Hegel, in her view – and the point seems to me to be well made – restores the balance that had been lost here; only now for the first time in philosophical form.

As we have seen, his opposition to the conservative position – the Anselmian understanding, restored by Melanchthon and others – is fundamental. His thinking represents, in effect, a radical insistence on the principle of the intrinsic 'irreplaceability of the individual';[74] there can therefore be no question here of Christ appearing as a 'substitute', miraculously interposed between us and the otherwise implacable wrath of God.[75]

But at the same time he stands equally opposed to the no less one-sided moralistic interpretation of the gospel, which has always been the fatal temptation of theological rationalism. If philosophy has to rise above the view of atonement as 'the deed of an *alien* satisfaction',[76] it nevertheless has to criticize that misconception from the standpoint of a *richer* notion of divine forgiveness, not a poorer one.

This point is most explicitly developed in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. The suffering and dying of Christ, considered as having representative significance, are, Hegel remarks here, ideas 'opposed to the doctrine of moral imputation according to which all individuals are accountable only for themselves, and all are agents of their own actions'. The trouble with that doctrine, however, is that it belongs to a mode of thinking still trapped within 'the region of finitude': it fails to allow for the sheer freedom inherent in 'the infinite of Spirit', to 'undo what has been done'; to remember certainly, but to 'strip away' past guilt insofar as this can simply be crippling and destructive.[77] And in that sense, it only inhibits the possibilities of conversion.

For faith is the truth, the presupposition, that reconciliation is accomplished with certainty in and for itself. [And] only by means of this faith that reconciliation is accomplished with certainty and in and for itself is the subject able and indeed in a position to posit itself in this unity.[78]

The argument about Conscience stands in the background here:

the problem with any theology lacking an adequate concept of divine forgiveness is that it lacks a proper basis in principle for that free political community of conscientious individuals which is the Hegelian ideal.

As Sölle's mention of Thomas Müntzer suggests, one possibility the Hegelian position is certainly designed to exclude is any sort of intolerant sectarianism, appealing for its justification either to divine wrath or a secular equivalent; no matter how rational in form. The anti-political fastidiousness of the Beautiful Soul belongs at the other end of the spectrum; but its underlying affinity to the sectarian mentality – in the neurotic censoriousness of its moralism – is also clear enough.

The Hegelian project is to build the least mystificatory, but theologically most decisive antithesis to both. And this means: an understanding of the atonement whereby (a) Christ is far more than just a model for imitation; but (b) his representative role is fully inclusive.

THE POLEMIC AGAINST THEOLOGICAL REDUCTIONISM

Hegel on his immediate predecessors

These christological insights are absolutely central to the whole Hegelian 'system'; not only in those works in which they are directly discussed – the *Phenomenology* and the various lecture series on philosophy of history, philosophy of art and philosophy of religion – but also, indirectly, as a vital part of the background to his critique of other philosophical positions – above all, in the two versions of the *Logic*, in *Faith and Knowledge* and in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*.

And here I have in mind, especially, his arguments against what one might term two basic types of philosophically grounded theological reductionism: (a) thinking which seeks to put *a priori* restrictions on our knowledge of God – a position represented above all, for him, by the three closely associated figures of Kant, Fichte and Jacobi; and (b) the type of view he terms 'acosmism' – as represented, in particular, by Spinoza.

These may be two completely different approaches to the general enterprise of philosophical theology. But both alike are approaches which serve to inhibit or to prevent the particular sort of intimate

engagement of philosophy with the actual data of religious *Vorstellung* which Hegel himself is anxious to establish, essentially on the basis of his christology. And they were also, in many ways, the two dominant types of philosophical influence on the intellectual world of Hegel's formative years: the most significant existing alternatives, therefore, over against which he had to develop his own distinctive viewpoint.

Kant, Fichte, Jacobi

Hegel first groups these three thinkers together in his early essay *Faith and Knowledge* (published in the *Critical Journal* in 1802, five years before the *Phenomenology*). This whole essay is dedicated to the subject, and already here we find the basic arguments that he also reiterates in his later works. The inter-relationship between the three is somewhat differently presented in different contexts: in *Faith and Knowledge* they are (perhaps a bit artificially) grouped with Kant as thesis, Jacobi as antithesis and Fichte as synthesis; in the introduction to the *Encyclopaedia Logic* the contrast is between two standpoints, that of Kant and Fichte which comes first, and that of Jacobi which follows; in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* the order is Jacobi, Kant, Fichte. However, Hegel consistently stresses the underlying affinity between all three. In *Faith and Knowledge* he sees them essentially as representatives of a philosophical standpoint in which the Enlightenment attack on objective religious dogma is brought together with 'the beautiful subjectivity of Protestantism'. This is most straightforwardly the case with Jacobi, with whom Hegel also associates the early Schleiermacher. The austere moral rigorism of Kant and Fichte is, in a sense, more *sui generis*; and to that extent, they are more interesting thinkers in their own right than Jacobi is. Nevertheless, he suggests, all three emerge out of the same cultural environment, and have to be viewed as representing variants of the same fundamental theological strategy in response to that environment.

This is a strategy which centres on a decisive partitioning of mental life. On the one hand there is the apprehension of empirical fact, the function of *Verstand*: the 'understanding' or, perhaps better, the 'intellect': knowledge of the finite. On the other hand there is the apprehension of divine reality behind and beyond the realm of empirical fact: that is, our encounter with the infinite, which we owe to the operation of reason (*Vernunft*) grounded in Faith; which Kant

opposes to 'knowledge'; and which Fichte and Jacobi regard as, at any rate, providing a quite different *sort* of 'knowledge' from *Verstand*.

According to this strategy the vital thing is that these two activities should be seen as being essentially *independent* from one another. As Hegel puts it in *Faith and Knowledge*: 'The fundamental principle common to the philosophies of Kant, Jacobi and Fichte is... the absoluteness of finitude and, resulting from it, the absolute antithesis of finitude and infinity, reality and ideality, the sensuous and the supersensuous, and the beyondness of what is truly real and absolute.'[79]

Hegel's basic objection is to this whole view of finitude and infinity. In fact, his critique of these philosophies leads straight into what is in many ways the real heart of his argument in the *Logic*.[80] What Kant, Fichte and Jacobi fail to see is that, 'if infinity is thus set up against finitude, each is as finite as the other'.[81] For them the infinite is an endless 'beyond' to the finite – which it excludes, and by which it is, in that sense, bounded. But for Hegel, on the contrary, the 'true' infinite cannot be anything other than that which is, in every sense, *un*-bounded. And from that perspective, therefore, what these other thinkers have in mind when they speak of the infinite is, really, an infinite 'infected with the finite', a 'bad infinite'. 'To suppose that by stepping out and away into that infinity we release ourselves from the finite', he remarks, 'is in truth but to seek the release which comes by flight. But the man who flees is not yet free: in fleeing he is still conditioned by that from which he flees.'[82] He takes up the Kantian distinction between *Vernunft* and *Verstand*, and transforms it: with *Vernunft* – in the theological context – now strictly identified with thought which grasps the 'true' infinite, and *Verstand* signifying thought which (in whatever way) falls short of this. The distinction these three thinkers draw between *Verstand* and *Vernunft* is itself, in other words, a prime example of what he would call *Verstand* at work. He also draws a parallel distinction, at the level of philosophical system-building, between 'reflective' and 'speculative' philosophy. Reflective philosophy is, in general, philosophy still stuck within the limits of *Verstand*, in his sense. His term for the common standpoint of these three in *Faith and Knowledge* is 'the reflective philosophy of subjectivity'.[83]

But what is the real difference *in practice* here?

In the first place, such thinking falls short of what Hegel calls true

'idealism': 'In philosophy idealism consists of nothing else than the recognition that the finite has no veritable being. Essentially every philosophy is an idealism, or at least has idealism for its principle, and the question then is only how far it is actually carried through.'[84] A thinking which puts empirical knowledge of the finite into a quite separate compartment from knowledge of the infinite is a thinking which fails to carry this principle through, inasmuch as the finite is still left standing in its own right. In that sense, it has failed to complete the necessary 'negation' of the finite.[85] In another sense, though, the problem lies in the sheer one-sidedness of its negativity: theologically speaking, one might say that in the thought of Kant, Fichte and Jacobi the *via negativa* has become a one-way street. They see true insight into the 'ideas of Reason', the subject-matter of theology, as developing out of a sensitivity to what *ought* to be – as opposed to the finite reality of what actually has been or is. As such, however, this insight is caught in a form of 'endless progression': things never are as they ought to be. Every 'ought' (whether of thought or action) presupposes a 'barrier' to be overcome; but with every 'barrier' that is overcome, another one springs up ahead; and so on *ad infinitum*, with God always in the endlessly receding distance.

'The image of the "progress to infinity" is the straight line, the infinite still remaining at its two limits and there only where the line is not.'[86] What is missing in this image is any notion of there being a returning movement, a living process of divine self-revelation within the finitude of creation. What is excluded is the essential *circularity* of the true infinite: 'the line which has reached itself, closed and wholly present and having neither beginning nor end'.[87]

More specifically: such thinking therefore entirely precludes the possibility of anything like Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature*, or the concept of 'Spirit' which Hegel develops in the *Phenomenology*, the *Encyclopaedia* and the various lecture series. For in both these areas he actually sets out to do just what Kant, Fichte and Jacobi frown upon: systematically to correlate the knowledge of contingent empirical fact with the knowledge of God. As Hegel sees things, nature as a structured whole and history as a structured whole are two spheres of divine revelation; and he sets out to present them in that light. There can, he insists, be no short cut: it is only insofar as we are able to gain a systematic overview of our place within the economy of nature as a whole, and the broad sweep of human

history, that we are truly able, at a *theoretical* level, to grasp what God is saying to us. The problem with 'the reflective philosophy of subjectivity', grounded in the 'bad infinite', is simply that it serves quite arbitrarily, to cut short our thinking.

The most significant *concrete* area in which it does so, however, from the Hegelian point of view, is in its critical encounter with the actual historical data of the Christian religion. Or in other words: precisely – in relation to christology.

This becomes clearest of all in the case of Kant, since of the three it is Kant who most directly tackles the subject – in his *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone.* Although most of his discussion of Kant is concerned with the three *Critiques*, of all Kant's books this was probably the one which was of greatest immediate influence on Hegel in his youth (he was twenty-three when Kant published it, in 1793).[88] It was his reading of this work which first determined his response to Kant. And it is clear enough what his final assessment must have been of the christology Kant develops here.

Because of the fundamental cleft Kant posits between faith and empirical knowledge of any sort, the only role he is able to allot to historical 'revelation' in general is that of *illustration.* He is certainly keen to emphasize the potential richness of Christian tradition in this role: indeed, arguing strictly on the basis of what he sees as the rational implications of the moral law, he actually manages to find room for quite a wide range of Christian dogmas (suitably reinterpreted). The notion of original sin reappears, for instance;[89] so does the notion of the pre-existent Christ and his 'descent' into the world;[90] the doctrine of the Trinity, too.[91] He even, briefly, outlines an 'inclusive' interpretation of the idea of vicarious 'satisfaction'. (This centres on the experience of moral conversion, insofar as it is an intrinsically painful process involving 'the death of the old man', 'the crucifixion of the flesh': such suffering, Kant suggests, can be seen as the punishment deserved by one's previous, not yet converted self, which, as a morally 'new man', one no longer deserves, but is still willing to suffer – in that sense, vicariously; and the suffering of Christ is symbolic of all such suffering.)[92] However, the basic underlying logic of his position remains: to argue 'within the limits of reason alone' necessarily means to exclude any attempt to *prove* the truth of religious dogma on the basis of history, whether by simple appeal to the authority of Scripture or tradition, or by pointing to supposed miracles; *therefore* the only role of the historical

is as a source of possible illustrations – to be set alongside arguments essentially independent of them. And it is exactly that conclusion which Hegel would question. For there surely still remains another, quite different possibility here, for which Kant has not allowed: granted, history does not serve as proof of any general propositions about God, in the sense of providing particular proof-texts or proof-events in isolation; but – can it not be seen, in its *totality*, as an unfolding of divine revelation?

The practical difference between this and the Kantian view lies in the imperative it contains, to make historical comparisons. Hegel compares: he places his christology in the context of a systematic study of comparative religion, relating the theological variables to other social variables (e.g. slavery); he contrasts the gospel with other, non-religious understandings of freedom (Stoicism, Scepticism); he traces, from his philosophical perspective, the historical evolution of Christianity itself. And all this is, for him, of vital significance. But for Kant, looking to the historical Christ only for a particular illustrative example – useful, thought not indispensable – of the moral ideal, the sole comparison that really counts is the contrast between those forms of 'dogmatism' which seek to assert more than this, and the 'reasonable modesty' of his own position. His thought remains stuck on that single, over-simple dichotomy.

In the thought of both Kant and Fichte matters are further complicated by the additional obstacles their ethical theory sets up. In one respect – namely, in the great emphasis they lay on the liberation of reason from tradition and on the proper moral autonomy of the rational individual – this theory no doubt constitutes a vigorous critique of the Unhappy Consciousness. Yet, at the same time, there is another aspect to it which may be seen as pulling in just the opposite direction – for here, superimposed upon the epistemological dualism of faith *versus* (finite) knowledge, we find a second dualism: a basic moral dualism of reason *versus* nature.[93] It is not that Kant envisages moral reason as necessarily entailing the consistent *suppression* of natural inclination.[94] But the Fichtean contrast between the two 'egos', the 'pure' or transcendental ego which is the agent of reason, and the empirical ego belonging to the order of nature, is clearly foreshadowed in Kant; and morality on this account can never have anything to do with the positive self-expression of the latter.[95] Nor, moreover, has religion any other

rational purpose than to promote morality. The dangers of such a view become especially clear in Fichte's later writings: his *Speeches to the German Nation* of 1807/8 contain a doctrine of the state as a vast pedagogical enterprise; a disturbingly coercive vision, in which the distinction between the two levels of subjectivity becomes a justification for the drastic curtailment of the liberty of individuals as they actually are (their empirical selves), in the name of that higher 'liberty' which is identical with following the dictates of reason (the 'liberty' of the transcendental self). It is the classic example of a 'positive' doctrine of freedom turned authoritarian.[96]

In *Faith and Knowledge* Hegel focusses on Fichte's popularizing work, *The Vocation of Man*, which had then just been published, and in which this notion of ethics is framed within a rhetorical lament over the woes of humanity's present 'natural' condition in general. The properly 'religious' attitude to nature, Hegel argues, is in fact the exact antithesis to Fichte's: for what 'religion offers' – at any rate, insofar as it is incarnational in character – is essentially 'reconciliation with nature'.[97] 'Reconciliation with nature': it is a Romantic formulation. It is reminiscent of Schiller, for instance, with his perception of human creativity and freedom as being rooted in the natural *Spieltrieb* (play impulse) innate in each one of us:[98] what Hegel has in mind is in a sense the 'playful' side of religion. In the background stands the ideal which informs his earlier unpublished manuscripts, of a true 'folk religion': a religion comparable to that of ancient Greece in its vital embodiment of the *Sittlichkeit* (ethical life) of a people; 'grounded on universal reason' but ensuring nevertheless that 'fancy, heart and sensibility' do not 'go empty away'.[99] There is an echo here, too, of his critique of Kant in the unpublished essay on 'The Spirit of Christianity'; where the dry-as-dust Kantian approach to morality appears as the formula for a merely internalized moral servitude, in sharp contrast to the much more expressive 'love' ethic of Jesus.[100] And in the *Phenomenology* the same aspects of the Kantian/Fichtean approach appear, in caricatural form, just before the discussion of Conscience and the Beautiful Soul, as 'the Moral View of the World'.

In the case of Jacobi, by contrast, these particular barriers disappear: in Jacobi's thought we simply have the epistemological, without the moral, dualism.

That, though, only serves to indicate even more clearly the intrinsic difficulties involved in this. Thus, Jacobi is in general much

less specific than Kant and Fichte about the criteria by which religion is to be judged; in fact his thought appears to originate, above all, out of a desire to defend religion, as such, from the 'atheistic' logic – in his view, unanswerable on its own terms – of Spinoza. Fichte, too, sees Spinoza as his chief philosophical opponent; but whereas Fichte goes on to counter Spinoza's deductive system with a quite different deductive system of his own, Jacobi is content merely to insist on what he sees as the narrow limits of philosophy – which, he argues, Spinoza has transgressed. That is to say: precisely, the limits defined by his epistemology.

At the same time, Jacobi is also critical of Kant and Fichte: in his view they are too negative, too restrictive of the possible validity of religious experience – in this sense he speaks of Kantianism as being latently 'nihilistic'.[101] In a way, of course, this is also Hegel's view; however Jacobi, from his perspective – having isolated knowledge of God from any other sort of knowledge just as thoroughly as Kant and Fichte themselves do – can only make the point in the most abstract terms. Whereas they ground faith in God on the specific requirements of practical Reason, he grounds it simply on an '*immediate*' knowledge. The great divide appears here as being between this and our necessarily 'mediated' knowledge of the finite, which always depends on our awareness of other things. Our knowledge of God (so Jacobi argues) does not. Such faith by no means lacks subjective certainty: he also speaks of our 'faith' in the sense perceptions that inform us of the existence of our bodies and the physical world around us, apparently placing both forms of faith on the same level. But this 'immediate' knowledge of God almost entirely lacks intrinsic content. As Hegel comments:

> The term *Faith* brings with it the special advantage of suggesting the faith of the Christian religion... But we must not let ourselves be deceived by the semblance surreptitiously secured by a merely verbal similarity. The two things are radically distinct. 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 that, while it has room for the faith of the Christian, it equally admits a belief in the divinity of the Dalai Lama, the ox, or the monkey – thus, so far as it goes, narrowing Deity down to its simplest terms, a 'Supreme Being'. 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.[102]

At least the Kantian approach provides criteria which can serve as some sort of a basis for genuine, critical dialogue with religious tradition, in the manner of his *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone.* Jacobi's approach does not even do that.

In this respect, indeed, Jacobi is even more radical than Kant or Fichte: for them the question of the validity of religious faith shrinks down into a narrow question about the logic of moral law, essentially abstracted from history; but for Jacobi by contrast it in effect disappears entirely – at any rate, as a matter for public discussion. It becomes a matter of a certain special – specifically 'religious' – kind of experience. Either one is true to one's own 'immediate' religious experience, or else one is not – but who can judge the secrets of another's heart? Jacobi relates to Kant and Fichte somewhat as the standpoint of Conscience in the *Phenomenology* relates to that of the Moral View of the World. Nor in fact could anything more vividly illustrate, from the Hegelian point of view, the ultimate poverty of a thinking which remains stuck at this level, and which fails to progress on to a serious consideration of that which follows next in the *Phenomenology* – the sphere of actual, historically given religious practice – than the sheer theological *omni-tolerance* of Jacobi.

In short: Kant, Fichte and Jacobi are important to Hegel for two reasons. Firstly, it was because their thought was in his day so highly influential, and served to express attitudes that had become very widespread. But, more importantly, it was because of the absolutely fundamental significance he attributed to the central issue on which he differed from them.

This difference, moreover, also spills directly over into the way he approaches the traditional 'proofs' of the existence of God. Kant of course in his *Critique of Pure Reason* had argued at some length against these proofs. Jacobi's arguments are briefer, but to the same effect (and Fichte here simply follows Kant). In response to these attacks, Hegel professes to rehabilitate the proofs. In so doing, though, he is by no means just going back uncritically to the earlier formulations of such thinkers as Anselm, Aquinas, Descartes and Leibniz. In the wake of the Kantian (and Jacobian) critique, Hegel in fact seeks to reformulate the proofs in a quite new way. – Thus: what exactly is the nature of the 'God' whose existence is supposedly being proved here? Is it in any sense presupposed that we already know what the various abstract definitions we might supply actually *mean*, when translated into concrete terms? Has the identification already

subconsciously been made with the God of the Bible? Hegel does not primarily treat these 'proofs' *as* proofs; he is perhaps as much against the attempt to prove the existence of a 'God' whose nature is apparently just presupposed in that way, as Kant himself is. But from his point of view, it seems, the proofs have got to be understood, precisely, as definitions of the path to be followed in order to *find out* what the word 'God' means[103] – or even to what extent, given its various actual connotations, this word is still positively useable. (Although he certainly thinks it *is*, of course.) The proofs, in other words, look back over, and logically summarize all that is involved in – as he puts it – 'the elevation of the thinking Spirit to that which is the highest thought, to God'.[104] In this sense, their proper subject matter is really nothing other than – the nature of thought itself:

> What men call the proofs of God's existence are, rightly understood, ways of describing and analysing the native course of the mind, the course of *thought* thinking the *data* of the senses. The rise of thought beyond the world of sense, its passage from the finite to the infinite, the leap into the supersensible, which it takes when it snaps asunder the chain of sense, all this transition is thought and nothing but thought.

Indeed: 'Say there must be no such passage, and you say there is to be no thinking.'[105] The necessity these arguments express is to be grasped as a necessity inherent in the nature of thought as such – rather than merely in certain specific thoughts.

Take the *Ontological argument.*[106] It is not surprising that Kant found this nonsensical: as an argument concerning the nature of thought as such, it might actually be seen as a sort of litmus test by which to distinguish 'speculative' thinking, in Hegel's sense, from 'reflective'. In Hegelian terms the movement here is from 'the Concept' (or 'Notion', *Begriff*) – that is, the subject matter of philosophical theology at the level of pure thought – back to 'Being', the realm of actual empirical existence. Where the Concept is conceived in terms of a rigid opposition between the finite and the infinite, and is therefore thought of as being known in a quite different way from finite Being, the question whether or not God exists is just a matter of faith. But where the Concept is conceived in terms of the unity of the true infinite, divine perfection is recognized as being intelligible only *through* the empirical reality of finite Being, as the highest Truth to which that reality as a whole bears witness: God exists by definition, as 'the Substance of all realities, the most real Essence'.[107] And from this perspective, therefore, the Ontological argument becomes, quite straightforwardly, an affirmation

of the essential superiority of the latter perception over the former. The whole meaning of the Concept lies in its role as an interpretation of Being as a whole. In order to comprehend the Concept one has to start from Being: the *Logic* traces the development in question here, in its purely abstract form. 'Being is nothing but the unutterable, the inconceivable; it is not that concrete something which the Concept is, but merely the abstraction of reference to self. We may say, it is immediacy, Being is the Immediate in general, and conversely the Immediate is Being.'[108] Where the 'reflective philosophy of subjectivity' either turns away entirely from the Concept as such (Jacobi) or else sets tight limits on what is seen as properly relevant to the Concept (Kant and Fichte, limiting it to the 'postulates of practical reason') Hegel on the contrary does away with all limits. What is relevant to the Concept? The whole of Being. It is just because of the sheer abstract poverty of the thought of 'Being', its emptiness of limitations, that it belongs there at the beginning.

What Hegel wants to insist upon, though, over against the traditional formulations of the argument is the necessarily *programmatic* nature of this insight.

The true standpoint is that the concept of God 'is identical with Being': knowing the truth about God is ultimately identical with knowing the truth about the way things in general actually are. But – 'When we regard closely the nature of the Concept, we see that this identity with Being is no longer a presupposition but a *result*.'[109] In other words: it is not enough that one should simply posit a certain presupposed understanding of divine perfection (of 'that than which nothing greater can be conceived', to use Anselm's phrase) and then proceed to argue, from there, that such perfection necessarily implies existence – as in the traditional versions of the argument. It is not merely a matter of providing logical confirmation, in this way, for one's faith. Rather, what this argument in effect provides is a programmatic formula for the whole critical enterprise of philosophical theology: namely, as the attempt systematically to retrace all the various actual experiences of Being, from which our idea of divine perfection in fact *results*. Philosophical theology is thus defined here in its aspect as a movement of thought from the 'subjective' to the 'objective'. As a simple *presupposition*, our idea of God is essentially subjective: this is what Kant can not get beyond, the finitude of the 'bad infinite', by which the Concept (in Hegel's sense of course) is uprooted from the objectivity of Being.[110] In the light of the true infinite, on the other hand, the Concept 'abolishes its

subjectivity, and objectifies itself'.[111] Precisely in order to comprehend the significance of our subjective ideals, in other words, our thinking has to lay itself as open as possible to the whole content of the objective world, which forms the context for any practical realization of those ideals. In finite terms, 'Man realises his ends'[112] – our idea of divine perfection derives from the practical struggles of men and women for a better world, insofar as these are successful. But, theologically speaking, these struggles are also the work of God: and 'Here we have the concrete and popular idea of God as Spirit',[113] the Christian idea of God as self-revealing – which then becomes the basis for the whole Hegelian Philosophy of Spirit (and the Philosophy of Nature too, as its necessary ante-chamber, so to speak). In fact, it is only in the light of this complete systematic process of thought that the necessarily existent 'that than which nothing greater can be conceived' of the Ontological argument can, in the last analysis, properly be identified with God at all.

And so too in the case of the other two types of argument he considers, the *Cosmological*, and the *Teleological*: Hegel also gives a corresponding twist to these.[114] Both Kant and Jacobi have the same basic sort of objection to these proofs – which from their point of view represent a sheer misapplication to the infinite and unconditioned of categories that are only properly applicable to the finite and conditioned. Whereas for Hegel on the contrary these arguments appear, once again, as further abstract definitions of the *necessary* link between knowledge of the world as a whole and knowledge of God.

Once again, though, their purpose in his view is not so much to establish the existence of God as a simple positive matter of fact: rather, they are definitions of the rationality of faith in God as a fundamental expression of the love for Truth in general. In this capacity they trace the necessary movement of thought, from the immediate explanation of particular phenomena, towards a maximally inclusive vision of the whole: they articulate, in principle, the restless *negativity* of thought towards every given, finite and provisional interpretation of nature or history. The Cosmological argument does this in relation to the categories of necessity and contingency, or cause and effect. The Teleological argument does it in relation to the category of purpose. Both, however, together serve to complete the circle of which the Ontological argument is the other half, moving back from the manifold finite results of divine self-revelation to their original, unitary infinite source.

Hegel's whole treatment of the proofs is thus characterized by a two-fold polemic. In the first place he is critical of the traditional formulations for failing to make sufficiently explicit what he would see as the full systematic implication of these arguments. As a result, these formulations are all too easily misinterpretable – as, to take the most extreme example, in certain types of eighteenth-century Deism: where the Cosmological argument is reduced to a demonstration of the existence of a remote, uninvolved clock-maker God; and where the Teleological argument is brought down to the level parodied by Goethe in his *Xenien*, in which someone praises God for creating the cork tree – in order that we might have stoppers for our wine bottles! The first represents the agency of God in terms of a merely 'external necessity', the second in terms of a merely 'external teleology'. In neither case is the true 'nullity of the finite' recognized: when matters are presented in this way, there actually ceases to be any sense at all of the mind's restless movement towards a *concrete* apprehension of the *whole*. Such thinking, therefore, itself still remains trapped within the limitations of *Verstand*. With reference particularly to the Cosmological argument, Hegel develops the point here in the shape of a contrast between two basic types of expression: the argument that, '*Because* what is material is contingent, *therefore* there exists an absolutely necessary Essence' remains ambiguous; it is, he contends, far more exact to say that, 'Contingent Being is *at the same time* the Being of an Other, that of the absolutely necessary Being.'[115] For only so is it clearly shown that the real truth of the argument lies in its reference to the infinite labour of thought – continually reinterpreting the world in all its detail. With reference to the Teleological argument, he seeks to move beyond the idea of God as the external artificer of the world, arranging this and that to fit together – in the first instance, to the Platonic concept of the natural world as a single living organism; and then, from there, to the concept of the Spirit at work in history:[116] rising thus from the traditional focus on various observations of particular phenomena to a theology which has its explicit basis in a thoroughly *comprehensive* programme of philosophical questioning.

At the same time, however, Hegel's concern with the proofs – and indeed the whole ontology within which he sets them – is, it is clear, to a very large extent determined by his implacable opposition to the agnosticism of Kant, Fichte and Jacobi.

Their thought represents the metaphysic of 'reflection' in its purest, most consistent form. Inevitably, therefore, they fail to perceive the true significance of the proofs. 'With Kant – the result is: "We know only phenomena"; with Jacobi, on the other hand it is: "We know only the finite and conditioned". Over these two results there has been unmingled joy among men, because the sloth of Reason (Heaven be praised!) considered itself liberated from every call to reflect, and now, being saved the trouble of penetrating to its own inward meaning and exploring the depths of Nature and Spirit, it could very well leave itself alone.'[117] It may seem somewhat outrageous to charge such outstandingly sophisticated and complex thinkers as these with furthering the 'sloth of Reason'. What troubles Hegel, though, is the ultimate failure, as he sees it, of their thought to present an adequate challenge to such 'sloth', as a popular attitude.

Over against such an attitude Hegel never tires of reiterating that God does not choose to remain hidden: 'God is not jealous.'[118] In theological terms, the trouble with Kant, Fichte and Jacobi lies in their fundamental distortion of the concept of divine revelation – which they both dissociate from Nature, and also de-historicize. For, most importantly of all, this drastically – and quite arbitrarily – truncates the real possibilities of philosophical christology. In order to say what he wants to say about christology Hegel needs, ultimately, to set it into the context of a broad-ranging philosophy of history. And therefore he also needs to clear away any preconception as to the proper relationship of philosophy to such questions, which would preclude this – as these three thinkers do, in the dogmatic way they *a priori* de-limit what is properly relevant to philosophical theology as a whole.

Spinoza

In *Faith and Knowledge*, which is his earliest direct onslaught on the 'reflective philosophy of subjectivity' as such, Hegel is still writing as an ally – indeed, in the general estimation of the world at that time, as the disciple – of his younger friend, the philosophical prodigy Schelling.[119] Schelling himself had begun his career as a follower of Fichte, yet had by then moved to an autonomous position, from which he sought to reconcile Fichte's thought with that of the philosopher Fichte saw as his antipodes: Spinoza. And when Hegel eventually parted philosophical company from Schelling (a parting

of the ways which, even though Schelling is not mentioned by name, first became apparent in the preface to the *Phenomenology*) the critique which he then developed is also intimately bound up with his parallel critique of Spinoza.[120] Hegel always expresses the greatest respect for Spinoza. In the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* he even goes so far as to remark: 'the fact is that Spinoza is made a testing-point in modern philosophy, so that it may really be said: You are either a Spinozist or not a philosopher at all.'[121] Or, again: 'To be a follower of Spinoza is the essential *commencement* of all philosophy.'[122] In fact, if Spinoza no longer exercises the same sort of influence on modern philosophy as Kant, in particular does – then this is doubtless very largely due to the way in which his central insight has been taken up and incorporated by Hegel into his own, altogether more comprehensive vision. Nevertheless, from the Hegelian perspective, there is at least one respect in which the problem with Spinoza is actually just the same as that with Kant, Fichte and Jacobi: for like them – after all – Spinoza still falls a long way short of providing a proper basis for the sort of thing Hegel has in mind, by way of philosophical christology.

Of course, in Spinoza's case the problem takes on a very different form. When Hegel speaks of Spinoza's thought as the necessary starting point for any authentic modern philosophy, what he has in mind is precisely the absolute antithesis it represents to any sort of philosophical dualism, whatsoever. There is nothing specialized about the cognition of God for Spinoza: it is on the contrary, in the most straightforward sense, identical with the sum of all knowledge – as all things are, in his doctrine, modes of the one infinite Substance, which is God. And he draws a sharp distinction between the true infinity of Substance and other notions of infinity deriving from the 'Imagination'.[123] Unlike Kant, Fichte or Jacobi, therefore, Spinoza has not erected any definite *barriers* to the Hegelian concept of God as 'Spirit'.

His thought, though, still falls short of that concept. One can see the results of this, above all, when one looks at his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* – the work in which he sets out to define the relationship of his philosophy to Scripture.[124]

Here Spinoza argues – specifically against Maimonides in fact – that the role of prophecy, as in the literature of the Bible, is in principle completely different from that of philosophy.[125] Thus, whereas philosophy deals in pure truth and requires to be judged by

the strictest criteria of theoretical coherence, prophecy by contrast moves in the inevitably confused realm of 'Imagination' – which means that it can only be judged by its practical effects. Scripture undoubtedly does have a valuable and necessary role to play in stirring people to rational behaviour, even if not for properly rational reasons. But the theological visions of prophecy are clearly subordinated by Spinoza to the essentially timeless truths of philosophy: the philosopher in his view, it seems, no longer needs to take them seriously, other than as an eminently useful set of emotive images for the edification of the non-philosophical public. Arising out of his desire to rise above the cultural divisions between Jew and Christian, and to communicate as effectively as possible with the surrounding Christian world, Spinoza does transfer certain elements of christological terminology into his thinking: he speaks of divine wisdom as 'the Son of God', the 'Holy Spirit', even 'the Spirit of Christ'. He has to confess, however, that the actual dogma of the Incarnation itself makes about as much sense to him as the idea of a 'square circle': its close identification of eternal truth with a particular, historically determined set of images renders it hopelessly unphilosophical.[126] He certainly makes no attempt to universalize the Biblical vision of salvation history into the sort of comprehensive philosophical concern with world history in general, and the history of religion in particular, which Hegel has. And his philosophy, consequently, still remains very much on the outside of religion, looking in.

No doubt much of the immediate force of Spinoza's philosophy lies in the sheer simplicity of his overall vision; and particularly in his radical determinism. But this simplicity, in Hegel's judgement, is also its weakness – the basic principles on which Spinoza builds being by no means simply self-evident or unchallengeable: as is witnessed, for example, by the contrasting metaphysical system of (to cite only the most notable of Spinoza's contemporaries) Leibniz. In the role of corrective, at least, Hegel equally approves of Leibniz – who is, after all, no advocate of metaphysical dualism either.[127] Leibniz, though, is still operating essentially on the same level as Spinoza: a prime example, in fact, of the way in which 'The one-sidedness of one philosophic principle is generally faced by its opposite one-sidedness.'[128] For whereas Spinoza starts off from the unity of the one Substance, back into which every finite entity ultimately just sinks, Leibniz – in an equally abstract and arbitrary

way[129] – starts off from a multiplicity of substances or monads, and then goes on to explore the metaphysical implications of that multiplicity;[130] so that here one form of arbitrariness is merely being countered by another.

Hegel's response, by contrast, is quite different. It involves making the transition, in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, to an entirely new level of thought. The basic shift of vision required for this – summed up in the crucial formula, that 'everything turns on grasping and expressing the True, not only as *Substance* but equally as *Subject*'[131] – involves raising a type of question which neither Spinoza nor Leibniz, nor indeed any of Hegel's predecessors, had ever even dreamed of as the basis for systematic philosophical study.[132] And in comparison with this radically new type of *concrete* philosophizing the differences between Spinoza, with his abstract stress on the One, and Leibniz, with his abstract stress on the Many, fade into relative insignificance. The *Phenomenology* tells a tale, and the 'Subject' of this tale is at the same time both one and many: the divine Spirit at work in and through finite spirits, at each and every level of the unfolding of truth.

Spinoza has no way of grasping this, because of the method he has adopted. It is this method, with its definitions, axioms and deductions modelled on Euclidean geometry, which is for Hegel 'the fundamental defect of the whole position':[133] 'The mathematical method', he comments,

> is considered superior to all others, on account of the nature of its evidence; and it is natural that independent knowledge in its re-awakening lighted first upon this form, of which it saw so brilliant an example. The mathematical method is, however, ill-adapted for speculative content, and finds its proper place only in the finite sciences of the Understanding.[134]

Applied to philosophy, the results of such a method, only appropriate to *Verstand*, are inevitably stultifying. It may produce abstract conceptual clarity; but only at the price of withdrawal from effective dialogue with ordinary thinking, with all its multi-faceted ambiguities. Euclidean thinking is a monologue. It does not unravel ambiguities, it excludes them. In the typical manner of *Verstand* it posits sharp and fixed distinctions. Hence, for example, Spinoza just posits thought and extension as two 'attributes' of God: because there is thought, and because there is extension, therefore God is both a thinking and an extended Being. But he has no method for

inter-relating the two – as Hegel does in the *Phenomenology*, tracing the complex interplay between subject and object in the various processes of human learning by which God actually lives within us. Instead, in Spinoza's thought the differences, as soon as they arise, immediately disappear again, back into the initial thought of their underlying unity.[135] Taking up Spinoza's formula that 'Determinateness is negation', Hegel puts it like this: 'Spinoza does not pass beyond negation as determinateness or quality to a recognition of it as absolute, that is, self-negating, negation.'[136] The 'Subject' which is the subject matter of the *Phenomenology* is, by contrast – 'pure, *simple negativity*':[137] the living process of consciousness progressively transcending its particular determinate limitations, negating them. As Spinoza's thought on the other hand lacks any concrete analysis of this, 'his Substance does not itself contain absolute form, and when it is cognized, this is no *immanent* cognition'.[138]

In fact, it is not only religion to which Spinoza's thought comes only, as it were, from the outside: it is the whole living reality of human history. But inevitably therefore – and for Hegel, also, most significantly – religion as well.

The Trinity

It is perhaps above all in the context of this critique of his immediate philosophical predecessors, as well, that one has to view that other major hall-mark of Hegel's theology: the all-important structural role he assigns to his philosophical re-working of the traditional doctrine of the Trinity.

Hegel's trinitarianism can thus be seen as issuing directly out of his basic concern for the most constructive possible interplay between philosophy, in general, and religion. Clearly underlying it are the following three fundamental moves.

(1) The move in which he is united with Kant, Fichte, Jacobi, Spinoza – and with all the many other philosophical critics of religion down the centuries, too: ranging from classical Greek philosophy, with all that has ever derived from it down to the present day, to Hindu traditions such as that of the Advaita Vedanta, to Buddhist philosophy, to Taoism. In Hegelian terms, this is the move from *Vorstellen* to *Denken*. It is what is grounded, very simply in a perception of the inevitable, inherent ambivalence of all religious *Vorstellung*: its use value to a whole range of impulses other than the pure love of truth, its widespread actual corruption into superstition

and the justification of intolerance. Over against dogmatic theology, this is just the move that makes philosophy – of any sort – philosophy: namely, strict critical reference to what are argued for as the trans-culturally intelligible criteria of Reason.

(2) The move by which, on the other hand, he distances himself from any *too hasty* formulation of the standpoint of such a critique. Kant, Fichte and Jacobi, in particular – with their radical undermining of any dogmatic notion of revelation – undoubtedly offer quite an attractively straightforward type of strategy to counter the legitimation of religious intolerance. And Spinoza offers another. But the problem is that such strategies result in one's being unable, with any conviction, critically to confront authoritarian religion *on its own ground.* From this point of view, Hegel's christology can be seen as an attempt, at least, to do the same thing, only by different means – more patiently, but therefore also more thoroughly, and with an altogether greater sensitivity to the strengths of what is historically given by way of religious tradition.

(3) The move by which, on that basis, he then goes on to try and stake out a place for philosophical insight actually within the ongoing life of the church: this being, in the first instance, a matter of analysing the nature and necessity of the church from the standpoint of the philosophical ideal, the better to clarify what is required.

The problem of reconciling the God of philosophy with the God of the Bible was clearly a major ingredient in the original emergence of the trinitarian dogma in the Patristic period, too. No doubt at least some equivalent to the dogma would have appeared anyway – it arises naturally enough, of course, out of any exegesis of the New Testament which seeks to affirm the Incarnation, in a strong sense: as a matter of relating God as revealed *in* Jesus with the God *to* whom Jesus prayed. Nor is it only when approached in philosophical terms that the concept of the Incarnation draws us into the dialectic whereby God is at once Revealer, Revelation and Revealedness – as Karl Barth's theology (to cite only the most spectacular example) shows. The trinitarianism of the Patristic period is, in this sense, quite a heavily overdetermined doctrinal development.

However, it cannot just be coincidence that it was at the same time – and it seems, quite independently – paralleled by the rise of trinitarian ideas within pagan Neo-platonism as well. Above all, in the thought of Proclus for example – a thinker for whom Hegel, in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, expresses particular ad-

miration, as representing 'the culminating point' of that tradition.[139] Over against the naturalistic or anthropomorphic images of the divine which constitute religious *Vorstellung*, Platonist thinking insisted on the true, essentially unimaginable incorporeality and simplicity of 'the One'. Yet, whilst remaining a Platonist, Proclus – a devout man – was also anxious to affirm the worth of the various cults of the gods. His trinitarian theology, accordingly, takes shape as a doctrine of the identity-in-difference of 'the One' with the gods: in his thought 'the One' appears first as pure abstraction; then, as holding within itself the infinite multiplicity represented by the variety of the gods; finally and most adequately, as both of these together. Proclus elaborates this central idea in a whole series of conceptual triads. In the Christian theology of the same period it is true that one finds a somewhat different specific type of trinitarian dynamic. Nevertheless, the underlying issue is not entirely unrelated. Here, the Platonist critique of naturalistic or anthropomorphic mental representations of the divine is further reinforced by the Old Testament ban on graven images. Obviously, though, despite that ban Scripture as a whole remains highly pictorial and anthropomorphic in its theological language. It was perhaps especially the Jewish Platonism of Philo which suggested the way out: by affirming the identity-in difference of 'God as such' (*Theos autô*) with the emanating divine Logos – to whom all the concrete imagery in the Bible is referred – Philo provided for his Christian successors a readily adaptable model for the application of philosophical principle to scriptural exegesis.[140] The dogma of the Incarnation certainly added a major dialectical twist; but the basic problem with which Christian *Logos* theologians like Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria and Origen were wrestling was really a much broader one.[141] It is above all in their writings that the Christian doctrine of the Trinity first began to take shape.

Hegel's trinitarian thought can be seen as deriving from a quite similar basic concern. The only difference lies in the sharply contrasting philosophical context.

Hegel develops his mature doctrine of the Trinity in three different texts: it is first sketched out in the hastily completed chapter on 'The Revealed Religion' in the *Phenomenology*, then briefly summarized in the penultimate section of volume III of the *Encyclopaedia*, *The Philosophy of Mind*, before finally appearing in definitive form in part III of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. The three moves outlined above give rise here, on the one hand, to

the distinction between the three contrasting 'elements' of theological thought: (a) the 'pure thought' of critical philosophical theology; (b) the *Vorstellung* of popular religion; and (c) 'subjectivity as such', that is, the thinking by which the truth of the gospel gets translated into the practical terms of a deepened self-knowledge.[142] From which Hegel then goes on to draw a corresponding distinction between the three 'forms or elements', or 'moments', of the divine. In both the *Philosophy of Mind* and the *Lectures* these are defined primarily by analogy with the three terms of 'syllogism', as analysed in the *logic*: (a) 'the "moment" of *Universality*', so called because referring to theological truth in the light of strictly universal human experience; (b) 'the "moment" of *Particularity*', so called because referring to theological truth in the light of the particular stories of the particular religious tradition; and (c) 'the "moment" of *Individuality*', so called because referring to the appropriation by each individual member of 'the spiritual community' of the universal truth represented by the particular figure of Christ.[143] The point lies, simply, in grasping these as the three complementary and necessary moments of just one single process. This is abstractly expressed in the *Phenomenology* by way of a distinction between the three moments: 'essence, being-for-self which is the otherness of essence and for which essence is, and being-for-self, or the knowledge of itself *in the "other"*'.[144] In the *Lectures* it is also worked out in terms of a threefold relationship to space and time. 'The first divine history is outside the world, it is not in space, but outside finitude as such', as it were, and 'outside of time': for here we have to do with the unchanging, necessary *essence* of what is rational, here God appears to us in and through our struggle to apprehend that. 'The second locale is the world, the divine history as real, God having his determinate being in the world', God revealed to us through the remembered past. 'Thirdly there is the inner place, the community, first of all in the world, but also the community as it simultaneously raises itself to heaven, or already has heaven within itself on earth – the community which, as the church, is full of grace, and in which God is active and present.'[145]

1 In his more detailed discussion of the first element Hegel begins from the standpoint attained by move (1), above, and proceeds to open up the way to moves (2) and (3). Consequently, in this context his primary concern is with the doctrine of the Trinity itself, in its abstract form: the 'immanent Trinity'. In fact, one might see this

discussion very largely as an extension of his critique of Spinoza – the philosopher who, above all others, remains stuck at move (1) solely on account of the undifferentiated monism of his thought. Spinoza's philosophy, he remarks in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, 'has only a rigid and unyielding substance, and not yet spirit; in it we are not at home with ourselves. But the reason that God is not spirit is that he is *not the Three in One*'.[146] In this respect he compares Spinoza unfavourably with Jakob Boehme; for in Boehme's mystical thought trinitarian patterns appear everywhere. Boehme, on the other hand, remains a 'wild and fanciful' thinker;[147] Hegel of course is aiming at an altogether more disciplined approach. Thus, he is not only sharply critical here of philosophical thought trapped within the constraints of *Verstand*, which naturally cannot comprehend the truth of the Trinity (a critique which would also at this level include Spinoza, by virtue of his defective method). He also criticizes what, in a strict sense, from his point of view must appear as the fundamental misapplication to thought in this sphere, and so to the immanent Trinity as such, of the traditional *Vorstellungen*:

The Trinity has been brought under the relationship of Father, Son, and Spirit. This is a childlike relationship, a childlike form. The understanding has no other category, no other relationship that would be comparable with this in respect of its appropriateness. But we must be aware that this is merely a figurative relationship; the Spirit does not enter into this relationship. 'Love' would be more suitable expression, for the spirit of love is assuredly what is truthful... But we must be aware that all three are spirit.[148]

This term, 'Spirit', has several advantages for Hegel: in the first place, there are its unmistakably anti-authoritarian ecclesiological connotations. As John E. Smith puts it,

the idea of the Holy Spirit represents life, creativity and power, so that it stands in tension with, if not in direct opposition to, the fixity of structure and content thought to be necessary for the survival of the church as an institution. Hence it was to be expected that the Spirit, described especially in the Fourth Gospel as the power that is to lead into all truth (implying that the full understanding of the religious content had not already been achieved in the past), would not be accorded a central place by an ecclesiastical hierarchy dedicated to the continued existence of a church already possessing authority and final truth.[149]

Secondly, it is a term which readily lends itself to the expression of the indwelling presence of the infinite actually within the finite, as

such – over against the rigid exclusiveness of the 'bad infinite'. And thirdly, there is that which makes it the natural term to express what differentiates Hegel's vision from Spinoza's: namely, its connotations of *purposeful* living process.

'Love' is an alternative term which might be similarly used; another is 'Life': indeed, in the writings of his Frankfurt period (1797–1801) we can see Hegel experimenting with both of these in turn, before finally, in his Jena writings, settling on 'Spirit' as the one he most favoured.[150]

2 From the immanent Trinity, he turns next to a philosophical consideration of the particular Biblical stories concerning the creation, the fall, and the atonement. And in this context his thought can be seen as going decisively beyond the various Patristic models in two major respects.

(a) In Hegel's presentation, the necessary tension between pure philosophical thought and religious *Vorstellung* is highlighted with unprecedented sharpness. This comes out particularly in his account of the creation in the 1821 *Lectures.* Thus, by its very nature, religious *Vorstellung* is bound to conceive of the reality of God, in the form of the immanent Trinity, and the reality of creation, in the form of 'spiritual and physical nature', as constituting two quite distinct 'spheres' (two spheres intersecting in the sacred history surrounding the Incarnation – but only there). And from the standpoint of *Vorstellung*, the story of the creation is predicated on this otherness. Philosophy, on the other hand, has to set the accent on the exact opposite, the underlying identity of the two: the point, here, being to grasp the omnipresent indwelling of God within the world of human experience as a whole, the two spheres therefore have to be seen as being at least 'implicitly' one and the same; as are the two corresponding 'acts' also: the act of self-othering within the immanent Trinity, and the act of creation.

Only 'implicitly', though – *not absolutely*. Contrary to Spinoza, Hegel wishes to maintain the complementary potential truth of *both* approaches. It would after all make nonsense of trinitarian doctrine, in traditional terms, simply – without further ado – to identify the second person of the Trinity, the divine *Logos*, with the world as a whole. For that would be flagrantly to contradict the necessary viewpoint of religious *Vorstellung*, which is just what is here being affirmed. The suggestion, originating with David Friedrich Strauss, that this *is* what Hegel wanted to do not only reduces his overall

doctrine to an absurdity; it also flies right in the face of his explicit repudiation in this passage of any such 'false interpretation'.[151] However unorthodox Hegel may have been in other respects, he was certainly not a 'pantheist' in this crude sense.

Nevertheless, it is unquestionably true that the inevitable tension here is much more sharply expressed and thought through in Hegel's exposition of the doctrine than in any previous exposition.

(b) The radical christocentricity of Hegel's thought also contrasts sharply with any of the more philosophically oriented forms of Patristic theology, particularly in his completely unembarrassed philosophical treatment of the crucifixion as signifying 'the death of God'. After all, for the Platonist/Aristotelian philosophy which the Patristic theologians were attempting to reconcile with the gospel it was axiomatic that God was essentially immutable and impassible. This way of thinking originated in a philosophical critique of the intellectual *form* of popular religious *Vorstellung*, which was at the same time closely bound up with a rejection of its emotional *substance*. What the schools of Stoicism and Scepticism presented directly as a human ethical ideal, Middle and Neo-Platonism projected on to God: in both cases freedom was conceived essentially as *apatheia*.[152] And in this respect, whether they recognized it or not, the Patristic thinkers were actually faced with an *absolute* contradiction between the abstract God of philosophy and the passionate, living God of biblical faith: one which went right to the very heart of the gospel; one within which they inevitably tossed and turned (witness the whole history of early incarnational and trinitarian theology). By radically overturning these particular assumptions, however – both in relation to God and, over against Stoicism and Scepticism, in relation to human wisdom too – Hegel by contrast opens up the way to a profoundly christocentric philosophy, and a profoundly philosophical christocentricity.

In the twentieth century (at any rate within the German speaking world) the need for some such fundamental de-Platonizing of the Christian tradition has indeed become a major theme for discussion. Hans Küng, in the concluding 'excursus' to his study of Hegel, refers in this connection to Karl Rahner, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Karl Barth, Eberhard Jüngel and Dietrich Bonhoeffer – among others.[153] And since then the same general theme has also been taken up notably by Jürgen Moltmann and Dorothee Sölle.[154] Even though, in Hegel's own presentation, these contrasts with Patristic thought

remain largely unexpressed *as* contrasts, he is nonetheless obviously an important pioneer here. And it is, in fact, this particular aspect of this thought which chiefly seems to interest Küng as well.

3 All of this, however, can also be seen simply as leading up to what follows: to Hegel's ideal vision of the church, as the 'Spiritual Community'. For here he draws the threads together.

Thus, on the one hand we have this very particular story, belonging to a particular culture: the story of the Incarnation. And on the other, we have philosophy with its search for the purely universal: the trans-culturally intelligible first principles of Reason. The basic project of Hegel's christology is, at once, both the legitimation and the transfiguration of the former in the light of the latter. He sees no need to soften or adapt the story in a Platonizing sense: in the death of Christ – 'God is dead'. Yet, without losing its particularity, the story still has to become, as it were, fully transparent to the universal. And so we are brought back, once again, to where we began: to the basic issue of Christ's role as the individual representative of all individuals – as such.

In the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* Hegel takes up this theme primarily in terms of its practical, social implications – for the life of a church.[155] Notoriously, the original 1821 version of these lectures ends on what Hegel himself calls a 'discordant note': the fact was, of course, that the actual life of the Lutheran church he belonged to fell far short of the philosophical ideal he envisaged.

The final lines of this work constitute a melancholy gesture of resignation. The reconciliation between Reason and religion which philosophy has shown to be possible in principle, is, after all, he writes, 'merely a partial one'. And in view of this, philosophy is condemned still to remain 'a sanctuary', served by 'an isolated order of priests'.[156] For in a corrupt world it could only gain effective influence by submitting to corruption itself.

Partly, it is that element of his thought which is bound up with Romantic admiration for ancient Greece which comes to the fore at this point, again. So he compares the present age with the world of the Roman Empire: always, for him, the classic paradigm of a culture in which the politics of genuine, religiously articulated ethical consensus have been superseded by the reign of naked power and private interest.[157] In his own age he discerns the opening up of a directly comparable spiritual void. Christendom is in decay. The sort of renewed encounter with the gospel he is working for is not

only valid in itself; there is also an urgent need for it – but the necessary impetus towards reform on this basis can never be generated in a culture in which the sort of reductionist thinking represented in its highest form by the 'reflective philosophy of subjectivity' still prevails.

At the more *popular* level such reductive thinking appears in two basic forms: on the one hand, irreligious Enlightenment; and on the other, 'pietism'. In the 1824 version of the *Lectures* the main critical focus in the concluding section is on the former. In 1827 and 1831 one finds the *Lectures* in general far more strongly marked by Hegel's need to defend himself from the increasing attack he was coming under from pietist circles in Berlin; and he concludes the *Lectures* with a definition of the immediate contemporary task of philosophy as involving the overcoming of both.[158] In the earlier version, as it happens, Enlightenment is paired with Islam – a religion he scarcely discusses at all elsewhere, except in passing.[159] The juxtaposition may at first sight seem curious; in particular the implicit parallelism it suggests between Islam and pietism. Hegel defines 'pietism' as a socially atomizing, privatized form of spirituality: 'an inward weaving of spirit within itself'. His description of it in this passage also has distinct echoes of his discussion of the standpoint of Conscience in the *Phenomenology*: 'Here', he says with a touch of hyperbole, 'the category of the good is nothing other than the caprice and contingency of the subject'. And hence, 'For such piety, everyone has his own God, his own Christ, etc.'[160] Nothing, in this respect, could be further removed from mainstream Islam (and he does not seem to be talking about Sufism). The basic point, however, is clear enough. What is missing in the theologies of 'pietism' and Enlightenment is just what is also missing, from the Christian point of view, in Islam: namely, a proper *practical* appropriation of trinitarian truth.

But as a result of 'pietist' and Enlightenment theology the whole life of the church tends to disintegrate:

> Where the gospel is not preached to the poor, who are the ones closest to infinite anguish; where the teaching of love in infinite anguish is abandoned in favour of enjoyment, love without anguish; where the gospel is preached in a naturalistic way – there the salt has lost its savour [Matt. 5: 13]. When everything is done in this way, and the moral man is satisfied in his reflection and opinion, his conviction, in his finitude; when every foundation, security, the substantive bonds of the world, have been tacitly

removed; when we are left inwardly empty of objective truth, of its form and content – then one thing alone remains certain: finitude turned in upon itself, arrogant barrenness and lack of content.[161]

'Absolute Knowing'

To summarize: when Hegel speaks of 'Spirit' he means, on one hand, God; but, on the other hand, the whole activity of human thinking. The foundational principle of Hegelian philosophical theology might thus be said to lie in the strict correlation he seeks to draw between true faith in God and genuinely enquiring thought *in general*. For Hegel, the former is fundamentally an expression of commitment to the latter. Theology, therefore, is not to be related to just one particular limited area or aspect of experience, as it is for instance by Kant and Fichte, or in another way by Jacobi. Nor is it to be in any sense permanently lifted out of actual, historical experience, as in the sort of rigidly deductive thinking which reaches its purest form in Spinoza. But the real truth of faith lies in the whetting of an appetite for thought which has to do with every area and aspect of our lives, in the most concrete terms possible.

His actual term for that truth, as the ideal goal of philosophical discipline, is 'Absolute Knowing'. In the final chapter of the *Phenomenology* he describes this Absolute Knowing, in the first place, as an inner appropriation of religious dogma: 'what in religion was *content* or a form for presenting an *other*, is here the *Self's* own *act*'.[162] He also refers back to the dialectic of Conscience, and further speaks of it as the 'realization' of that essential inner freedom which there, in the form of the Beautiful Soul, remains 'un-realized'. That is to say, it is what is arrived at where that freedom 'externalizes itself', gaining 'the form of universality': a proper public legitimation, an actively political dimension in the broadest sense.[163]

These, in fact, are presented here as two complementary approaches to a comprehension of the final 'reconciliation of consciousness with self-consciousness':[164] '*consciousness*' in this particular context being (it would seem) a general term, encompassing the whole framework of ideas about the world which one inherits, as it were, second-hand from others (religious and ethical beliefs, above all); whereas '*self-consciousness*', by contrast, refers to that by which one identifies oneself as oneself, over against others.

The point is: these are '*reconciled*', to the extent that one's received

ideas, instead of inhibiting, actually come to reinforce in one a basic sense of individual autonomy. So that what one is being taught is, in the deepest sense, precisely to think freely for oneself – with all that involves.

APPENDIX: GOLLWITZER'S DEFENCE OF 'EXCLUSIVE' REPRESENTATION

Even though he makes no direct reference to Hegel, Helmut Gollwitzer in his book *Von der Stellvertretung Gottes: Christlicher Glaube in der Erfahrung der Verborgenheit Gottes* offers a very interesting defence of an 'exclusive' christology. The book is subtitled *Zum Gespräch mit Dorothee Sölle*, and is, essentially, a *Streitschrift* occasioned by her *Stellvertretung* (*Christ the Representative*), published earlier in the same year.

Gollwitzer attempts to put his argument in the sharpest possible form by taking the example of Nazi war criminals (pp. 40–2). We are quite rightly, he says, outraged by the sheer lack of penitence shown by the majority of these criminals for the fantastic crimes in which they were implicated. But let us be realistic: what would repentance *mean* for such people? It would mean facing the reality of what they have done, and that would involve – being thrown into a living hell! 'Conscious of the gaze of their thousands of murdered victims, they would know themselves worthy of death just as many thousands of times over.' They could hardly survive such guilt; for such criminals, therefore, impenitence appears to be 'their only means of life'.

And here, he argues, we have a basic challenge to Christian theology. How are we to do full justice to the horror of the crime – and yet, at the same time, to provide some realistic basis for repentance in such a situation? There is, he suggests, only one way, and that is precisely by recourse to the traditional – 'exclusive' – understanding of Christ's redemptive death, according to which that death is indeed a *substitutionary* sacrifice for all our sins, including even these: a miraculous event in which 'another does for us what we can neither now, nor ever do for ourselves, and does so, exactly in order that it should never again be demanded of us' (p. 36).

I would certainly accept the significance of the challenge. Gollwitzer's conclusion, however, appears to me a complete *non-sequitur*.

Thus, (1) in his discussion of the problem posed by war crimes,

Gollwitzer seems to envisage just three alternatives. Either, he polemically suggests, (a) one adopts some form of 'exclusive' interpretation of atonement; or (b) forgiveness is cheapened, and the suffering of the victims devalued (as Anselm argued that it would be unworthy of God to forgive sin *sola misericordia*, without Christ having to die on our behalf, since that would be an offence against justice); or (c) the guilt of sin is taken seriously enough, but as a result – at least in such an extreme situation – the notion of God's continuing love towards the sinner tends to fade away.

He evidently regards Sölle as a representative, primarily, of (c). Hence his charge that her position is, in the end, little more than a disguised version of Socinianism (p. 36) and, as such, a basic deviation from the central insights of Lutheranism, yet another left-wing theology of works-righteousness (pp. 129–32). This, however, is patently unfair: he makes things far too easy for himself by just ignoring her discussion both of Luther and of Hegel; a discussion in which, as we have seen (see above, pp. 39–41) she seeks to distance herself, quite explicitly, from the sort of view he is here attributing to her. Gollwitzer may consider her argument inconsistent – but the fact is, he has not even confronted it. On the other hand, a properly 'inclusive' understanding is never going to fall into the trap of (b), either, even if it does lead to a very different imaginative presentation of the 'wrath' of God (see pp. 44–5). For one can scarcely speak of a 'devaluing' of sin when the whole point of an 'inclusive' understanding is, of course, to identify Christ in the most direct way possible with *every* victim of sin, as such. (A point which Sölle herself applies very forcefully to the Holocaust in her book, *Suffering*, English translation, pp. 145–50.)

At the same time, on an 'inclusive' understanding – one might say – to meet with divine love through Christ is the same as to find *oneself* mirrored in Christ: which remains a possibility from this point of view for every human individual, at the very least, simply *as* a human individual. At that deepest level of identity the war criminal is also very much one of the victims of the atrocity in which he or she has been complicit; only, obviously, the most pathetic and ignoble of the victims – a victim by virtue of the spiritual corruption into which he or she has been drawn. And for such a one the only possible encounter with divine love would presumably lie in just that recognition.

This is, indeed, an understanding of divine love which actually represents the purest possible antithesis to the whole mentality of

Nazism, insofar as Nazism, like any other form of authoritarianism, is originally grounded in the individual's repudiation and denial of his or her individuality: the desire to sink into the collective, to identify with its power; the Unhappy Consciousness at its most extreme and least self-aware. No doubt in so extreme a case truly adequate penitence remains, in actual practice, virtually impossible. – But does an 'exclusive' understanding *really* have anything more valid to offer here? Despite Gollwitzer's argument I still can not see how it does.

(2) How does Gollwitzer meet the charge that an 'exclusive' interpretation necessarily stands in fundamental conflict with an 'inclusive' one? It seems to me he does not properly meet it at all. All he does is *assert* their ultimate compatibility – contending that an 'exclusive' interpretation not only can, but always does include elements of 'inclusive' thinking as well (p. 37).

Granted, in most theology the distinctions here do tend to get blurred. But how – after all – is this blurring of distinctions other than a muddle? And how is Gollwitzer's position, therefore, more than an option for muddle? I have tried to show that the two approaches tend to serve quite opposite interests. Nor does Gollwitzer, so far as I can see, in the end say anything to suggest otherwise.

CHAPTER 2

Philosophy and dogmatics

A PROTESTANT AQUINAS?

And so – one might ask – 'Why did Hegel not become for the Protestant world something similar to what Thomas Aquinas was for Roman Catholicism? How could it come to pass that, very soon after Hegel's death and even more plainly from the middle of the century onwards, it was exactly his achievement which began to be looked upon, with a pitying smile, as representing something which was in the main already superseded?'[1]

Posed in this way, however – as it is by Karl Barth – the question is, I think, a very misleading one. (If, that is to say, it is taken as implying a judgement on Hegel's own actual intentions – as Barth's subsequent argument tends to confirm.) The suggestion that Hegel is to be regarded as some sort of would-be latter-day Thomas Aquinas seems to me to very dubious. The whole orientation of his thought was in an important sense, surely, quite different.

Coming from Barth, of course, the compliment which the question implies is double-edged in the extreme. Certainly, Barth wants to emphasize Hegel's stature. He even expresses himself in the most hyperbolic terms: 'Was not Hegel he who should come as the fulfiller of every promise, and was it worth waiting for another after he had come?'[2] In general, he presents the history of nineteenth-century theology as a story of decline, a decline of which the increasing marginalization of Hegel is directly symptomatic. 'The century had denied its truest and most genuine son and since then it no longer had a good conscience or any true joyousness or any impetus,'[3] he comments. And 'Where does the fault lie? In Hegel? Those who study him will not receive this impression. If it is a question of doing what the entire nineteenth century evidently wanted to do, then Hegel apparently did it as well as it could possibly be done.'[4] 'What

the entire nineteenth century evidently wanted to do', however, is just what Barth himself here wants to call in question. And from Barth's point of view, therefore, this role he attributes to Hegel, as most distinguished spokesman for the *Zeitgeist*, is by no means to be reckoned an unequivocal honour.

To what extent, though, *is* that the role which Hegel sets out to play? It seems to me in fact that there is a fundamental contrast in this respect between Hegel and Aquinas.[5] For, yes, in relation to the given norms of Christian spirituality and social practice in his day, one can very well see Aquinas as a spokesman for the *Zeitgeist*. At the level of pure theory he was in many ways a great innovator – at first, moreover, very controversially so. He too had his troubles with the authorities, several of his propositions being condemned by episcopal decree in Paris and Oxford just after his death. Not everyone in the first instance welcomed the new patterns of thought, of which he was such a notable representative, then emerging in response to the challenge of a rediscovered Aristotelianism; and this is understandable – especially in view of what Aristotle's Arabian commentators, Avicenna and Averroes, had made of him, and the effects of their influence on other less cautious Christian thinkers. Nonetheless, Aquinas himself scarcely appears as a major critic of the established church order or of its general ethos. True, he had taken the Dominican view of poverty, at a time when the Dominicans were still not altogether respectable – but that is about as far as it goes. Rather, his interest in philosophy seems to arise out of a concern to develop a new defence of the prevailing ethos, better adapted to the new intellectual context. So he uses Aristotle against the new, theologically more sceptical 'Aristotelians'; in a way that quite naturally, in fact, fits his thought for its eventual absorption into the mainstream of orthodox tradition.

Hegel on the other hand was surely a much more *dissatisfied* thinker, from this point of view. He was not only a philosopher; he was also, by intention, a religious reformer. His whole philosophy, I want to argue, has to be seen as an attempted contribution towards religious reform. After all, whatever the conceptual advances that may be made, at a practical level the problem of the Unhappy Consciousness will always remain. Nor is his critique of 'pietism' in the *Lectures* aimed only at a small or marginal phenomenon within the Lutheranism of his day. 'Pietism', here, covers a broad spectrum: not just an unsophisticated anti-intellectualism of simple faith; but,

as I have remarked, a pattern of thinking at the popular level which is also closely related to the 'reflective philosophy of subjectivity'; through Jacobi in particular – and, still more, through *Schleiermacher.*[6] It is true that in the *Lectures* he names no names; but this 'pietism' is surely, in the end, just the same phenomenon as the Protestantism reduced to a 'pervasive atomism' which he was already criticizing in *Faith and Knowledge*, in that context with specific reference to both Jacobi and Schleiermacher.[7] And no one (least of all Barth) would seriously want to deny the immense historical significance of Schleiermacher, at any rate, as a representative figure.

Critical of both, Barth's own inclination is, clearly, to try and bracket Hegel and Schleiermacher together, so far as he can – just as he also brackets Hegel with Aquinas. In fact, it is almost as if he wanted to present Hegel, somehow, as a cross between the two. He draws a simple contrast between, on the one hand, theology which is primarily theoretical (Hegel – like Aquinas?) and, on the other hand, theology primarily oriented towards practice (Schleiermacher). Which also allows him to adopt a mediating stance, for – 'Does not man always exist at the invisible intersection of his thinking and willing?'[8] But at the same time he also wants to hint in a mysterious manner at some altogether deeper affinity by which they are united: one, that is to say, which exists at the level of the innermost 'secrets' of each one's thought.[9]

Of course, it is true that Hegel and Schleiermacher were close contemporaries, both belonging to the same intellectual world: for thirteen years they were colleagues together at the University of Berlin (and were once, at least, observed jovially sharing a toboggan together, arm in arm, at the Tivoli). And it is also true that neither of them had quite the same theological priorities as Barth himself. Nevertheless, the fact remains that Hegel always saw Schleiermacher as his Protestant antipodes: a theologian whose obvious philosophical partner would be Jacobi; the embodiment *par excellence* of the all too natural alliance of 'pietistic' theology with a philosophy of 'reflective' *Verstand.*[10] And it seems to me that this does, after all, have to be recognized as implying a *quite* different relationship to that hazy figure – the great anti-hero in the Barthian scheme of things – 'modern man', in general. For Barth is no doubt right about Schleiermacher: he (like Jacobi) is, at bottom, always very much a *peacemaker* by intention.[11] If Schleiermacher in a certain sense subordinates theory to practice, treating doctrine strictly as a means

of articulating individual religious experience, then this is at least in part because, as a post-Enlightenment thinker, he is so acutely aware of the potential destructiveness of doctrine valued, as it were, for its own sake, and thereby transformed into a justification for intolerance. But Hegel, a completely different sort of post-Enlightenment thinker, has surely *not* come to bring peace, in anything like this way. The doing of philosophy may for him, it is true, require a certain detached tranquillity in the contemplation of history; and there may also be a certain pacifying philosophic consolation in the recognition of historical necessity.[12] This, though, is quite a different sort of peace. Thus, it is not simply that he gives an opposing primacy to theory, but rather that in his thought both doctrine *and* experience are equally called in question. In sharp contrast to Schleiermacher, in short, what Hegel brings that is new is really a new principle of *division*. With his analysis of the Unhappy Consciousness and all that follows from that, he has completely rethought the basic criteria for theological truth, in such a way as to bring to light a whole range of vital ambiguities in the tradition.

As a result, I would suggest, Hegel's thought is, in fact, incomparably more critical in its actual implications than either Schleiermacher's or Aquinas's. Schleiermacher's live-and-let-live approach quite naturally appears, from this perspective, precisely as an 'atomistic' aberration; which, in seeking to exclude bigotry, only manages to do so by in effect devaluing truth itself. And an interpretation like Barth's, insofar as it fails to come to grips with this contrast, is therefore, in my view, flawed from the outset.

But Barth is by no means alone in this interpretation.

The fundamental problem here, I think, lies in the fact that Hegel is always strictly the philosopher; that he himself never actually enters the domain of dogmatics. So it is not so much theory versus practice, as philosophy versus dogmatics. And the two games are played according to different rules: dogmatics, with its direct concern for the content and conduct of liturgy – word and sacrament – being a discipline of thinking, necessarily, altogether immersed in the quite un-philosophic medium of *Vorstellung*. Hence, the question of the implicit significance of Hegel's thought *for* dogmatics does, it is true, have to remain very much a matter of imaginative reconstruction; moving out beyond the given texts.

What would a reformed liturgy purged of ambiguity with regard

to the Unhappy Consciousness look like? To what extent can such a thing be conceived? What would have to change at the level of catechetics or actual preaching? It is true that Hegel nowhere offers any real answers. That gesture of withdrawal at the conclusion of the 1821 lectures on religion is in this sense only too characteristic of the lectures as a whole.

And the natural temptation is always to oversimplify. Whilst Hegel's more sympathetic atheist commentators, siezing in particular on the concept of the Unhappy Consciousness, have tended to interpret it as an indication of his latent atheism – those who have wanted, on the contrary, to take his explicit professions of faith more seriously have, it seems to me, like Barth, all too often lapsed over to the opposite extreme.

To a very large extent, I find this to be the case with Hans Küng's book, for instance.[13] This massive work is of obvious interest, not least for coming from such a very notable contemporary theologian. It possesses all Küng's usual qualities of readability and liberal-mindedness; and he provides an admirably systematic introductory survey of the development of Hegel's thought, from its earliest origins to its final fruition, with special reference to questions of christology.

Küng, however, actually cites Barth's questions – why did Hegel not become a Protestant Thomas Aquinas? – with warm approval. He even goes on to expatiate upon it at some length.[14] Yet, if anyone wants to help do for modernity what Thomas Aquinas did for the Middle Ages, it is, surely, not so much Hegel as Küng himself! It is Küng whose thought, in this book, is dominated like Aquinas's by a concern for the theoretical legitimation of Christian faith, rather than its critical application.

Of course Küng too is a reformer. But what he looks to Hegel for in this particular work is, basically, help in formulating something like a new *Summa contra Gentiles* (rather as Aquinas looked to Aristotle): one which will work in a post-Enlightenment age.[15] This is what leads to his particular interest, referred to above, in Hegel's philosophical overcoming of the fundamentally Platonist assumptions underlying classical christology: the way in which Hegel's meditations on 'the death of God' point beyond the classical doctrine of divine *apatheia*. But with Küng this is also, unfortunately, where it stops. Indicative, for example, of the resulting dislocation of the true centre of gravity in Küng's presentation of Hegel's theology

is the awkward fit (which Joseph Fitzer has also remarked upon[16]) between his first seven expository chapters, and his eighth, entitled 'Prolegomena to a Future Christology', which overflows into a whole series of excurses no longer directly to do with Hegel in any way. These provide useful background material to Küng's own project, as they deal with the whole history of Christian tradition in relation to these issues. And no doubt that project is a perfectly valid one, so far it goes. But does it really provide a sufficiently comprehensive vantage point for a final coming to terms with Hegel? At all events, it has to be noted that Küng scarcely discusses Hegel's use of the concept of the Unhappy Consciousness at all. It may be that he reads the original passage in the *Phenomenology* the same way Quentin Lauer does, for instance: as referring only to certain quite extreme distortions of Christianity; and attaches no great importance to it, for that reason. But even this is not clear.

So too, in another way, with Emilio Brito's work;[17] which is, to date, the most detailed and comprehensive study covering all of Hegel's christological texts in a systematic way. Brito sets out to show the complementary nature of Hegel's contrasting approaches to christology in the *Phenomenology*, the *Encyclopaedia* and the *Lectures*, closely analysing the structure of the argument in each of these in turn. And yet (especially when it comes to the Unhappy Consciousness passage) one cannot help observing that Brito is still far more concerned, in general, to clarify the syllogistic *form* of Hegel's argument than he is to evaluate the underlying critical *content* of what Hegel is saying, or its practical implications.[18] Brito, like Küng, writes as an upholder of Roman Catholic orthodoxy, albeit from a liberal point of view – partly seeking to enlist Hegel's support for such a position, partly seeking to criticize Hegel from that perspective.[19] And, even though his work is a good deal more rigorous than Küng's as regards attention to detail, the end result, it seems to me, is much the same. It is particularly interesting, in this connection, to note how Brito handles the Hegel/Anselm relationship.[20] Thus, if Barth obscures the true distinctiveness of the Hegelian vision by assigning it a family likeness to that of Aquinas, Brito surely does the same in the way he, in effect, ignores the basic opposition here between the 'exclusiveness' of Anselm's christology and the 'inclusiveness' of Hegel's. Obviously, he is just not very interested in that sort of contrast – which to me seems so central; but what interests him far rather, it would appear, is Hegel the systematic philosophical technician.

I have related misgivings, as well, about two of the more notable recent English-language studies of Hegel's theology: those of Emil Fackenheim[21] and James Yerkes.[22] Fackenheim, again, refers approvingly to Barth's rhetorical question.[23] There no doubt is a certain sense in which he is quite justified in insisting that 'The entire Hegelian philosophy may be viewed as one vast effort to *stay with* the modern Christian world, in contrast with Greek-Roman philosophy, which was compelled to flee from the ancient-pagan world'[24] (and I shall come back to that). The problem is, though, that in his account this side of Hegel's thought is so heavily stressed as virtually to blot out everything else there, all that remains in any sort of tension with it. So much so that when at length he comes to the 'discordant note' at the end of the *Lectures* he is driven to express amazement: 'What an incredible, what a shattering turn of thought!'[25] Yerkes is selective in another way. He presents his study as one that draws on all the various texts.[26] But, even so, it appears to me that (as with Küng) much too quick a jump is made, here, from Hegel's theological *Jugendschriften* to the later writings of the Berlin period – over the *Phenomenology*. It is not that there is, in my view, any great contradiction between these later works and the *Phenomenology*. Where they overlap, the later works serve rather to unpack what is said in the *Phenomenology*, in a more readable manner. Yet not everything is fully unpacked. Not everything can be, in the very different format of these lecture notes and outline courses. And this certainly seems to me to be the case where it comes to christology, in particular.[27]

Unfortunately, moreover, such readings – all, in their various ways, obscuring or softening the real element of *practical* critique underlying Hegel's argument as a whole – at the same time also make it far too easy for the theologians just to pick and choose what they will borrow from him.

CHRISTOLOGY, IMMORTALITY, 'PANTHEISM'

The debate here is, of course, dominated by the charge that Hegel's philosophy is 'pantheistic'; or, if one wants to say the same thing a shade more politely, 'panentheistic'. This is the obvious historical reason why Hegel did not, even mistakenly, ever come to be accepted as a latter-day Thomas Aquinas. Right from the outset in orthodox Christian circles, his thought was found suspect. And, notwithstanding the strenuous attempts he himself made to disavow

the actual term 'pantheist',[28] the charge stuck. I have already briefly touched on this. But it seems to me that, from the particular perspective developed above, there one or two further points to be made.

1 In the first place, let us note the sheer sweeping generality of the charge. In this context, 'pantheism' seems to serve as a derogatory term, covering simply any theology in the form of pure *Denken*, as distinct from that of *Vorstellung*. And when it comes to more specific issues what is attacked under this heading is, on the whole, not so much what Hegel unequivocally says as what it is felt his doctrine must (secretly) *imply*.

In the earliest debates, for instance, one of the central issues was that of *immortality*; the debate on this being largely initiated by the polemical intervention of two young Left Hegelians: Ludwig Feuerbach, with his *Thoughts on Death and Immortality* published in 1830; and Friedrich Richter, with his *Doctrine of the Last Things* published in 1833, and other writings around the same time.[29] Thus Richter's work, especially, sparked off a fierce controversy within the Hegelian school in those years. Both Feuerbach and Richter saw themselves as the prophets and popularizers of a new faith. Hegel's achievements in the realm of pure philosophy marked, for them, the beginning of a revolutionary new epoch in European culture; but, in order for this revolution to be fully carried through, a new means had to be found for disseminating the esoteric insights of philosophy to the common people. Whatever Hegel himself might say, in their view the Christian religion could no longer do the job; it was beyond reform. A new faith was needed. And for them, it is true, the charge of 'pantheism' held no fears at all.

It is, perhaps, unfortunate that the doctrine of immortality is not a subject which Hegel himself discusses at any great length. Nevertheless, the fact is that such discussion as he does provide suggests conclusions very different from those of Feuerbach and Richter. This is not to say that he is just a straightforward defender of mainstream church doctrine here (even though some of Feuerbach and Richter's more militant Right Hegelian critics may have sought to give that impression).[30] And yet there surely is a fundamental sense in which he *must* believe in immortality. For if the innermost truth of the gospel lies, as he argues, in the implicit overcoming which it represents of the Unhappy Consciousness – then does not that also, itself, logically imply such belief? Would not belief in an

authoritarian God coupled with disbelief in immortality represent the very purest form of the Unhappy Consciousness?[31] From this perspective, the dogma of the Incarnation, on the one hand, and the Christian concept of immortality, on the other, have to be seen as being two different aspects (the theological and the anthropological) of one and the same basic truth; both of them alike formulations for the reconciliation of what the Unhappy Consciousness sets apart. In short, 'the infinite value of the individual as such' must surely be recognized as an eternal value too: as transcending whatever may or may not happen to the individual in time; as something that not even death can take away, as a triumph to be celebrated in the face of death.[32] Wherever the doctrine of individual immortality begins to appear, or is developed, as in Egyptian religion or in the thinking of Socrates and Plato, this in itself for Hegel always marks a significant advance.[33]

As always, there will of course be a difference between the form the doctrine takes in religious *Vorstellung* and the form it takes in philosophy. What *Vorstellung* presents pictorially, in terms of the *post mortem* future, philosophy will presumably grasp far more in terms of the conceptual distinction between two basic aspects of our experience here and now: the inessential, the essential – the merely temporal, the eternal – that which, properly understood, fades into insignificance in the light of death, and that which does not. It is no doubt also true that one can observe the distorting influence of the still resistant Unhappy Consciousness at work here, too, in the actual imagery the tradition has tended to employ in representation of the after-life: in the other-worldly – as opposed to world-transfiguring – character of that imagery; in its compensatory character; its reduction to consolation. The proper function of talk about life beyond death cannot, from the Hegelian point of view, be consolatory in the sense of an un-dialectical mere denial of finitude. Nor does Hegel believe in an after-life the way Kant professes to, as a 'postulate': philosophy, as he conceives it, speaks of nothing that cannot be experienced in this world. But, nevertheless, the point remains.

And, in fact, Feuerbach and Richter's position is only possible by virtue of a radical departure from the most fundamental insights of Hegelian christology.

What Feuerbach in particular does draw from Hegel is his awareness of the need to understand the development of ideas about

immortality in the light of developments in the social status of the individual. Indeed, he introduces his essay with an historical account in which he distinguishes three basic 'epochs' in the development of the idea of immortality in European culture.[34]

The first epoch corresponds to the pre-Christian world of ancient Greece and Rome: in that world, Feuerbach argues, the concept of individual immortality could not really arise with any force, strictly speaking (that is, beyond the hazy notions of Elysium and Tartarus) because individuals then were so well absorbed into the ethical life of the communities to which they belonged. Their hopes and aspirations were, as a result, essentially this-worldly, being identified with the survival and prosperity of the community; to the extent that there was little or no sense of anything extra being needed. The second epoch, corresponding to the period of early and mediaeval Christianity, marks a shift from this inasmuch as, obviously, the concept of individual immortality had now become official dogma, in the shape of a doctrine concerning the resurrection of the flesh. On the other hand, he argues, one should not ignore the large degree to which individuals were still, at this stage, spiritually incorporated into the on-going corporate life of the church, and the very considerable practical difference this made to the way in which the after-life was conceived. Immortality was still thought of, in this period, much more as a participation in the eternal fellowship of the church than as a property of one's individuality as such; and the resurrection of the individual often seems to be posited only as it were incidentally, as a figurative means of representing the final vindication of good against evil at the Last Judgement. It remains, by subsequent standards, relatively insignificant in itself. Only in the third epoch – the age inaugurated by the Reformation – does it at last move centre stage; for it is only with the Reformation that a truly individualistic spirit begins to establish itself generally in European culture. Thus, the authority which pietist spirituality attributes to the distinctive religious experience of each separate individual also gives rise to an altogether new set of emphases with regard to immortality; which in turn develops into certain forms of 'rationalism' (he presumably has Kant, above all, in mind) for which the immortality of the individual, in itself, comes to be seen as a postulate of quite vital importance in the grounding of morality. Such a view, Feuerbach insists, is a peculiarly modern phenomenon; it is one which could only arise in an age such as the present.

Hegel for his part might not, perhaps, have had any great quarrel with this account, as a quite loosely conceived and highly impressionistic historical sketch (although one is still left wondering quite how Plato fits in[35]). The fundamental difference, though, lies in the way in which Feuerbach assesses the actual philosophical significance of this history. For, with regard to both points of transition, he merely *deplores* the increasing apparent alienation of the individual from the community.

By contrast, Hegel sees the experience of alienation in this sense as a necessary moment in the historical unfolding of freedom. That, after all, is the essential theme of chapter 6 of the *Phenomenology*, the chapter entitled 'Spirit' – a chapter which portrays a whole series of different types of culture, arranged on a scale of ever-increasing disintegration. As we have seen, Hegel is also a very vigorous critic of the 'spiritual atomism' of his own day. Nevertheless, the process of disintegration he is tracing here is no *mere* regression; it is also, at the same time, a path forward: *towards* the final goal of Absolute Knowing – which is first glimpsed only right at the very end of this chapter, at the conclusion of the section on Conscience. This is because, for Hegel, the evil of 'spiritual atomism' lies not so much in the actual loss of order in itself as in the inability of an atomistic culture adequately to maintain the life of the Spirit. The resolution needed, therefore, is not just a restoring of communal unity; for not all unity is equally spiritual. (We have already seen just how fundamental a defect Hegel considered the institutions of slavery, in particular, to have been, in classical antiquity; and this is only one example.) The process of disintegration may only be an advance insofar as it serves to dissolve less spiritual forms of cultural cohesion; apart from that, it may indeed be sheer regression. But, if the real truth of freedom is to be grasped, *both* aspects need to be held together, in tension.

And from this perspective Feuerbach's view can only be regarded as a relapse into total one-sidedness. For him, modern subjectivity equals untruth, pure and simple. There is therefore no sense, for him, in which belief in individual immortality can ever represent an expression of genuine freedom. It can only ever represent an expression of individual egoism, a symptom of cultural decadence. The rhetoric of piety may serve to disguise that egoism as something else; in fact to a large degree, he suggests, that is just what pious rhetoric is really all about: projecting the egoism of human

individuals on to God. But egoism it remains, nothing more. This early work of Feuerbach's is characterized by a lyrical mysticism of love and death: he defines true love as a movement towards the sheer annihilation of our individuality – and therefore as something which in principle does away with any reason to rebel against that other great destroyer of our individuality, death. 'Only the shell of death is hard, the kernel is sweet',[36] he declares: the wisdom which lies in surrender to the God of love implies, above all, the cheerful acceptance of our natural being, our mortality. It means a decisive abandoning of any separate hope for ourselves as individuals – as we place all our hopes instead in the on-going life of the species, 'Humanity'.

So Feuerbach comes forward here as the prophet of a new, fourth epoch: a post-Christian *Reich der Idee*,[37] which, however, in thoroughly *un*-Hegelian fashion would mark a sheer *reversal* of the whole historical process leading up to it. He is at one with Hegel in his critique of 'pietism', but develops this in a completely one-sided way. For the truth Hegel perceives in the Incarnation disappears entirely, as does his positive evaluation of the Reformation itself, which rests upon the same basis. And this means that Feuerbach's polemic against false notions of divine transcendence takes on an altogether different significance from Hegel's critique of the theology of the Unhappy Consciousness. Insofar as Feuerbach still sees any truth in the Incarnation (as subsequently appears in his *Essence of Christianity*[38]) it is as an affirmation of the divinity of the *species* – not the individual; the species, as opposed to the individual. (One finds the same distortion of Hegel in David Friedrich Strauss, as well.) – But what is meant here, in practice? The sharp opposition Feuerbach posits between 'species-being' and individuality might well be suspected of harbouring all sorts of authoritarian implications. Let me repeat: the Unhappy Consciousness is not necessarily a phenomenon which appears only in specifically theological form. And there is by no means any automatic guarantee that one has overcome it just by changing the name of God to 'Humanity', as he later goes on to do.[39]

At the time of writing his *Thoughts on Death and Immortality* it would seem that Feuerbach still regarded himself as a disciple of Hegel's. In his subsequent writings he tends to distance himself from Hegel: for example, shifting from his earlier 'pantheism' to overt atheism. – But how Hegelian was he ever, in reality? It can, certainly, be misleading to judge Hegel too much in the light of Feuerbach.

2 What, though, of the apparent eclipse of the idea of *divine freedom* in Hegelian philosophy? Barth's misgivings on this score actually represent what is perhaps the most typical theological response to Hegel: Hegel's 'identification of God with the dialectical method', he writes, 'implies a scarcely acceptable limitation, even abolition of God's sovereignty ... This God, the God of Hegel, is at the least his own prisoner.'[40]

One might well question Barth's somewhat loaded – and not at all Hegelian – use of the phrase 'dialectical method' in this context; yet here we have the final verdict of perhaps the greatest dogmatic theologian of the twentieth century. Neither can it be denied that Hegel very often *does* speak of philosophy uncovering the 'necessity' of that which religious *Vorstellung* grasps only in the form of contingency. And the question, therefore, no doubt has got to be taken seriously: is not Hegel a 'pantheist' – or a 'panentheist' – at least, in this sense? Let us be quite clear, however, just exactly why Hegel wants to speak in such terms. And let us be quite clear, as well, about both what he is and what he is not saying here.

Characteristically enough, Barth develops his own critique of this aspect of Hegel's thought first and foremost in a specifically christological context. Thus, one of the things that troubles him in particular is that 'Hegel in his paraphrase of the relation of man to God did not call a halt before the concept of sin. He included it in the unity and necessity of mind [*Geist*]... He thought he could see one point whence it could be understood at once as fate and as guilt, and at one and the same time the poison-cup of death and the fountain-head of reconciliation.' As a result of which, according to Barth, he also 'understood reconciliation not as an incomprehensibly new beginning, but simply as a continuation of the one eventual course of truth, which is identical with the existence of God himself'. Since for Barth, on the contrary, 'the basis of theology for knowledge should be revelation; and... revelation should be the revelation of God to man who is lost in sin, and the revelation of God's incomprehensible reconciling', he considers that 'here, where we seem to be permitted to think beyond the mystery of evil and salvation, and where it seems to be permitted and possible to solve in this way this dual mystery, we have before us... a concept of truth which' (in the end, and notwithstanding all the philosopher's, as he sees it, perfectly genuine good will) 'cannot be acceptable to theology'.[41]

A broadly similar line of argument is also to be found, for example,

in the commentaries of Küng and Brito.[42] At the same time, though, a philosophically speaking yet more fundamental issue appears to be raised by Hegel's doctrine of the prior 'necessity' of Creation itself: as expressed, for example, in the notorious formula that 'Without the world God is not God'.[43] The Atonement, the Fall, the Creation: let us consider Hegel's understanding of the 'necessity' of each element, in turn, of this receding series of topics.

The Atonement

There are, to be sure, those who will criticize just about any attempt to answer the question '*cur Deus homo?*' other than by simple recourse to God's sovereign will; even the Anselmian theory has sometimes come under suspicion for this reason. And Hegel's concern to dissolve all mystery here is, admittedly, that much more insistent than Anselm's.

In order to understand this, however, it seems to me that once again one really does have to go straight back to his analysis of what happens to our understanding of the Incarnation and Atonement when these events are viewed in the distorting mirror of the unsubdued Unhappy Consciousness. For where one finds the course of salvation history presented as unfathomable to human reason – is this not just playing into the hands of the Unhappy Consciousness? From the standpoint of the Unhappy Consciousness it is quite natural that one should perceive the Incarnation as a sublime contingency: given the intrinsic resistance of this form of consciousness to any more generalized sense of unity between the divine and the human, it is clear that the only way the Incarnation *can* appear to it as a miraculous conjuncture of incompatibles, an event altogether outside the ordinary, humanly explicable run of history. But then – of course one might ask – where is the real liberation in it?

In Hegel's view, on the contrary, the Incarnation is necessary fundamentally, it would seem, in the sense that it is a rendering explicit of what has always, implicitly, been the case with regard to the nature of human individuality in relation to God: a basic truth, towards the full realization of which the whole of human history, both before and since, has been straining – insofar, that is, as it has been an authentic history of the Spirit. It has the retrospectively recognizable necessity of a necessary 'moment' in the historical process of divine pedagogy, the education of the human race, which

only awaited the right combination of historical circumstances – the rightness of which is also explicable – to appear. And it is only insofar as it is in fact recognized as being necessary that its truth is fully grasped: in the quite straightforward sense that one has only ever fully learnt to understand anything to the extent that one has at the same time learnt to understand the reasons why it is as it is.

(So much, at least, by way of a preliminary response. As the Incarnation is an event within history, one is also brought face to face with Hegel's broader 'historicism' here – and I will come back to this in the next chapter.)

The Fall

Hegel's interpretation of the Fall is the natural corollary.[44] It is, in essence, a philosophical extension of the type of position originally represented in the Patristic period by Irenaeus. That is to say, in this context, Hegel's main concern is to emphasize the difference between true goodness and mere innocence.

'Paradise is a park, where only brutes, not human beings, can remain':[45] what Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden symbolize is in his view, not so much the ideal condition of humanity at one with God, but rather the purely animal condition of humanity prior to its entry into any sort of true spiritual life. As Stephen Crites puts it, for Hegel Adam and Eve fall 'into history'.[46] Our condition of 'fallenness' is necessary, basically in the sense of being the precondition for any actual possibility of historical development. 'The Fall... is the step into self-consciousness... [Adam's] opposition to God is not merely a contradictory act of will; the opposition lies in the fact that he has come into existence as a finite consciousness, one-sided, particular, self-concerned – in the fact that he has an individual will at all'.[47]

Adam and Eve eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge: they learn to reflect, to think rationally, to recognize good and evil. It is only by virtue of reflection that evil, as such, becomes a possibility; and in that sense one can indeed say that 'reflection itself is evil'. But only in that sense – which at the same time, equally, allows one to say the exact opposite: for it is of course only by virtue of reflection that good, as such, becomes a possibility too. 'Cognition gives the wound and heals it.'[48] This is in fact the actual meaning of the symmetry to which Barth seems to object here. Hegel, though, finds the same symmetry in the book of Genesis itself. For, as he points out, 'the serpent had not lied': it is true that by eating the apple Adam

and Eve have become 'god-like'. In the original story this is made clear, since God is also represented as confirming it: 'The man has become like one of us' (Genesis 3:2). 'A great deal of trouble', Hegel remarks, 'has been taken with the interpretation of this passage, and some have gone the length of explaining it as irony. The truer explanation, however, is that the Adam referred to is to be understood as representing the second Adam, namely, Christ.'[49] In other words, if the myth of the Fall primarily represents the negative consequences of rational thought, it nevertheless already hints at the healing power of the very same – which is, essentially, what in historical form the story of Christ displays, and confirms. The real truth of the Genesis story lies above all, for Hegel, in that balance.

It is argued against Hegel that his reading the story this way is in some way symptomatic of a basic failure to take sin seriously enough. But how? To be sure, a strictly fideist theology may well regard itself as 'taking sin more seriously': for in such a theology the theme of human 'fallenness' will tend to play a very different role. It becomes a basis for the *disqualification* of Reason in relation to Faith: 'how can we, fallen sinful creatures that we are, *presume* to comprehend the ways of God?' and so forth. And no doubt, in this case, the necessity which Hegel attributes to the Fall does disappear – along with the symmetry in which it is grounded. For the free exercise of human rationality, which in the Hegelian view 'is at once what produces the disease, and the source of health', is here on the contrary grasped only in the former aspect; whereas the source of health appears, instead, as a Faith which in fact sets quite arbitrary limits to what can be thought.

If however the only choice, at this philosophical level, is between those two basic alternatives (and I must confess that I can not see a third) then it seems to me that one would have to pose the question here: how is this 'taking sin more seriously', in the end, more than just a somewhat convenient excuse for, in general – *not* taking inconvenient questions more seriously? Which is surely not what Barth, or any other serious theologian actually intends; any more than his doctrine of the Atonement is actually intended in the spirit of the Unhappy Consciousness. But quite the opposite.

The Creation

As for a formula like 'Without the world God is not God': the controversy which this has provoked is perhaps not surprising. Although it is a truism in one sense – God 'without the world' would not be God the Creator, and therefore not the 'God' we know – Hegel no doubt does also mean it in a much more polemical sense than that.

If one looks at the original context,[50] it will in fact be seen that his argument here is directed not so much against ordinary religious notions of the Creation as, once again, against 'the reflective philosophy of subjectivity': 'God without the world' is the God of that philosophy, in caricature – inasmuch as such thinking always tends in this direction, abstracting our idea of God from our actual concrete experience of the world. But, even though his primary concern here is thus to rebut the philosophical views of 'enlightened' thinkers like Kant, Fichte and Jacobi, it can scarcely be denied that this particular way of putting matters does at the same time raise all sorts of other issues, with regard to the whole relationship between Hegelian 'speculative' philosophy and ordinary religious *Vorstellung*. By its very nature, after all, the latter has got to operate with at least some notion of 'God without the world': it deals in particular stories, stories of God intervening here and there in the world, as it were from outside, in that sense from 'without'. And so – does Hegel, then, want to deny the validity of that as well?

On the contrary, he argues – it is not 'speculative' philosophy – it is 'reflective' philosophy which is the real enemy to ordinary, or 'positive' religion: this being a philosophy whose whole rationale is also just to abstract itself away from the actual content of positive tradition as such.[51]

But it nevertheless has to be admitted that, at least at a certain level, the comfortable agnosticism which goes along with such abstraction, with its generous allowance of mystery, does sit much more easily with the imagery of *Vorstellung* than the Hegelian vision does. To go back to the formula, 'Without the world God is not God': already as early as 1838, as Wolfhart Pannenberg notes, one finds the dogmatic theologian Julius Müller deducing from this the supposed logical impossibility, on the basis of Hegelian metaphysics, of any notion of God as a truly *personal* being.[52] Such a God, so the argument runs, needs the world, in the sense of being dependent upon it. There can be no question, therefore, of gratuitous grace; no

real God of love; no God set over against us in a genuine I/Thou relationship: for one can hardly enter into such a relationship with a *purely immanent* world-process. And obviously, if this were so, it would wreck any chance of Hegel's claim ever being accepted, that 'speculative' philosophy signifies a genuine unfolding of the truth of the gospel rather than its fundamental cancellation. It is clear that there would be a major inconsistency in his thought.

How, though, might Hegel himself have responded to this sort of objection?[53] He might surely have argued that it simply reflects, once again, the typical way in which *Verstand* muddles up the two quite *different* modes of expression appropriate to philosophy and religion. Thus: does he think that God 'needs' the world? In one sense, no doubt, yes – but only inasmuch that creativity 'needs' to create, or overflowing love 'needs' to love. In the sense that would collapse divine creativity and love into divine dependency, however – no. For the 'necessity' by which God acts is after all, for Hegel, purely self-, and not other-determined; finitude being for him always a necessary but disappearing 'moment' of the infinite, and therefore never an absolute 'other' to it, which would limit it.[54] This of course is something always beyond the grasp of *Vorstellung* as such – the finite, for *Vorstellung*, being always essentially 'other' to the infinite; with the further result that divine freedom *has* to appear purely contingent, if it is to exist at all. But, as I say, it is not *Vorstellung* he is criticizing here. It is *Verstand* – with its basic *misapplication* to philosophy of what is in reality exclusively appropriate to *Vorstellung*. The point is: these two modes of thought, philosophy and religion, really do follow quite different criteria. If 'Without the world God is not God' were a statement at the level of *Vorstellung*, no doubt Müller and those who have followed him would be right. But it is not. (One has to distinguish here between cognition itself and its expression: 'Without the world God is not God' is, essentially, a denial that God might be the object of a *cognition* quite different in kind from our cognition of the world, as a whole. It is exactly this false differentiation between two modes of cognition, however, which then leads to a confusion of the two modes of expression.)

So far from Hegel denying the personal nature of God, moreover, in a sense the very opposite might be said: that he has in fact given that concept a specifically *philosophical* centrality which is unprecedented. In the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* he distinguishes between two conceptions of personality. On the one

hand, there is the 'abstract' conception which emphasizes the singularity of the person as 'a rigid, unyielding, independent being-for-self': '"I am a person, I stand on my own"'. On the other hand, there is the 'concrete' conception, which focusses far rather on the constituting of personality through relationships. Only the latter conception grasps 'the truth of personality'. For 'it is the character of the person, the subject, to surrender its isolation and separateness... In friendship and love I give up my abstract personality and thereby win it back as concrete. The truth of personality is found precisely in winning it back through this immersion, this being immersed in the other.'[55] Only this conception, therefore, is properly applicable to God. The problem with 'reflective' thinking is that it still clings to the former, the abstract conception of personality here; and so fails to take seriously enough the nature of God as love.

The experience of personal relationship with God, in short, is an experience of being caught up into a relationship of self-giving love, in which, at the deepest level, God is to be recognized both as the lover lovingly contemplated, in the two forms of *Vorstellung* and *Denken*, and as the moving spirit within, at the core of the loving creaturely self, as well. But just this, as we have seen, is what, for Hegel, provides the vital trinitarian dynamic of *true philosophy itself:* philosophy, as the love of God in the form of Wisdom.

Which brings us back to his critique of Spinoza. And to the formulation in the preface to the *Phenomenology*: 'everything turns on grasping and expressing the True, not only as *Substance*, but equally as *Subject*'.

Another term for 'Subject' in this sentence might well be, 'the fullness of personality'; or, 'personality, at its most purely concrete'. And Hegel actually defines the whole enterprise of the *Phenomenology* here as an attempted demonstration of the sense in which 'the True' is to be 'grasped and expressed' in this way. For in the *Phenomenology*, one might say, he is providing a systematic analysis of the pursuit of truth, in general, as the living process of our developing towards full personhood: that is, towards a true conformity to the image of God. In other words, it is not only that he is quite explicit in formally affirming his faith in a personal God. In the *Phenomenology*, he has even written an entire treatise, essentially in order to fill out the sense of that affirmation.

THE BOUNDARY OF PURE DOGMATICS

Indeed it is by no means obvious how far what Hegel is attempting, as a philosopher, should have to be in *competition* with what a dogmatic theologian like Barth, for example, is attempting, at all. To take up Barth's own terminology: the 'raw material' of dogmatics is 'Church proclamation', on the sacred basis of scripture.[56] By contrast, the raw material of philosophy would have to be defined as the sort of open dialogue where no presupposition is sacrosanct, everything is questionable. One could scarcely, however, develop a workable liturgy on such a shifting foundation. The openness of philosophy is gained at the price of an abstractness which is quite inimical to liturgy. Yet Hegel is very far from denying or seeking to minimize the worthwhileness or necessity of public liturgy. As he reiterates often enough, philosophical insight does not invalidate insight at the level of *Vorstellung*: it is just that it has another role. It is true that the things Barth is most anxious to hear said, and to say, in relation to the Atonement, the Fall and the Creation, Hegel does not say. But then – that is only natural. Philosophy and dogmatics being two such completely distinct enterprises, of course they also give rise to radically contrasting priorities. It is at least arguable that in his critique of Hegel Barth is to a large extent, therefore, just talking at cross purposes with him.

This is not to deny that the two disciplines must impinge upon one another in some critical sense. And, as I have said, it has to be conceded that Hegel himself never appears at all seriously to have considered quite how. Neither, so far as I am aware, did any of his original followers; even though several were Lutheran pastors or theologians.[57]

But suppose one starts from the simple proposition that a philosophy decisively critical of religious kitsch must require as its partner a dogmatic theology, in its own very different way, equally critical of religious kitsch. – If I have chosen to focus above all on Barth in this connection, my reason is that, even though it is so distanced from philosophy, in some ways his seems to be just such a dogmatics.

Thus, what I have in mind here is that absolutely fundamental feature of Barth's thought as a whole: his recapitulation of the old Reformation polemic against 'justification by works', and his turning of this not only against conservative Roman Catholicism,

but also against the liberal Neo-Protestantism of his own day. I am thinking, that is to say, of the sharp distinction he draws between 'religion', on the one hand, and 'revelation', on the other; a distinction entirely foreign to the liberal theology of thinkers like Schleiermacher, Ritschl or Troeltsch, for whom the term 'religion' has such positive connotations – but harking back to the original Reformation concentration on the dialectic of Law and grace, the sharp critical element in Reformation thought which in liberal Neo-Protestantism has tended to fade away.

For Barth, religion is at the same time both the domain into which revelation enters, but also that which revelation has to *abolish*.[58] And, in speaking of it in this latter sense, his focus does, in fact, seem to be on the way in which – when left to itself, as it were – religion degenerates into kitsch. He defines religion in this sense as 'the realm of man's attempts to justify and sanctify himself before a capricious and arbitrary picture of God'.[59] 'Man's attempts to justify and sanctify himself': by religion here is meant our relationship to God insofar as it is *we* who hold the initiative, and not God. 'A capricious and arbitrary picture of God': it is a matter of our constructing a picture of God and the world to suit our own felt needs, rather than allowing ourselves to be confronted and disturbed by those aspects of reality we would rather not know – which is, exactly, the basic manoeuvre of kitsch.

Barth spares no effort to drive this basic message home: 'In religion man bolts, and bars himself against revelation by providing a substitute.'[60] It is us talking rather than listening, taking rather than receiving, grasping at God rather than leaving God to 'intercede for God'.[61] In isolation from revelation, it is therefore nothing other than – 'unbelief';[62] 'the one great concern of godless man';[63] 'a complete fiction, which has not only little but no relation to God', as God truly is.[64] Whereas revelation, properly understood, is the absolute opposite: a relationship in which the initiative is with God alone, God sweeping away all our religious defences – more radically than any form of 'mysticism' can, more radically even than atheism can.[65] So that if there is such a thing from this point of view as 'true religion', religion truly informed by revelation, it can only be 'in the sense in which we speak of a "justified sinner"'.[66] And so forth.

Rather as Luther opposes the 'theology of the cross' to the false 'theology of glory', Barth opposes true theology to 'natural

theology': 'natural theology' being a term, in effect, for any form of dogmatics which is able, in any degree, to make its peace with religion so defined, as our 'natural' mode of relation with God. The vital difference between the Barthian view and that of 'natural theology' here would seem to lie in the basic *presumption* of dissent from the mainstream practice of the church which the Barthian view implies, as that practice so seldom manages to transcend the ordinary character of religion: the *presumption* therefore that the dogmatic theologian, no matter how orthodox, is necessarily called to something like the role of a prophetic outsider, as the true basis for his or her whole enterprise. And this was of course dramatically highlighted in the 1930s by the major role Barth's theology played in the German Church Struggle, helping undergird the resistance to that great eruption of state-sponsored religious kitsch which was spearheaded by the 'German Christian' movement. I see no reason to reject Barth's own view that the failure of the German churches more effectively to resist the rise of Nazism was, in general, very largely attributable to the debilitating heritage of 'natural theology'.[67] Nor can there be any doubt that the history of those years does, in itself, confer a considerable authority on his position.

However, the point is: it is an authority one can very well acknowledge even if one also wants to uphold the complementary validity of the sort of philosophical approach represented by Hegel.

It is true that this dogmatic position rests on, and gives rise to a view of God's freedom which differs from the Hegelian perception in much more than just the simple sense (referred to above) that, being conceived in the medium of *Vorstellung*, it is bound to grasp that freedom as contingency. In fact, the idea of divine 'freedom' operates for Barth in much the same way as the idea of rational 'necessity' does for Hegel: for, in both cases alike, it is a matter of expressing that which it is the never-realized but *essential* goal of all our thinking finally to comprehend. When Barth speaks of God's freedom, he means God's freedom precisely from the necessity of conforming to our natural, religious expectations: he is trying to express, in the language of *Vorstellung*, something of the actual experience of critical illumination – whereby everything at the level of religious practice is called in question and held in question, relativized, rendered provisional. When he speaks of the Fall, what he wants to emphasize is not so much, surely, the fallenness of human Reason *per se*, as the fallenness of religion – and of Reason only

insofar as it serves to limit God's freedom over against religion. And when he speaks of God's freedom in relation to the Atonement, what he wants to convey is the shock of the new here: the radical otherness of what has truly taken place, from any merely religious notion. This whole doctrine makes sense only in the context of a theology for which the essential validity of revelation is, in the first instance, presupposed (*fides quaerens intellectum*). On that basis it then aims to accentuate our sensitivity to the *distinctiveness* of revealed truth. The procedure involved, therefore, is quite different from that proper to a pure philosophy.

But there is, in my view, no reason why it should be in irreconcilable conflict with the Hegelian project. It is just that philosophy has a different 'raw material', different priorities – and consequently a different use of terminology. Nothing more.[68]

Both disciplines, on the other hand, have their limits. And if philosophy has to acknowledge its limits when it comes to the question of how the gospel is actually to be proclaimed, so too dogmatics has equally to acknowledge its own. These limits emerge with special clarity, for example, in relation to two particular areas of current controversy.

Dialogue with other faiths

One of the chief criticisms commonly made of Barth's thinking is that it fails to provide any proper basis for dialogue with other faiths. And, in fact, he appears never to have taken any particular interest in such dialogue.

To be fair, it has to be emphasized in this context that the whole interest underlying his doctrine of revelation lies in its critical application to the religious character of Christianity itself. There can be no question for Barth of our using 'the judgment of revelation, that religion is unbelief' as an argument primarily against the non-Christian religions: 'On the contrary', as he puts it,

> it is our business as Christians to apply this judgement first and most acutely to ourselves: and to others, the non-Christians, only in so far as we recognise ourselves in them, i.e., only as we see in them the truth of this judgement of revelation which concerns us, in the solidarity, therefore, in which, anticipating them in both repentance and hope, we accept this judgement to participate in the promise of revelation.[69]

Nor does Barth in any way deny the possibility that our

understanding of the gospel may be deepened by lessons originally learnt from non-Christian sources: a possibility he goes on to discuss at some length in *Church Dogmatics* IV/3.[70] Although he deliberately refrains from citing any specific examples here, one is reminded, above all, of his own evident indebtedness to the traditions of secular socialism.[71] One has to acknowledge that his recognition of this possibility is seriously meant; and it is also clear that the same might equally apply to particular phenomena from other, non-Christian religious cultures, too. It would not apply to their religiousness, as such. But then we are unlikely to learn much that is new from another culture by merely focussing, in an abstract way, on the general substratum of what we already have in common – the sort of general substratum to which the abstract quality of 'religiousness', as such, belongs; and for Barth, just as much as for Hegel, the point is always that we should be opened up, so far as possible, to learning *new* things.

Nevertheless, one surely still has to ask the question: can we truly learn all that there is to be learnt from the encounter with the traditions of other cultures, if we never take the risk of entering into debate with them *on equal terms*? And the fact is that dogmatics, since it presupposes the authority of scripture, never can do this. Only philosophy can.

In one respect, at least, Hegel is completely at one with Barth here: namely, in his radical critique of any attempt to ground such an enterprise on 'the reflective philosophy of subjectivity'. For the abstraction which that sort of philosophy imposes is just the sort of abstraction against which Barth, too, is reacting – inasmuch as one of the results of the great gulf which such philosophy maintains between religious truth and knowledge of history is, of course, immediately to *de-historicize* the actual point of contact between different faiths. And to view Christianity in such a de-historicizing light is, surely, to reduce it to the status of a mere mode of being 'religious', very much in the sense to which Barth objects. Here too Schleiermacher provides the classic example: for Schleiermacher, it is not just that 'religion' is a very positive term. When he wants to argue for the relative superiority of Christianity, the whole point of his argument is that Christianity is, exactly, the most purely religious of all religions: true religion here being set over against tendencies towards superstition on the one hand and an a-moral fatalism on the other.[72] But this is all quite exclusively to do with the most abstract

level of experience, the way different faiths embody modifications of that which, deep down, underlies all religion as such – in his famous formula, 'the consciousness of being absolutely dependent'. As Schleiermacher presents matters, the specific concrete realities with which christology deals – the gospel story as such, and its subsequent formative, socio-political influence on Christian culture – simply do not enter into the picture at all, at this stage. They belong to another, secondary level of theological discourse.

Or take someone like John Hick, for instance. Hick might be said to represent a particularly pungent contemporary application of 'the reflective philosophy of subjectivity' to this issue. Here, Kantian metaphysics appear as the basis for a *Copernican Revolution* in Christian theology, whereby it will quite cease to place its own world at the centre of the universe of faiths, recognizing the true centre to lie instead in Kant's eternally 'unknowable' beyond.[73] Again, the same thing has happened, although in an even bolder way: in Hick's thought everything possible is done in order to marginalize christology. The concrete detail of each tradition is regarded as being that tradition's own private affair. In sharp contrast to this whole style of approach, Hegel – just as much as Barth – remains a thoroughly christocentric thinker.

However, the difference is that, unlike Barth, as a philosopher he does not just develop his christocentric standpoint in terms of the actual Christian tradition. He also develops it in terms which positively *invite* dialogue with other faiths. He has not accorded any *a priori* privilege to Christian faith; his thinking is not christocentric in that sense at all. It is christocentric, rather, in the sense of consistently channelling inter-faith dialogue in the direction of the concrete and the historical; and in the sense of consistently querying the model of liberation/atonement which each faith provides, in those terms. At the same time, of course, he does argue for the ultimate pre-eminence of Christianity. But what is surely far more significant than that result is the distinctive manner by which he has arrived at it.

Barth speaks scathingly of the 'clever aloofness' of the typical Hegelian 'rationalistic Know-all'.[74] And, from the opposing liberal standpoint, one may also sympathize with the intellectual modesty of someone like Ernst Troeltsch for instance, in his acknowledgement of the enormous difficulties one faces in trying to break through the very considerable barriers to mutual comprehension which exist

between cultures that have grown up with more or less separate traditions.[75] Hegel does seem to have made every effort to absorb all the information about other faiths available to him; but of course it is true that his perspective remains severely limited. Nor can it be denied that a good deal of his comparative discussion is, in consequence, unfair.[76]

None of this, however, necessarily invalidates his approach as a whole. The unity of his vision does not, after all, *depend* on his doing any violence to the facts: it is not a rigid scheme imposed upon them, such as might straight away be falsified by new information which will not fit. He is not attempting to construct a definitive universal history, in that sense. But what he is constructing is a basic typology of religions; a flexible typology which is, in fact, always quite open to reorganization in order to accommodate new data or new emphases – as can be observed in the very considerable changes he introduces in each of the three successive revisions of his lecture series.[77] The unity simply derives from the consistency with which his whole discussion is, in the last analysis, determined by the one fundamental issue: the question of freedom.

There is in this question, as Hegel poses it, all the passion for truth – as something by no means incompatible with, but nevertheless quite distinct from the fervour of subjective piety – which Barth is also anxious to preserve, over against a theological liberalism grounded in 'reflective' philosophizing.[78] Hegel presses the distinction home just as firmly, and gives just as decisive a priority to truth over religiousness, as Barth does. And yet at the same time he lifts the barriers to dialogue.

God, man and woman

A pure dogmatics – without positive philosophical underpinning, grounded in scripture alone – is also quite helpless when it comes to any suggestion of a fundamental contradiction latent *within* scripture, between coeval layers of truth and untruth. It can only deny it. But my argument has been that that is precisely what the central thrust of the Hegelian argument implies.

Just because the difference between 'exclusive' and 'inclusive' understandings is not an issue in the New Testament itself, a purely biblical dogmatics can not even thematize the problem with any clarity, let alone resolve it. And with regard to this Barth's theology may even be said to represent a major regression. Sölle for instance

contrasts Barth, from this point of view, not only with Hegel but also with Schleiermacher and, still more, Ritschl: both of whom in fact, as good post-Englightenment thinkers, make a clear stand for 'inclusiveness' here as well.[79] In response Helmut Gollwitzer has criticized the sheer one-sidedness of Sölle's treatment of Barth;[80] and, granted, one can see his point. She entirely ignores the other, more critical elements in Barth's thought, in relation to the ecclesiastical *status quo*. Nonetheless, the contrast remains.

It is also interesting to compare Barth's response to the whole question of the *patriarchal* qualities of scripture, for example: and to consider, by contrast, how this relates to the Hegelian argument.

I have in mind here the sort of 'feminist hermeneutics of suspicion' developed by a writer like Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza for instance:[81] the way Fiorenza locates the revelatory element in scripture not so much in its direct message as in the largely indirect witness it bears to struggles – in relation to which the text's own original role appears very often, in fact, to have been more reactionary than emancipatory. The evidence for real discontinuities and awkward tensions in the New Testament on this issue is, after all, overwhelming – as the initial, radically emancipatory gospel of the 'Jesus movement', a gospel of liberation for the politically marginalized in general and for women in particular, inreasingly came to be adapted and tamed in order to meet the perceived needs of the emerging institutional church and of its hierarchy. And it is clear that this raises the question: where does authority lie? Within the texts, or, insofar as they are all, at least to some extent, influenced by a certain spirit of practical compromise and accommodation with the *status quo*, behind them?

The specific shape Barth's discussions of sexual politics takes is, it seems, essentially determined by his loyalty to St Paul; and the result is a fairly straightforward, if cautious, legitimation of traditional patriarchy.[82] As for any difference here between Paul and the original spirit of the 'Jesus movement' in Jesus's own lifetime – Barth shows no interest in such a possibility. But then, given the methodological presuppositions of his theology, the fact is that this sort of contrast simply never *could*, for him, possess any real significance. A purely scriptural dogmatics is after all constitutionally incapable of responding to the kind of challenge presented by someone like Fiorenza. It may well tend to set up 'a canon within the canon', pitting where necessary the authority of one biblical writer over against another; but that is quite a different game from a

systematic 'hermeneutics of suspicion' like hers. The two approaches are, by their very nature, in complete opposition to one another.

And so how is one to judge between them? There can be no other way than by appeal to what are, properly speaking, philosophical first principles.

Admittedly, at first sight Hegel scarcely appears to be any more helpful here.[83] There had been no Mary Wollstonecraft in Germany (nor is there any evidence of his having ever even heard of her). Feminism as such was not on the philosophical agenda. As things stood, women in the world to which he belonged were excluded from direct formal participation in political life and the legal system, from large areas of economic activity, and from higher education; and in his *Philosophy of Right* he, lamely, just reproduces the conventional wisdom by which these exclusions were always supposed to be legitimated: the ethical role of women appears as that of upholding the values of the family, whereas men are called to internalize and to express the claims of the wider community. Both roles, for Hegel, can be equally authoritative, even when they come into bitter conflict: this is the situation classically dramatized in Sophocles' *Antigone*, a play for which he expressed enormous admiration ('that supreme and absolute example of tragedy' he called it) and the logic of which he discusses at some length in the *Phenomenology*.[84] Indeed, he is no more eager than Sophocles was simply to condemn Antigone for her particular rebellion against the masculine ethos personified by King Creon. But he still accepts without question all the old sexual stereotypes in terms of which that conflict is defined.

At a deeper level, on the other hand, the inner logic of his christology might be seen as pointing in a very different direction. Thus, his views in the *Philosophy of Right* rest on a completely *a-historical* understanding of sexuality, in sharp contrast to his usual mistrust of the a-historical. As we have seen, for Hegel the essential *practical* purpose of philosophy was, ideally, to lay the theoretical foundations for the establishment of a new culture: one that would rival the beautiful harmony of ancient Greece – only, this time on the basis of a Christian appreciation of the *universal* claims of freedom, which the Greeks, with their social order built upon slavery, lacked. And it might very well be argued that these universal claims must in principle transcend and tend to dissolve not only the class distinctions between slave and free, but also the traditional distinctions between male and female, imposed by

patriarchy; the only difference being that the latter are, of course, even deeper rooted than the former.

Sophocles' drama illustrates the innermost latent contradiction of patriarchy. In chapter 6 of the *Phenomenology* Hegel begins with the simplest form of social harmony he can imagine, and proceeds to show it disintegrating just because of its inability to contain this basic contradiction. After Sophocles along comes Aristophanes, who translates the conflict from tragedy into comedy, portraying the womenfolk of the *polis* as being altogether disenchanted, and filled with mockery for the male elders. Here 'womankind in general' has been converted into an absolute 'internal enemy' of the principle of community, the embodiment of a countervailing principle of 'eternal irony'.[85] So, in focussing upon this aspect of ancient Greek drama Hegel has, in effect, set up the problem: how these two value-systems, the 'masculine' and the 'feminine', are ever properly to be reconciled while they continue to be allocated separately, in this rigid way, to the two different halves of human society? He actually leaves the problem, as it were, hanging in the air. But it is not hard to see how the argument might also be developed further, from this point – somewhat along the lines, perhaps, of Simone de Beauvoir's pioneering work in our own century. Such reconciliation, one might go on to suggest, is only ever going to be possible in a society which requires and encourages, and provides the appropriate environment for, every individual to work at it *within* his or her own psyche. Both Creon and Antigone are equally blind; they are conditioned to be. Such blindness can only in the end be overcome by overcoming the narrow conditioning that produces it. – Why ever not?[86] And from that perspective, then – if divine revelation is to be viewed in the way that Hegel views it, namely, as an ongoing dialectical process in which the liberating truth of the gospel is still being unfolded today – there would be every reason to regard the contemporary flowering, within Christian culture, of specifically feminist theology as a vital step forward towards Christianity's ultimate fulfilment.

At all events, if Christian theology ever is to come to terms with the challenge posed by feminist critique, then that surely must require not only, in exegetical terms, an appropriate 'hermeneutics of suspicion', but at the same time just the sort of radical philosophical re-thinking of the divine/human relationship for which Hegel also stands.

This is so, in the first place, at a very general level. A feminist

critique of traditional patriarchal imagery for God – 'Father' (but not 'Mother'), 'Lord', 'King', etc. – obviously needs to be grounded in a general relativization of all sacred imagery. That no imagery for God can ever be more than metaphor is of course a fundamental theme which all critical philosophy, in common with all mysticism, has always sought to emphasize (over against the more conservative forms of biblicist dogmatics like Barth's). And Hegel is relevant here simply as the most systematically and purely critical, in that sense, of all philosophical theologians: indeed, in the quest it represents for the barest, least metaphorical and conceptually clearest definitions of the essential scope and subject matter of theology, Hegelian metaphysics may well be said to embody this necessary moment of negation in uniquely rigorous fashion.

Where he then goes on to take a first tentative, reconstructive step back, out of the pure abstraction of that initial moment of negation, into the realm of metaphor, *Vorstellung*, his particular choice of terminology for this – 'Love', 'Life', 'Spirit' – seems, furthermore, at the deepest level to be determined by his sense of the need to transcend the old 'unhappy' dualism and authoritarianism which is associated with 'Father', 'Lord', 'King', etc.[87]

But, above all: how *can* a male saviour save either women or men, when it comes to the spiritual oppression bound up with patriarchy? It is surely only possible, if at all, on the basis of a completely 'inclusive' christology. For here we come up against yet another fundamental problem with any 'exclusive' approach: the way in which, in sociological terms, this sort of approach obscures the inevitable symbolic limitations of the gospel story. Thus, the saviour has to belong to one particular epoch and one particular culture rather than any other, to one particular race rather than any other, and, in the same way, to one particular sex rather than the other. Yet the gospel represents, in principle, a *universal* truth. And how are we to grasp this, except by discounting those limitations? If we do not: Christian ethics all too easily get tied to the cultural values of a past epoch, the icon of a white Christ all too easily becomes an image of white imperialism – and his maleness, too, all too easily acquires a quite false significance. (Whether at a conscious or only at a subconscious level makes little difference in practice.) An 'exclusive' christology, with its misplaced concentration on the particularity of Christ just at the point where one is speaking of his representative role, can only distract attention away from this

problem, which an 'inclusive' interpretation, by contrast, very properly highlights.

At its most extreme one can observe the co-option of christology by patriarchy, for instance, in the heavy symbolism of those traditional images of the Trinity which show God the Father seated on his throne in the act of crowning God the Son, the former with a long white beard, the latter with a shorter brown beard, while God the Holy Spirit hovers overhead, as a somewhat irrelevant-looking bird.[88] But perhaps an even clearer indication of the problem is the furore caused when, in 1984, a bronze sculpture by Edwina Sandys was briefly displayed in the Anglican cathedral of St John the Divine in New York: the image of a crucified woman ('Christa'). Commenting on this in an interesting article, Daphne Hampson remarks: 'One may dislike the misogyny of the remarks of those who were outraged, and their failure to grasp the problem for women, but they were surely right that it is incompatible with the historical religion to put a woman on the cross.' She emphasizes here the unprecedented depth of the challenge which feminism poses to traditional Christianity: 'Christianity has in feminism met with a moral challenge which it can neither deny nor accommodate. In the past, when a matter of human rights and equality has come to the fore, Christianity has been able to espouse it. It could be said that nothing else was commensurate with Christianity, when truly understood, than that slaves should be freed, or that blacks and whites are equal.' And images of Christ as black are relatively acceptable. In the apparent impossibility of 'put[ting] a woman on the cross', however, she sees a real stumbling block.[89]

I would agree. If that can not be done, then I guess it is all up with Christianity as a liberating faith at this deepest and most difficult level. But is it, in fact, impossible? No doubt it is, without a major theological adjustment to the way in which the gospel is for the most part presented: a decisive triumph for the 'inclusive' principle – whereby the symbolic significance of the cross is rendered as directly as possible applicable to all human experience, simply as such.[90] I am not convinced, though, that one has to be quite as fatalistic as Hampson appears to be in this respect. (At least, not yet; not until there has been a bit more time for this new challenge, which contemporary feminism represents – this new movement of the Spirit – to sink in.)[91]

Moreover, it is not just a question of liturgical representation. And

(as Sölle also recognizes) neither Schleiermacher nor even Ritschl provide an altogether adequate basis for the re-thinking which is required in this context, either. This is, again – quite directly – because of the way in which, in Hegelian terms, their thinking (like that of so many other 'liberal' theologians besides) continues to be trapped within the constraints of reductionist *Verstand*: the way in which they still continue, in effect, to block out the question of how the category of divine revelation is to be applied in human history as a concrete whole. Schleiermacher, it is true, does recognize the totality of history as revelation. But he lacks any means of following this thought through.[92] Ritschl discusses Christian history at considerable length; but this is always on the basis of his own reductionist interpretation of the essence of the gospel, which abstracts it to such a point (for all his concentration on 'the kingdom of God') that it more or less ceases to have any clear *critical* bearing on worldly politics at all.[93] And so these thinkers just do not develop the conceptual tools necessary to help us come to terms with the full implications of such a wide-ranging movement as feminism. Like any other strand of authoritarian politics, patriarchy depends, in the end, on the Unhappy Consciousness. And, I would want to argue, the only truly adequate theological response to it would in fact have to be one which began right there, at that fundamental level of analysis, as Hegel's does – providing that sort of systematic bridge between the sacred and the secular, between questions of theology and questions of sociology. What basically is missing in the mainstream liberal tradition, as represented by Schleiermacher or Ritschl, is any such bridge.

CHAPTER 3

Christology and history

'When philosophy paints its grey in grey, then has a shape of life grown old...The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk': for Hegel, philosophy always 'comes on the scene too late'.[1] History can never be comprehended except in retrospect; what philosophy, as the wisdom of hindsight, grasps of the world's reality is what is already in the process of disappearing, even as it is grasped. And it may well be said that this applies in quite a strong sense to his own thought. As Emil Fackenheim puts it: 'Such are the crises which have befallen the Christian West in the last half century that it may safely be said that, were he alive today, *so realistic a philosopher as Hegel would not be a Hegelian*.'[2]

Since his appreciation of the owl of Minerva's nocturnal habits leads him to abstain from any serious prophecy of the future, it is not that subsequent history has refuted him in that sense.[3] Also, as I have already remarked, it seems to me that Fackenheim himself tends to oversimplify the issue here, in his presentation. Nevertheless, at least at one level he is no doubt right: changes and developments in the social context of philosophizing must tend to impose different critical *priorities* on our thinking; and from that point of view it is clear that the world has changed to a very considerable extent from what it was in Hegel's day, in a number of quite significant respects.

How, though, does this relate to his christology, specifically? That is the question I want to move on to now. In the first place, it seems to me to be much the same story here as in the case of his alleged 'pantheism' – in the sense that a good deal of the more extreme criticism levelled against his overall interpretation of history is vitiated by the critics' sheer failure to grasp just how compellingly this *too* (as a twin outgrowth, alongside his study of comparative religion) is rooted and grounded in that christology.

HEGEL'S PATH TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

Hegel himself describes his philosophy of history as a 'theodicy'. In the ringing words with which the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* conclude:

> That world history is this developing process and the actual becoming of Spirit, under the changing spectacle of its histories – this is the genuine theodicy, the justification of God in history. Only this insight can reconcile Spirit with world history and actuality, so that what has happened and happens every day is not only not without God, but essentially the work of his own self.[4]

This is sometimes caricatured as the utterance of a sort of 'speculative' Dr Pangloss, seeking to justify everything without discrimination as the 'cunning of Reason' or the work of the 'World Spirit'. But when he speaks of the 'reconciliation of the Spirit' with the 'actual' it should, as he reiterates with evident irritation and impatience in the *Encyclopaedia* passage, be obvious that this is not meant in the commonplace sense, whereby 'any freak of fancy, any error, evil and everything of the nature of evil, as well as every degenerate and transistory existence whatever, gets in a casual way the name of actuality'.[5]

And so, too, in order to comprehend that notorious formula,

> What is rational is actual

and

> What is actual is rational[6]

one needs, above all, to reinsert it in its original context. That context is his polemic against the philosophical standpoint of 'reflective subjectivity', in terms of its implications – not only for the nature of theology as such, the primary theological issue of the relationship between faith and knowledge, but also, following on from that, for political theory as well.

On the one hand, he remarks, 'The actuality of the rational stands opposed by the popular fancy that Ideas and ideals are nothing but chimeras, and philosophy a mere system of such phantasms.' But, on the other hand, 'It is also opposed by the very different fancy that Ideas and ideals are something far too excellent to have actuality, or something too impotent to procure it for themselves'.[7] And the 'reflective philosophy of subjectivity' reinforces this latter illusion. In dissociating true apprehension of God from any sort of factual

knowledge about the actual state of the world, it has, amongst its many other sins, undermined the proper theological basis for the study of politics. Kant and Fichte, it is true, do try to build a systematic political philosophy on this shaky foundation. However, from the Hegelian point of view, their thinking is marked by a fundamental loss of balance between descriptive analysis and critical prescription: as Hegel puts it, this is an approach to politics which 'prides itself on the imperative "ought"'.[8]

At one level, one might say, what Hegel is seeking to express in these formulas is just a very simple truth about the nature of intellectual integrity: the necessity, before one criticizes anything, or anyone, of first making as conscientiously charitable an attempt as possible to grasp *why* things are as they are. But, over against the basic failure of (among great recent philosophers) Kant and Fichte, in particular, to do full justice to this principle in their political thinking, he wants to mobilize every possible resource of traditional theological language in order to drive the point home.

Their approach is as it is because their whole theology impels them in that direction; his approach is different because his theology is different, because – as we have seen – it expresses such an altogether different heuristic principle. 'The great thing is to apprehend in the show of the temporal and transient the substance which is immanent and the eternal which is present':[9] that is what he means by 'actuality'. Following Platonic tradition he also terms this ultimate goal of all thinking 'the Idea'. Platonism itself, though, still falls a long way short of what is really needed from this point of view, as well: for Plato's *Republic*, too, is an approach to 'the Idea' conceived in considerable abstraction from the actual empirical reality of his world. And in order to say what he wants to say, he has therefore got to go well beyond Plato (or Aristotle for that matter, or any of the other Classical philosophers) in viewing world political history, in all the concrete detail of its givenness, as the actual self-unfolding process of 'the Idea'. But, again – at another level – I want to argue that this whole doctrine has also to be understood in a much more specific sense: christologically. It has got to be grasped as *in essence* a definition of what Hegel has found he needs in order to explicate his critique of the Unhappy Consciousness, and apply it to the broader political realm.

After all, Jean Wahl is surely right: if one looks at the way in which his early thought evolves towards his final philosophical standpoint, the fact is that the critique of the Unhappy Consciousness

constitutes its base-line right from the start – just as I have tried to show it also represents the deepest moral stratum of his thinking, throughout. The phrase, 'Unhappy Consciousness', is new in the *Phenomenology*. But the pre-history of that discussion can be traced all the way back to his unpublished writings on religious 'positivity' during his years as a *Hauslehrer* in Bern (1793–96), and even further to the fragmentary notes we have from his time at the Tübingen *Stift* (from 1788), on 'folk religion'. For already in these, his earliest writings, we find an acute dissatisfaction with the authoritarian nature of contemporary Christianity: that is what is meant by 'positivity'. A true 'folk religion' is the opposite. It is what the religion of ancient Greece continues to symbolize for him, in his later works too: a religion, that is to say, which does not *have* to rely for its survival on an oppressive 'positivity' – since it lives instead from its role as the spontaneous self-expression of a genuinely harmonious social and political life.

His early intellectual development, from Tübingen to Berne to Frankfurt, lies essentially in a shifting diagnosis of the causes of the present-day malaise, and hence also in a shifting strategy for confronting it. Roughly speaking, in Tübingen his view is that of Rousseau: the problem is identified as the supposedly inherent anti-communitarianism of Christianity in any form. Next, in Berne, he becomes a Kantian; the problem is traced back to Christianity's inheritance from the alienated theology of Judaism; and he moves on to a strategy of re-telling the gospel story, with Jesus portrayed in effect as a teacher of Kantian ethics. Then, in Frankfurt (1797–1801) he arrives at a new appreciation for the deeper ontological aspects of the problem: all forms of dualism become suspect – and so he breaks with Kant. But he still at this stage sticks with the strategy of re-telling the gospel story; his analysis of the Unhappy Consciousness is, therefore, still confined to this one particular context: the dualistic ontology underlying the Mosaic law and 'positive' Christianity. Everything depends on a very dubious exegesis of the New Testament, and on a highly simplified picture of the Judaism against which Jesus is said to have been reacting. And the strategy, as a strategy, is also quite utopian: it is not at all clear what realistic expectation of practical success could ever have been entertained for such a project, even had he had his essays published.[10]

The question: what might it mean to develop a truly comprehensive philosophy of history? does not emerge in his thinking until later, at Jena. As it happens, it comes to him in the first instance

from a somewhat different quarter: his initial approach to the issue has to do not so much with religion as with economics. He appears to arrive at it, above all, from his reading of such works as Sir James Steuart's *Inquiry into the Principles of Political Economy*, and Schiller's 'Ästhetische Briefe'.[11]

These thinkers provide something he had hitherto lacked, namely, a vivid perception of modernity as *fate* – as something determined by irreversible economic forces: population growth, urbanization, the ever-increasing division of labour and all that that brings with it. From which it is then seen to follow that the problems posed by modernity are essentially *unprecedented* problems; and that they require correspondingly *new* solutions. For Steuart, this meant recognizing the need for the public authorities to start to play a new role in stimulating and regulating the economy: systematically promoting a general ethos of enterprise and thrift, but at the same time also introducing a degree of planning in order to minimize the incidental social costs of economic progress. For Schiller, it meant exploring new methods of education – 'aesthetic' education – better suited to equip people, spiritually, for the new pattern of life now unfolding. In Hegel's earlier writings at Jena, prior to the *Phenomenology*, we can see him grappling with the issues these writers have introduced him to: in his essay of 1802 on 'Natural Law' we find his first extended critique of the Kantian/Fichtean approach specifically to political theory;[12] whilst in a series of lecture notes dating from the same year, entitled *System of Ethical Life*, he begins to work on his own alternative, which is then further developed in the lecture series of 1803–4 and 1805–6.[13]

At length, of course, the decisive break-through to his mature position is completed in the *Phenomenology* (1807). And the break-through lies, very largely, in the decisive *transposition* here of his original concern into this new context. That is to say: he has now come to recognize that the modern world, in its absolute novelty and distinctiveness, also requires a correspondingly *new* form of religious consciousness, for its disorder to be healed. He sets out here, in other words, to do something for theology more or less equivalent to what Steuart, in his view, has done for economics, and Schiller for educational theory.

Henceforth, therefore, he can no longer permit himself to indulge in any mere nostalgia for the lost harmony of ancient Greece, no matter how fervently he may continue to admire it. (In Schiller, too, one can observe much the same tension.) Neither can he any longer

rest content with making the sort of simple appeal to timeless truth, whether this be conceived in Kantian or post-Kantian terms, which we find in his earlier imaginative reconstructions of the teachings of Jesus. But from now on, much more than that is going to be needed: namely, nothing less than a way of grasping and critically assessing the whole evolutionary rationale of human religious tradition; as this can be seen to match, and at least to some extent to move along in step with, the types of socio-economic development with which these other thinkers are concerned.

And the results, in a sense, speak for themselves: by comparison with his juvenilia – the essays he produced in Tübingen, Berne and Frankfurt – Hegel's mature writings are just so much richer. It is, I think, essentially in terms of this contrast that we need to understand his doctrine of the self-actualizing Idea; this being the difference his adoption of that doctrine makes, in practice.

THE NEW PRIORITIES – AND THE HEGELIAN STATE

Still, it no doubt requires quite a leap of historical imagination for anyone today to appreciate sympathetically the spirit in which his philosophy of history was first conceived; or not to be scandalized by the sheer bold confidence with which he presents his results. Fackenheim names some of the most obvious obstacles to our sharing in this confidence:

> On the one hand, the Divine today speaks at most obscurely and intermittently to the believer... On the other hand, our secular world too is postmodern; for the old modern Western self-confidence has been shaken to the core in this century. Two world wars have destroyed Europe's spiritual hegemony. The Western culture which has produced the idea of the freedom of all has also unleashed forces which would dehumanize and makes slaves of all. And philosophical, sociological and psychological skepticism articulate, or even aggravate, the widespread failure of nerve. Only in a single sphere – science and scientific technology – the old modern self-confidence survives, and even here, since Auschwitz and Hiroshima, it is mixed with terror. From so fragmented a world the Hegelian philosophy would be *forced* to flee, as surely as Neoplatonism was forced into flight from Imperial Rome.[14]

And underlying all these changes there is also, I think, something else. That which most deeply separates us from Hegel and his world might well be described as the emergence of a whole new *area of work* for critical thinking. What I mean is this: Fackenheim speaks of the

'obscurity' and the 'intermittency' with which the voice of the divine is heard today; but what has really changed, in our secularized world? To a large extent, it is the *power-status* of religion which has changed: the relative significance of religious traditions, as contrasted with other types of thinking, for the ideological legitimation of political power and social privilege.

In this context, I would suggest, the vital difference between Hegel's world and ours lies in the emergence of a whole new species of secular ideology, which has tended to displace religion in that role. A whole new species of ideology – and hence a whole new species of official kitsch, as well. A new type of institution has arisen, rivalling and largely displacing the church, as the chief guardian and propagator of ideas with which to rule: namely, *the political party.* Fackenheim refers to Auschwitz and Hiroshima as two extreme symbolic manifestations of the general deformation of twentieth-century modernity. There is of course a considerable record of Christian complicity in the horrors of fascism, and in the promoting of the nuclear arms race; but the basic ideologies in question here are secular ones, embodied in political parties. Hegel lived in a state without political parties, in anything like our contemporary sense. In his world the ideological role which political parties were later to assume was still, for the most part, played by the church. And the entire critical force of his thinking is therefore directed against ecclesiastical kitsch, and what he sees as helping protect that.

The new kitsch of the political party, however, also brings with it a quite new attitude to history. Kundera in this connection speaks of 'the fantasy of the Grand March':

> Since the days of the French Revolution, one half of Europe has been referred to as the left, the other half as the right. Yet to define one or the other by means of the theoretical principles it professes is all but impossible. And no wonder: political movements rest not so much on rational attitudes as on the fantasies, images, words and archetypes that come together to make up this or that *political kitsch.*
>
> The fantasy of the Grand March ... is the political kitsch joining leftists of all times and tendencies. The Grand March is the splendid march on the road to brotherhood, equality, justice, happiness; it goes on and on.[15]

But neither, of course, is there any less kitsch on the political right; only a different sort. As Kundera also recognizes, 'Kitsch is the aesthetic ideal of all politicians and all political parties and movements' across the spectrum.[16] Whether the tone of their

propaganda is determined more by a sense of triumphant progress or of anxious flight, all political parties, whatever their colour, need to persuade people of the possibility of a better earthly tomorrow. All of them alike, therefore, tend to construct some overarching vision of history to serve as background to that promise. And the kitsch they wrap it up in thus stands in stark contrast to the older religious kitsch against which Hegel is still reacting – where hope is focussed far rather, of course, on the after-life: the heavenly city.

The contrast derives from the difference between (a) ideology mediated first and foremost through liturgy, a commemorative celebration of transcendent values, and (b) ideology mediated through the modern mass media, directly responsive to, and seeking to provide a ready-made interpretative context for, the latest news as such. Two very different modes of communication – two very different techniques of domination.

Much of the most serious misunderstanding of Hegel, I think, derives from his mistakenly being taken as, in effect, a positive philosophical protagonist of this newer species of kitsch. Let us take an extreme example, to illustrate the point: one of Hegel's most savage twentieth-century critics is *Eric Voegelin*. In his major article, 'On Hegel – A Study in Sorcery',[17] Voegelin actually goes so far as to argue that Hegel combines two quite different 'selves': that he is, on the one hand, 'a sensitive philosopher and spiritualist, a noetically and pneumatically competent critic of the age, an intellectual force of the first rank'; but at the same time, on the other hand, he is a man possessed and consumed by an enormous *libido dominandi*, whose prime motive in constructing his account of world history is to show it all as somehow culminating in *himself*, thereby deforming the theophany which philosophy should be into the merest 'egophany'.

This view is, in the first place, grounded in what I would consider (to borrow for the moment something of Voegelin's own asperity of tone) a truly grotesque mis-reading of the texts. Voegelin does not enter into any close analysis of Hegel's discussion of christology. He does not need to, he already knows what it is all about; Hegel himself, of course, wants to be God. For Voegelin, it is as simple as that. And everything Hegel says about the self-perception of redeemed humanity and what it means to be liberated from the Unhappy Consciousness, in general, is therefore reduced here to the most ludicrous of purely personal claims.[18] Add to this a complete ignoring of the real rationale behind Hegel's critique of reductionist

theological agnosticism; a critique Voegelin never in fact focusses on, as such, at all. Instead of which, he just asserts that Hegel is offering us a manipulative 'knowledge'; the hubristic 'knowledge' of a 'sorcerer', obsessed with power... The end-result is, surely, a fantastic caricature.[19]

And yet, it has to be said, Voegelin is by no means a thinker one can lightly dismiss. How, then, is such an aberration to be explained?

The original source of the problem, so far as I can see, lies in Voegelin's exclusive concern with the destructiveness of only the *one* type of kitsch. 'The motivations of my work are simple: they arise from the political situation', he once remarked. And, as Ellis Sandoz comments, 'The "political situation" spoken of... was that signified by Stalin, Hitler, Mussolini, and the social and intellectual milieux whose historical emergence allowed them to hold sway as representative figures.' Voegelin belonged to that generation. 'The passing of these "epigonal" figures from the scene, moreover, did not eradicate the long-term factors that fostered their ascendancy to begin with.' Voegelin's philosophical and historical work was a 'struggle to find truth amidst the corruption of debauched language and ideological politics that began during the 1920s and 1930s in Europe', and which has continued in varying forms ever since.[20] Looking back, he seeks to trace the historical origins of the corruption he sees. One key figure in this context is of course bound to be Karl Marx: Voegelin is one of those for whom the critique of twentieth-century totalitarian ideology necessarily leads back into a critique of Marx as the single most formidable and influential nineteenth-century precursor of such ideology. When one approaches the matter from this angle, however, it is all too easy simply to subsume Hegel into the pre-history of Marxism. Heavily dependent as he is on the highly dubious Hegel-interpretation of the Marxist Alexandre Kojève, Voegelin in fact tends to associate Hegel very closely with Marx.[21] At the same time he also associates him with other figures too. 'Beginning with the French Revolution', he writes, 'a cloud of new Christs descended on the Western world': Saint-Simon, Fourier, Comte, Fichte – and Hegel.[22] The plausibility to Voegelin of his otherwise so bizarre view of Hegel is no doubt in large measure attributable to such associations. Indeed his 'Hegel' appears almost to be a composite figure, dressed out in sundry more or less isolated quotations from Hegel and some loose reference to the overall systematic structure of Hegel's thought, but in reality made

up of all these various other early and mid-nineteenth-century false Messiahs somehow lumped together. He draws a parallel between this 'modern outburst of new Christs' and the phenomenon of second-century Gnosticism, the claims made by the various Gnostic 'sons of God' attacked by Irenaeus for example: 'Marcion, Valentinus, Basilides, Carpocrates, Simon and the others'. In both cases he finds the same *libido dominandi* at work; seeking power through the promise of an arcane 'knowledge', a grandiose imaginary 'second reality' protected from critical questioning by being located at a considerable theoretical remove from the individual disciple's own limited actual experience, but nevertheless presented in each case as the one and only true means of salvation.[23] The only difference lies in the new this-worldliness of the post-French Revolutionary variants, their new application of *gnosis* to the worldly realm of social and political history – which then, however, disastrously helps open up the way towards the authoritarian 'Gnostic socialism' of Marx,[24] and the ideological nightmares (both Marxist and anti-Marxist) of the twentieth century. Such patterns of thinking are not quite unprecedented: Voegelin also refers in this connection to Joachim of Fiore, for instance.[25] But what is new is the way in which they have now in our culture moved centre-stage, constituting an effective basis for ideologies of government. And for Voegelin, it is clear, the real importance of Hegel lies above all in his supposed role as the philosophically most sophisticated representative of that whole catastrophic development.

In fact I am not sure I would want to defend any of the other members of this rogues' gallery, at all, from Voegelin's onslaught. But when it comes to his attack on Hegel, it is not just that there is so much he leaves out of account. Given the priorities with which he is working, that might even be legitimate. No, what is truly objectionable is the carelessness with which he also distorts those elements of Hegel's thinking that do concern him: for there surely is a fundamental sense in which the Hegelian view of history *cannot* be grouped with that of any of these other thinkers; a basic difference Voegelin has completely ignored. We are, after all, talking here about an intellectual position which precludes, in principle, not only all prediction *of* the future – but also any direct actual prescription *for* the future, as such.

Hegel's description of the devotees of philosophy at the end of the 1821 *Lectures* on religion, as 'an isolated order of priests ... who [at any rate in their role as philosophers] are untroubled about how it

goes with the world' may be problematic in other ways. But it is scarcely compatible with Voegelin's portrait of him. It is obvious that he is not saying the philosopher is to be indifferent to worldly affairs; and it is obvious too that any analysis of the problems of the present is bound to have implications for the future. The formulation does, however, reflect his appreciation of the need for a fundamental intellectual restraint in this respect. Hegel simply does not regard it as part of philosophy's business to deal with the future, *directly*, in any way whatsoever. There could not possibly be a sharper contrast than this to the approach of such visionary thinkers as Saint-Simon, Fourier, Comte, Fichte(!), Marx; their numerous more or less like-minded contemporaries; or such varied predecessors of theirs in this respect as, say, Bacon, Rousseau, Mably or Condorcet. As I have remarked, Voegelin ignores it.[26] And yet it surely is decisive. For what else does the new kitsch need, by way of a theory to back it up, if not, exactly, the clearest and most exciting possible pre-packaged vision of the ideal future, or of the way there? The clearer and the more exciting the better from this point of view; that is to say, the better disguise for a destructive will to power. The more effective as a justification for locking people away, and murdering them: 'they stood in the way'. And what we make possible by removing them will be so beautiful.

No doubt Voegelin is right that the intellectual history of the nineteenth century in particular does feature a whole array of greater or lesser prophets who can all, in their sheer impatience to change the world, be seen as helping store up fuel for the coming fires of the twentieth. But not Hegel. On the contrary: such impatience is quite foreign to him.

Nor, moreover – *given his own critical priorities* – is Hegel's qualified affirmation of modernity by any means unjustifiable; for it surely is the case that there had opened up by his day a quite unprecedented cultural space within which to explore and to articulate the demands of freedom, in his basic sense of an overcoming of the Unhappy Consciousness. Thus, in the final section of his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, he brings together, from this point of view, what he regards as the three key developments that had helped open up that space. Working backwards: the French Revolution, the Enlightenment, and the Reformation.

The French Revolution

In a sense Hegel's whole philosophy of history may be seen as an extended strategy of defence against the sort of murderous rejection of historical continuity represented by the Jacobin Terror; a much more complex strategy, however, than the comparatively straightforward reactionary response of a thinker like Burke for instance.[27]

So he focusses on the essential *abstractness* of the thinking that lies in the background here; as represented in its most sophisticated form, he thinks, above all by Rousseau (he also refers to the way in which he finds Rousseau later echoed by Fichte[28]). That is to say: as he sees it, the root of the trouble from a theoretical point of view lies in the attempt to ground political practice not so much on any detailed, concrete consideration of what, in practice, renders modern political institutions viable; but, rather, on the vague notion of the 'general will'. Since it is defined as that which is rationally recognizable to be in the best interests of the community as a whole, the 'general will' is here supposed in principle to demand the absolute spiritual submission of all. But therein lies the problem. For it is easy enough to see what the 'general will' is *not*: neither the assertion of one's own particular interests as such, nor blind acceptance of tradition for its own sake. It is much harder to convince everybody of what it positively does entail. Hence, the condition to which in the *Phenomenology* he gives the ironical name of 'absolute freedom'[29] – and which truly is an absolute freedom from the heritage of the past – ends up, in practice, as a form of absolute servitude, a mere fury of destruction; as those in power, still obsessed by the need for absolute spiritual submission to the ideal, find themselves compelled to impose their personal interpretation of its actual requirements by force.

> When these abstract conclusions [Rousseau's] came into power, they afforded for the first time in human history the prodigious spectacle of the overthrow of the constitution of a great actual state and its complete reconstruction *ab initio* on the basis of pure thought alone, after the destruction of all existing and given material. The will of its re-founders was to give it what they alleged was a purely rational basis, but it was only abstractions that were being used; the Idea was lacking; and the experiment ended in the maximum of frightfulness and terror.[30]

Moral: always mistrust such abstractions, in whatever form they may come. It is not just that they are theoretical short-cuts; such short-cuts can do real practical damage.

And yet, of course, the Revolution as a whole is an epoch-making event for Hegel, not merely a cautionary tale. It is reported that to the end of his life he continued to observe the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille by drinking a toast to the memory of what had been achieved that day; thereby recalling his original feelings at the time. And, then, there is the lyrical passage in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, so reminiscent of Wordsworth's famous verse, 'Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive' (Wordsworth was his exact contemporary):

> As long as the sun has stood in the heavens and the planets have circled around it, we have never yet witnessed man placing himself on his head, that is, on thought, and building reality according to it. Anaxagoras had said first that *nous* rules the world; but now man has come for the first time to recognize that thought should rule spiritual reality. This was a magnificent dawn. All thinking beings joined in celebrating this epoch. A sublime feeling ruled that time, an enthusiasm of the spirit thrilled through the world, as if we had now finally come to the real reconciliation of the divine with the world.[31]

'The real reconciliation of the divine with the world': there is a direct link here to his christologically determined view of true freedom. The 'absolute freedom' of Jacobinism is an appalling travesty of this. But true freedom, as well, must involve at least a certain emancipation from the authority of mere unquestioned tradition. The Unhappy Consciousness may be content to invest all manner of 'mediators' with an unquestionable authority; a free individual on the other hand, in submitting to authority, needs to know the reason why. 'Thought should rule spiritual reality.' Therefore, a truly civilized state 'works and acts by reference to consciously adopted ends, known principles, and laws which are not merely implicit but are actually present to consciousness'; not just on the basis of past precedent.[32] And it is beyond question that, alongside all its violence, the French Revolution had had the effect of opening up the whole realm of political life to a questioning spirit, as never before.

The Enlightenment

What the French Revolution accomplished in the political realm, furthermore, the Enlightenment had already, over a much longer period, achieved in the realm of religious thought. I have referred above to Hegel's critique of the Enlightenment at the end of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*; in the more extended discussions

in the *Phenomenology* and in the other lecture series, he is no less critical.[33] As philosophical theologians of 'reflective subjectivity', Kant, Fichte and Jacobi may be seen as heirs to the Enlightenment, who have simply carried the essential work of the Enlightenment through to a new level of theological sophistication; for the Enlightenment in general is very much the work of *Verstand*: *Verstand* at its most radical. 'The Enlightenment, in its positive aspect, was a hubbub of vanity without a firm core':[34] Hegel has little time for the 'positive' theoretical constructions of the Enlightenment; neither those of the outright materialists nor those of the deists, with their 'vacuous Être suprême'. For here too we have a quite arbitrary closure of the path towards real philosophical insight into the truths of revelation.

On the other hand, though, no new theophany is possible without the old certainties first being cleared away. And, as we have also already seen, at the end of *Faith and Knowledge* he speaks of the other, the 'negative' side of the Enlightenment as a 'speculative Good Friday': an experience, that is to say, which – despite all appearances, even despite the fact that at the time it meant revelation was consciously denied – is nevertheless retrospectively recognizable as having itself been a vital moment of revelation. Kant's definition is apposite here:

> Enlightenment is man's release from his self-incurred tutelage. Tutelage is man's inability to make use of his understanding without direction from another. Self-incurred is this tutelage when its cause lies not in lack of reason but in lack of resolution and lack of courage to use it without direction from another. *Sapere aude*! 'Have courage to use your own reason!' – that is the motto of enlightenment.[35]

Where Kant speaks of 'tutelage', Hegel speaks christologically of the Unhappy Consciousness. Herein, I think, lies the innermost identity-in-difference of their two positions.

The Reformation

Most important of all, however, from the Hegelian perspective, is the Reformation, that decisive triumph for 'the principle of subjectivity':

> In the Lutheran church the subjective feeling and the conviction of the individual is regarded as equally necessary with the objective side of Truth.

Truth with Lutherans is not a finished and completed thing; the subject himself must be imbued with Truth, surrendering his particular being in exchange for the substantial Truth, and making that Truth his own. Thus subjective Spirit gains emancipation in the Truth, abnegates its particularity and comes to itself in realizing the truth of its being... In the proclamation of these principles is unfurled the new, the latest standard round which the peoples rally – the banner of *Free Spirit*, independent, though finding its life in the Truth, and enjoying independence only in it.[36]

The 'spiritual atomism' he sees as the pervasive disease of modern Protestant culture has to be viewed as a basic loss of balance here – in which the negative work of the 'subjective spirit' has lost its necessary *counterweight* of active concern with the other 'objective side of Truth'; as a result of which, Protestant subjectivity ceases to function dialectically and, to that extent, degenerates instead into a species of emotional self-indulgence. In the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, he also comments on some of the other, more authoritarian historical manifestations of Protestantism. He refers to the 'minute and painful introspection' characteristic of certain forms of 'self-tormenting' Protestant spirituality: the quest for the fullest possible subjective awareness both of one's own sinfulness, and of God's saving grace; and the agonies of doubt as to whether or not one is saved, which can result (William Cowper would be a classic example of the sort of thing he has in mind here). He relates this to the use of the psalms in Protestant liturgy, for example, as hymns. And he contrasts it with the in many ways much more attractive 'formal broad certainty' offered by Catholicism; it is in this light that he understands the conversion to Catholicism of a number of contemporary intellectuals (such as Friedrich Schlegel). He points, too, to the equal susceptibility shown by both Catholic and Protestant peoples to the 'epidemic sickness' of witch-hunting.[37]

Yet none of this removes the essential achievement of the Reformation, from the philosophical point of view. Many of the grosser distortions, at least, of the gospel by the Unhappy Consciousness are here attacked head-on; it is after all no accident that the illustrative allusions in the original 'Unhappy Consciousness' passage appear in the first instance to refer to mediaeval Catholicism. And, of course, the more discursive treatment of the Reformation in the lecture series reflects the same priorities. A major emphasis, therefore, is on the emancipation of the laity from the authoritarian claims of the church institution and its ministers: the

relativizing of the institution's role as mediator; the priesthood of all believers. Where the Bible is made available to all who can read by being translated into the common tongue, and its authority is at the same time strongly insisted upon – 'the whole system of tradition, the whole fabric of the church becomes problematical, and its authority is subverted'. Thus, 'Luther's translation of the Bible has been of incalculable value to the German people'.[38] And Luther's demystification of the eucharist serves the same end.

By the same token, the Reformation is also a decisive moment in the long-term process of the reconciliation of the gospel with the 'worldliness' of 'the worldly realm', as he puts it in the 1827 and 1831 *Lectures* on religion.[39] On the one hand, it signifies a transcending of the, as he sees it, narrow other-worldliness of traditional monastic spirituality (his general view of monasticism is, it has to be said, very one-sided). On the other hand, it puts an end to the older form of institutional rivalry that had existed between church and state. From his earliest writings on 'folk religion' onwards, Hegel consistently sets his sights on the ideal of a culture in which the religious and the 'worldly' realms might finally be reconciled; where religious life might flourish – completely undistorted by the particular power-interests of an alienated 'religious' institution, or set of institutions, as such, in any way at all. That is how he thinks it was in ancient Greece. But in its radical negativity in this respect the Protestant 'principle of subjectivity' does, at least, begin to break down the walls of partition that have, by contrast, always tended to split the culture of Christendom in half here.

'Time, since that epoch, has had no other work to do than the formal imbuing of the world with this principle.'[40] Given his particular priorities, one can well see the logic even of such an apparently extravagant claim.

'The formal imbuing of the world with this principle' is partly a matter of the further negative spin-off from the Enlightenment and the French Revolution.[41] Partly, too, it involves the decisive advance of modern over mediaeval philosophy; for whereas, given the inadequacies of scholasticism, the Reformation's original turning away from philosophy (Luther's virulent hostility to 'Reason') is perfectly intelligible, subsequent history has since opened up a quite new situation here too.[42] And the net result is that now a completely new sort of possibility has appeared on the horizon: a completely new possibility, as it were, to set the gospel free. It has, in short, now

become possible – as never before – to draw a sharp theoretical dividing line, distinguishing the essential truth of the gospel itself from its traditional, given role as a legitimating ideology for the particular claims of the ecclesiastical institution. The Reformation begins the process. The Enlightenment and the French Revolution help roll back the remaining obstacles to it. And it is philosophy's task to try and set a final seal upon it. This is the actual basis for the Hegelian affirmation of modernity: the newly favourable environment he thinks it supplies for the practical clarification of the gospel, in this way.

And this is, furthermore, also the proper context for understanding his well-known theological exaltation of the state.

No doubt, in view of the obstinate durability of hostile prejudice, it is still worth insisting on the point that when Hegel speaks of 'the state' *simpliciter* – that is, as distinct from 'the *political* state'[43] – he is in fact using the word in a very particular sense. To quote from the Introduction to the *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*:

> The spiritual individual, the nation – in so far as it is differentiated so as to form an organic whole – is what we call the state. This term is ambiguous, however, for the state and the laws of the state, as distinct from religion, science and art, usually have purely political associations. But in this context, the word 'state' is used in a more comprehensive sense [to include those others], just as we use the word 'realm' to describe spiritual phenomena.[44]

As Z. A. Pelczysnki puts it, 'The state in this sense means the whole population of an independent, politically and "civilly" organized country in so far as it is permeated by "ethical life" and forms an "ethical order" or "ethical community".'[45] Thus when, for instance, Hegel identifies 'God's way of moving in the world' (*der Gang Gottes in der Welt*), above all, with the drive towards the formation of states, or when he speaks of 'the Idea' of the ideal state as 'this actual God', or of 'the absolutely divine principle of the state',[46] he is not just speaking of the apparatus of government. He is speaking (in a manner reminiscent of the ancient Greek conception of the *polis*, at its highest) about the whole public realm. And the basic point of such language would, in the first instance, seem to lie in the polemical thrust being made here against a narrower *ecclesiocentric* understanding of Christian loyalties: the type of view which comes to its purest expression in ultramontane Roman Catholicism, but which still in fact persists even in the mainstream

Lutheran *zwei Reiche Lehre* of church and state; with its emphasis on God's embodiment ('the body of Christ') within the church, alone.[47] He is struggling to get both beyond that and beyond the type of neo-Protestant spirituality which would tend to limit our experience of God to the purely private sphere, towards an altogether more open theological engagement with worldly concerns.

It is a matter of trying, as it were, to set the gospel free from everything that would tend arbitrarily to narrow the scope of its application. There is, therefore, in his mind no conflict at all between such an affirmation of the state, in particular the modern state of the post-Reformation era, and his christologically grounded view of the status of the individual. On the contrary: 'the principle of modern states has prodigious strength and depth', he declares, precisely 'because it allows the principle of subjectivity to progress to its culmination in the extreme of self-subsistent particularity, and yet at the same time brings it back to the substantive unity and so maintains this unity *in the principle of subjectivity itself*.'[48]

The theme is a familiar one. We have seen how Hegel analyses the problems that arise where 'the principle of subjectivity' is *not* adequately 'brought back to the substantive unity', or integrated into a viable practical basis for community life: in the reductionist theologies of pietism and the Enlightenment; in the phenomena of the Moral View of the World, and the Beautiful Soul; at the highest intellectual level, in the form of 'reflective' philosophy. We have seen, too, how he finds a solution to these problems in the potential capacity of Christianity to articulate the same principle, and (to use the same phrase) 'bring it back to the substantive unity' of a religious community, an actual living community of worship. And now we find a closely analogous reconciliatory role being attributed to 'the principle of modern states'.

The type of state he has in mind is, of course, itself a product of Christian culture. It is a state permeated with Christian values, as interpreted and transmitted by his own philosophy. It is also a complex modern state, with a free market capitalist economy built upon an extensive and growing division of labour, and hence the interplay of numerous competing 'particular' interests, both economic and cultural. Heir to the Reformation and the Enlightenment and chastened by the spectacle of the French Revolution, it is (in practical terms) a liberal state, with a carefully balanced structure of representative institutions, which does not simply seek to

repress that competition by force or to sweep it away on a tide of communal emotion. Instead, it fosters religious toleration; and, by the standards of the day, allows a considerable degree of free speech. But it plays its reconciliatory role to the extent that, at the same time, it succeeds in developing a stable and effective working structure of legality – recognized by everyone as the authoritative guarantor of their underlying common interest. Thus, Hegel refers to the difference between respect for law and 'hatred of law' as a fundamental 'shibboleth' in political philosophy: everything depends on the degree of *intrinsic* importance one attaches to the non-partisan rule of law, and the cool rationality which that requires.[49]

The essential point here is the one which, from a present-day point of view, has been developed above all by *Michael Oakeshott* for instance, in terms of the distinction between the two alternative models for the state: the model of a rule-governed 'civil association' versus the model of a purpose-governed 'enterprise association'.[50] Hegel would, it seems, be very much at one with Oakeshott in seeing the former model as the true basis for objective liberty, and the latter always as a threat to it (tending to express the repressive aspirations of, to use Oakeshott's phrase, 'the individual manqué'). It is only (to mix Hegelian and Oakeshottian terminology) to the extent that a state views itself as a purely 'civil association', constituted by and requiring positive assent only to the operation of a set of laws, rather than as an 'enterprise association', constituted by and requiring positive assent to both laws *and policies*, that 'the principle of subjectivity' can flourish freely.

The subject matter of *Philosophy of Right* is therefore the state as a 'civil association', in Oakeshott's sense; all the high-flown things Hegel says about the state refer to it strictly at that level. It is on this basis that he develops his position as an alternative to that of Rousseau, for instance. And in the context of Prussian politics in 1821, he also found it necessary to polemicize in defence of this view on two other fronts as well: against two other particular types of authoritarian doctrine. Firstly, against the nascent ideology of pan-German nationalism – influenced by Fichte, and represented by, amongst others, the philosopher J. F. Fries; a doctrine of the ideal state as the collective enterprise, one might say, of a single unified people (with strong anti-semitic overtones in Fries's case). And secondly, against the conservative Restoration-ideology of K. L. von Haller; a doctrine of the state as, in essence, the elitist enterprise of

a divinely ordained aristocracy and absolute monarchy. Both of these doctrines he attacks with considerable vigour.[51]

Although the 'enterprise association' state in the twentieth century has, of course, taken on a wide range of forms, including a number of socialist versions quite different in character from either of these, it might well be argued (as Oakeshott does) that the results have vindicated Hegel's fundamental standpoint in this respect, emphatically.

Thus, Hegel's affirmation of modernity is anything but a blanket affirmation. It is quite precisely focussed, and argued for.

And yet – the problem nevertheless still remains. As Fackenheim says, there surely *is* a significant sense in which 'so realistic a philosopher' as Hegel could no longer be a straightforward Hegelian, in view of the new realities of today.

With the rise of the modern political party and the modern mass media the whole agenda of critical thinking has been transformed in a way which Hegel, standing as it were at the overlapping end of another age, did not even begin to discern or to anticipate.[52] It is, I think, this elemental shift in the social context of philosophy which has done most to confuse the posthumous reception of his thought. The confusion which reigns supreme in Voegelin's outlandish interpretation is by no means just an idiosyncratic aberration. However mistaken, it is at any rate perfectly intelligible, as a reflection of that shift.

TOWARDS A CORRESPONDINGLY ENLARGED DIALECTIC

The real problem, I want to suggest, does not lie in what Hegel positively says at all. It lies solely in what he leaves unsaid. It lies in the very specialized nature of his primary critical concern; in the way in which, as a critic of ideological kitsch, his whole focus is on just the one particular form: namely, the corruption into kitsch of the Christian gospel. And in the absence from his thinking of any more *generalized* critique, which would also give equal weight to other forms.

Or in other words: Hegel's central concern is with the Unhappy Consciousness in the shape of a distorted Christianity. But the peculiarity of this is that, at any rate as he interprets it, the Christian gospel, in itself, is already the absolute antithesis to the Unhappy Consciousness; and his critical strategy, therefore, is entirely

determined by the specific need to lay clear that underlying truth of the gospel, over against its corruption.

Now, however, we are faced with the rise to power of this whole new species of kitsch, this whole new mode of ideological self-deception, so to speak, on the part of the latent Unhappy Consciousness – one which is often quite independent of the gospel, even where it does not openly reject it. And so, in order to confront this new development *on its own secular terms*, we now need something else, as well. The new secular ideological kitsch of modernity is in one sense a much simpler and smoother phenomenon than the older religious kitsch of Christendom; it provides far fewer openings for an effective challenge *from within*. Hence, it calls for critique at a much more abstract level: in the first instance, at the level of what may equally be said of simply *any* form of ideological kitsch; the kitsch of any religion, any form of secular ideological kitsch, alike.

One might perhaps define the sort of philosophical critique required here as: a sheer upholding of transcendence (a direct equivalent, one might say, to Barthian dogmatics). At the most abstract level, the definitive feature of the kitsch mentality being its persistent yearning for some simple explanation of the world, some simple hazy certainty, to be accepted by everyone: such as would tend to do away with autonomous thought, restless questioning, the pursuit of the transcendent, altogether. Or one might use Theodor Adorno's term, and speak of ideological kitsch, at this broadest level of generality, as the extreme form of rigidified 'identity thinking': a thinking which wants to identify its own theoretical constructions with reality, just like that; which refuses to take seriously the essential incompleteness of even the truest truth – the essential nature of truth as the property of an ongoing, living *process* of thought. What the new situation seems to require is a critical thinking which begins from right back there; whereas Hegel's critical thinking begins from much closer in to its primary theological target. It is this essential difference of range, I think – and consequent difference of tactics – which has then given rise to so much misunderstanding.

Voegelin's mis-reading of Hegel, for instance, is no doubt in part a straightforward error of judgement; as I have suggested. At the same time, though, it clearly does derive, as well, from his basic commitment to this other mode of thought. The difference between the two approaches has thus to be seen as a direct reflection of the

fundamental difference in critical priorities defined above. For Hegel: 'the history of the world is nothing but the development of the idea of freedom'.[53] The story he sets out to tell is the story of that *idea*: the innermost truth of the gospel of the Incarnation; first in all its pre-history, and then in its unfolding down to the present day. The story Voegelin tells, on the other hand, is the story of the symbolization of a central *region of human experience*. It is a story of progressive sophistication, or 'differentiation' on both sides of a debate: both in the affirmation, and in the implicit denial, of transcendence.

In the world-historical scope of his project Voegelin is indeed following in the path pioneered by Hegel, and belongs with such other modern thinkers as Toynbee and Jaspers. (His studies cover the cultural origins of European civilization in the civilizations of ancient Israel and ancient Greece, and the marriage of the two in Christianity; he contrasts the 'cosmological empires' of Egypt, Mesopotamia and China with the 'ecumenic empires' of Persia, Macedonia and Rome; and, against this depth of background, develops his own distinctive account of modernity.) But his approach to all this material is quite deliberately much more diffuse or pluralistic than Hegel's; in consequence of his contrasting starting point. At the critical heart of Voegelin's thinking as a whole there lies the opposition between true philosophy and what, following Plato, he terms 'philodoxy'.[54] The meaning of this term is, so far as I can see, more or less identical with Adorno's 'identity thinking'. But (unlike Adorno) Voegelin's strategy is, in general, to turn back to the pre-Gnostic traditions of classical philosophy, and to try and reappropriate them – as a 'theoretical basis for the psychopathology of the "age"'.[55] As contrasted with Hegel, he is concerned to stress what he sees as the fundamental Platonic insight into the necessary limitations of philosophy, the limitations which philodoxy denies. For him, Hegel is in this sense not a philosopher, but a philodoxer. – And that is what I would want to question: a difference of emphasis, after all, is one thing; denial is quite another.

Nevertheless, there can be no questioning the difference of emphasis. In short: the story Hegel is telling is essentially a story of growing articulacy in the public discussion of freedom, and what freedom requires: a story about the development of appropriate aesthetic imagery and appropriate religious *Vorstellungen*, as well as the necessary framework of philosophical concepts, in order to be

able to express the truth of freedom. But progress in articulacy *about* freedom, however much it may help, does not automatically imply equivalent progress in the actual attainment *of* freedom. If Voegelin's critique of Hegel were limited to the complaint that Hegel did not equally emphasize this other side of the matter, it no doubt would be perfectly valid. The only trouble, it seems to me, is that his onslaught goes so far beyond that simple, balancing corrective.

For further illustration of the same general point, let us also consider the arguments put forward by some of the other major critics of the Hegelian philosophy of history. The three I have particularly in mind are:

Søren Kierkegaard (an obvious choice);
Theodor Adorno again; and
Michel Foucault.

Kierkegaard

What such a corrective must mean in specifically christological terms is shown pre-eminently by Kierkegaard. Here Adorno's 'identity thinking', or Voegelin's 'philodoxy', appears as 'objectivity' (or, at least, there is a close analogy). Like Voegelin, Kierkegaard turns back to the Greeks at this point;[56] above all to Socrates. So he builds his whole christology on the foundation of what he takes to be the Socratic position that 'truth' – truth about God – 'is subjectivity'. Or, more exactly, that truth is 'an objective uncertainty held fast in an appropriation-process of the most passionate inwardness'.[57] It is a matter of abandoning the false quest for an impossible objective certainty; yet not despairing. But persisting in a spirit of irony, rather – Socrates being the great master of irony. It is a matter of truth as faith, in that sense.

Later on, this identification of truth with subjectivity gives way to the more specific recognition of the gospel as truth.[58] What makes Kierkegaard's thought most challenging, however, is the way in which these same, one might say *formal*, themes continue to dominate his subsequent conceptualization of the *content* of the gospel, as well.

Kierkegaard still belongs to an age in which the problem of objectivity arises first and foremost as a problem about 'Christendom'. His world, though, was at the same time already a very different one from Hegel's. The context is neatly captured, for instance, in the words he sets in the mouth of Johannes Climacus, where that humourist describes the way he first arrived at his sense

of intellectual vocation – one fine Sunday afternoon, as he sat smoking a cigar in the Fredericksberg Garden In Copenhagen:

> 'You are going on', I said to myself, 'to become an old man, without being anything, and without really undertaking to do anything. On the other hand, wherever you look about you, in literature and in life, you see the celebrated names and figures, the precious and much heralded men who are coming into prominence and are much talked about, the many benefactors of the age who know how to benefit mankind by making life easier and easier, some by railways, others by omnibusses and steamboats, others by the telegraph, others by easily apprehended compendiums and short recitals of everything worth knowing, and finally the true benefactors of the age who make spiritual existence in virtue of thought easier and easier, yet more and more significant. And what are you doing?...You must do something, but inasmuch as with your limited capacities it will be impossible to make anything easier than it has already become, you must, with the same humanitarian enthusiasm, undertake to make something harder.'[59]

This 'something', he decides, will be the business of being a Christian. The 'Christendom' Kierkegaard attacks is, precisely, an established Christianity which, in order to maintain its ideological hegemony at least for a while, has sold out to the new, up and coming political kitsch of progressive Industrial Revolution modernity: 'the fantasy of the Grand March', as Kundera calls it. The danger Kierkegaard sees is that the gospel itself will be modernized – in much the same way as everything else.

'What the age *needs* in the deepest sense', he declares, 'can be said fully and completely with one single word: it needs...eternity. The misfortune of our time is just this, that it has become simply nothing else but "time", the temporal, which is impatient of hearing anything about eternity.'[60] In other words, it needs what every age needs, every age alike. Truth as subjectivity is timeless truth. In order to understand what Kierkegaard is about, one has to grasp the historical background to this rejection of history – as John W. Elrod has outlined it for instance in his book, *Kierkegaard and Christendom*.[61] Kierkegaard's Denmark was in fact a world in the midst of the most rapid transformation. From having been, in the first two decades of the century, a nation almost without politics, under the enlightened despotism of its kings, in the 1830s and 1840s it had quite abruptly entered a period of considerable political excitement. The swift growth of the Danish economy had begun to bring new social forces to the surface, both in Copenhagen and in the countryside. A

'Society for the Proper Use of the Freedom of the Press' had been formed, to campaign against censorship; which then became an important forum for public education in the principles of democratic liberalism. In 1848 a bloodless revolution took place, which resulted in the establishment, the following year, of a liberal constitution – setting the seal on Denmark's newly acquired status as by now, alongside Britain, one of the most 'progressive' of all European states. Kierkegaard's thinking is, to a large extent, shaped by his contemptuous reaction to the accompanying furore.

Not that he chose to make any direct comment on the revolution at all; in that respect his contempt was expressed by silence. He makes clear his personal preference for the *ancien régime*, in passing,[62] but his real concern is not with forms of government in themselves. Rather, it is with the moral implications of what he evidently sees as the deeper, underlying development: the rise – stimulated by the emergence of a mass-circulation press – of a new mass *culture*, as the matrix of public life.

Kierkegaard's most sustained discussion of the evolution of modern society is to be found in a long essay entitled *Two Ages: The Age of Revolution and the Present Age*, published in 1846.[63] In this work, as the title suggests, he contrasts his own age with the age of the French Revolution. Even though he has no political sympathy at all with the actual revolutionary dreams of 'the age of revolution', at least, he ironically argues, that age had the merit of being an age of real passion; whereas the present age is 'essentially a sensible, reflecting age, devoid of passion, flaring up in superficial short-lived enthusiasm and prudentially relaxing in indolence'.[64] It is an age of passive spectator politics.

> In contrast to the age of revolution, which took action, the present age is an age of publicity, the age of miscellaneous announcements: nothing happens but still there is instant publicity. An insurrection in this day and age is utterly unimaginable; such a manifestation of power would seem ridiculous to the calculating sensibleness of the age.[65]

It is plain that he does not in any way foresee the full destructive potential of 'an age of publicity', as this was later to appear in the violent mass-culture of twentieth-century totalitarianism. The politics of mid-nineteenth-century Denmark were, after all, benign enough; and that is what he is talking about, in particular, when he speaks of insurrection having become 'unimaginable'. He is,

however, acutely critical of what he sees as the grave spiritual decay involved here. The 'public' which the modern press creates for itself is, he declares, 'a monstrous abstraction, an all-encompassing something that is nothing, a mirage'[66] – in the sense that it can never be called to moral account. 'A generation, a nation, a general assembly, a community, a man, still have a responsibility to be something, can know shame for fickleness and disloyalty, but a public remains the public.'[67] He also describes the formation of this new modern phenomenon of the 'public' as an 'abstract levelling process'. A process driven by envy; by envy, at work in a spiritual void:

> If I were to imagine this public as a person... I most likely would think of one of the Roman emperors, an imposing, well-fed figure suffering from boredom and therefore craving only the sensate titillation of laughter, for the divine gift of wit is not worldly enough. So this person, more sluggish than he is evil, but negatively domineering, saunters around looking for variety.[68]

(Even as he wrote this, Kierkegaard himself was being hounded by the gutter press of his day, in the shape of the *Corsair*: 'Anyone who has read the ancient authors', he goes on, 'knows how many things an emperor could think up to beguile the time. In the same way the public keeps a dog for its amusement... If a superior person turns up, perhaps even a man of distinction, the dog is goaded to attack him, and then the fun begins'.) Insofar as the 'levelling process' prevails the 'full-blooded' individual disappears; it is thus a direct threat to truth as subjectivity.

Notoriously, Kierkegaard does not in fact oppose the false political order of 'the present age' with any vision of a better political order. Instead, in this thought the critique of 'objectivity' carries over into a generalized, undiscriminating hostility towards *every* type of involvement in worldly politics, without exception.

This indeed is his professed reason for preferring life under an absolute monarchy; since, as compared with liberal democracy, such a system is so much less liable to pester one into bothering oneself about political affairs.[69] His (in a Lutheran context) provocative, even if qualified, expressions of sympathy for the spirituality of contemplative monasticism may be seen as springing from much the same source.[70] For his praise of the monastic ideal is qualified only by his rejection of its institutionalization: inasmuch as, in being institutionalized, the monastic community's testimony to the truth of

inwardness is converted into a form of outwardness 'only relatively different from every other outwardness'.[71] With monasticism understood as a passionate rejection of the worldliness of the world, on the other hand, he is in complete agreement. He did not confine *himself*, of course, to a purely contemplative role. On the contrary: his final 'attack upon Christendom' in 1854–55 constituted an incursion into the public realm with a real vengeance.[72] Nevertheless this was still a very other-worldly sort of prophetic incursion. It was a quite anti-political form of political action. He regarded his own vocation very much as an 'exception' – and one can well see why. The attack was certainly bitter enough: he ended up advocating a total boycott of 'official' religion. Yet he did not do so with the idea of setting up any sort of sectarian alternative. In fact he had no actual organizational reforms in mind whatsoever. He mocks the clergy for their mercenary-mindedness, but is not urging any change in their status or in their pay, for instance. The sole point of the boycott is to protest against what he sees as the intolerable complacency of the established church, in its easy adaptation to the world. All he is demanding is that there should be an end to the hypocrisy of Christendom, and that the church should, at any rate, come clean and confess its abject failure to live up to the standards of the New Testament: nothing more, and nothing less than that. Hence the distinct shrillness of tone in these writings: lacking any more practical goal he ceases to have any real anxiety as to whom he offends. He loses all inhibition.

With regard to this particular point, his radical dissociation of faith from worldly politics, Kierkegaard no doubt is in irreconcilable conflict with Hegel.[73] But beyond this point, it is at least arguable that the apparent disagreement is, far more, a matter of his talking at complete cross-purposes to Hegel. His attack on Hegel is related to his attack on Danish 'Christendom' by virtue of the fact that it is at the same time (and it would seem first and foremost) an attack on Hegel's Danish admirers, in particular the influential literary critic J. L. Heiberg and the theologian H. L. Martensen. Martensen, be it said, was a somewhat idiosyncratic Hegelian;[74] but he was also the dominant figure in the world of Danish theology in that period; a theologian who in the end was to rise to be Bishop of Sjaelland, that is, the official head of the Danish Lutheran Church. And, as a result, Kierkegaard is swift to identify Hegelianism in general with everything he most detests. Just as with Voegelin, he seems to assume

that just because Hegel does not say the things he himself is most anxious to say, Hegel therefore by implication denies those things. Yet it would surely be far truer to say that Hegel, on the contrary, tacitly *presupposes* them.

Nor does Kierkegaard ever appear to have come to terms with the real theological challenge of what Hegel does say. Thus, he for his part builds his whole christology on the basis of his critique of 'objectivity'. For this he uses two contrasting types of strategy, corresponding to his use of the two different pseudonyms, 'Johannes Climacus' and 'Anti-Climacus'.

(a) 'Johannes Climacus' is the author of *Philosophical Fragments* and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. In these works objective Christianity is, as it were, exploded from within. Suppose one adopts an objective point of view in relation to Christ – so the primary argument runs – and suppose one is also logically *consistent*, what then must the Incarnation look like? Given these premises, it must appear to be an 'absolute paradox', utterly 'absurd'. So Lessing's formulation of principle is cited: 'Contingent truths of history can never serve as proof for necessary truths of reason.' The gospel, as an offer of 'eternal happiness', and as a definitive account of the human condition in those terms, makes claim that, if they are valid, in Lessing's sense belong at the level of 'necessary truths of reason'; yet it is also grounded in the contingently historical. Kierkegaard/ 'Climacus' is fulsome in his praise of Lessing for highlighting the problematic nature of this conjunction.[75] 'That, that is the broad ugly ditch I can never get across', Lessing had written, 'no matter how often or how earnestly I have tried to make the leap.' Kierkegaard does not share Lessing's despair; but he is in complete agreement about the need for a 'leap' here. True faith is a leap. Its character as such is ignored by the objective thinking of Christendom because it is, precisely, a leap *into* subjectivity, in relation to the gospel. The 'absolute paradox' of the Incarnation, in short, consists of the conjoining of two quite opposite modes of thought. As a story about the historical human figure Jesus of Nazareth, the gospel is objective narrative, inviting objective factual assessment. As an affirmation about God, on the other hand, carrying with it an offer of 'eternal happiness', it is properly comprehensible only in the most purely subjective of terms. The objective thinking of Christendom remains unaware of any real tension between those two aspects of the matter because it, in effect, just subordinates the latter to the former.

True faith, the property of the single individual in the passion of inwardness, has therefore disappeared; it has been supplanted by an historical theory, a basis for the self-understanding of the ecclesiastical crowd and of its leaders. In this way, Christendom may manage to repress any sense of the actual absurdity – from the perspective of its own objectivity, that is – of what it is affirming; but it can do so, 'Climacus' insists, only by dint of voiding the dogma of all its significance.

(b) 'Anti-Climacus' is the author of the later *Training in Christianity*. And in this case the primary strategy is to highlight the contrast between the objective view and the subjective view by means of a focus on the meaning of Christ's eternal 'contemporaneity'. ('Contemporaneity' also features as a theme in *Philosophical Fragments*, but much less prominently.) 'Out with history. In with the situation of contemporaneity. This is the criterion: as I judge anything contemporaneously, so am I. All this subsequent chatter is a delusion', as Kierkegaard put it in his journal.[76] The objective thinking of Christendom does everything to magnify the importance of history. But for him, on the contrary, 'it is a matter of getting rid of 1800 years as if they had never been'.[77] The '1800 years' serve Christendom primarily as a means of self-distancing from the original 'offence' of the gospel. In 'Anti-Climacus's' work this 'offence' appears as two-fold: on the one hand, there is the offence with which 'Climacus' has already dealt, the offence implicit in the simple idea of God become flesh; but on the other hand there is also the further offence which derives from the *manner* in which this is said to have happened. The flight into history serves to distance us from that, too. Hence Kierkegaard/'Anti-Climacus' speaks of two forms of 'degradation' into which God has entered, in Christ: first, the 'essential', or qualitative degradation inherent in Incarnation as such; and then the, so to speak, quantitative degradation involved in the relatively low *social* status, as a 'servant', adopted by the incarnate God, the crucified Christ's 'incognito' or, in worldly terms, 'absolute unrecognizableness'.[78] In *Training in Christianity* 'Anti-Climacus' tries to bring this home, for example, by imagining Christ as a citizen of his own Copenhagen, and describing how the good Christian people of that city might react when confronted by him as their contemporary in the flesh: the various ways in which – cautiously, and not without some grudging admiration, it is

true – they might justify their undoubted rejection of such an extraordinary phenomenon.[79]

The special authority of Christianity for Kierkegaard over against the equally pure subjectivity of a non-Christian like Socrates would seem to lie in the interplay between these two contrasting levels of offence, and in the unique power of Christian faith, as a result, to awaken both the very deepest possible consciousness of sin – and, therefore, also the very deepest possible consciousness of what it means for sins to be forgiven. 'Sin is this: before God, or with the conception of God, in despair not to will to be oneself, or in despair to will to be oneself': this is how he defines it in *The Sickness unto Death* (the companion piece to *Training in Christianity*, also issued under the pseudonym 'Anti-Climacus').[80] Only insofar as one is aware of God is sin, in the strict sense, possible, as a turning away from that awareness in despair. But encounter with Christ is envisaged by Kierkegaard as carrying with it the most intense conceivable awareness of God; and therefore as intensifying to the very highest conceivable pitch the whole dialectic of sin and the forgiveness of sins.

This, basically, is the point 'Climacus' is making, in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, in terms of the contrast he draws between 'religiousness A' and 'religiousness B': two forms of religiousness, both of them authentic, but operating on different levels. 'Religiousness A can exist in paganism, and in Christianity it can be the religiousness of everyone who is not decisively Christian, whether he be baptized or no.'[81] Such religiousness may be quite profoundly subjective – a heart-felt, sincere orientation towards the 'eternal happiness' promised by religion; only, even if it takes on a 'Christian' form, it is still not *decisively* determined by actual encounter with Christ. And 'Climacus' also distinguishes the 'guilt-consciousness' to which this 'religiousness A' may rise from the altogether more radical 'sin-consciousness' which is, in his view, only attainable by 'religiousness B'. The difference in practical terms appears, first, precisely in 'the possibility of offence' – a possibility which has still not penetrated the consciousness of a Christianity at the level of 'religiousness A', at least not in its full radicalism. And, secondly, in what he calls 'the smart of sympathy': the acute sense of community with one another which binds Christians at the level of 'religiousness B' together, over against the much more diffuse sympathies of 'religiousness A': that acute sense

of the sheer otherness of true Christianity from the norms of the wider world, in other words, which was later to become the basis for the 1854–55 'attack upon Christendom'.[82]

One cannot help noticing, however, the fundamental one-sidedness of this doctrine of sin. For, surely, it is not only the *watering-down* of 'sin-consciousness' in Christendom which is problematic. But religious kitsch also *distorts* the sense of sin; so that not every intensification of 'sin-consciousness' is necessarily healthy, but it is also quite possible for it to be pathologically intensified. In short: *it is as if the problem of the Unhappy Consciousness just did not exist for Kierkegaard, at all.*

'As a sinner', he writes, 'man is separated from God by a yawning qualitative abyss. And obviously God is separated from man by the same yawning qualitative abyss when he forgives sin.'[83] Kierkegaard's whole concern is to accentuate this 'yawning qualitative abyss', and so to accentuate the paradoxical nature of the Incarnation. The abyss in question is no doubt quite different from that posited by the authoritarianism of the Unhappy Consciousness. But the fact remains that he nowhere presses that difference home. On the contrary: in places, there is a real ambiguity about his thinking in this respect – as, for example, in his treatment of the story of Abraham and the sacrifice of Isaac, in *Fear and Trembling*.[84] The choice of this story to illustrate the sacrificial nature of true faith is traditional enough; but that does not remove its intrinsic ambivalence. For what sort of God, after all, demands such a wholly *meaningless* sacrifice as the one which is demanded of Abraham? Kierkegaard speaks here of a 'teleological suspension of the ethical'. Insofar as 'the ethical', in this context, is a term for mere external convention, in conflict with the inwardness of conscience, well and good. Yet that does nothing to alleviate the real difficulty, which has to do with the story's apparent implications regarding the nature of God. Abraham's sacrifice is so cruelly pointless, what sort of God could ever require such a thing – if not, after all, the 'God' of the Unhappy Consciousness, at its most fanatical and extreme?[85] The original story may well be read as the mythological remembrance of some pre-historic transition from the practice of human sacrifice to that of animal sacrifice. When, on the other hand, it is taken up into Christian thinking with the chief accent set on Abraham's exemplary faith, it surely does need to be handled with somewhat more circumspection than Kierkegaard shows.

Kierkegaard responds to the Hegelian critique of the Unhappy Consciousness, in the one place where he does refer to it, only by constructing his own contrasting portrait of the 'unhappiest man'.[86] But the unhappiness of the 'unhappiest man' has nothing whatever to do with the unhappiness of the Unhappy Consciousness. It is not a competing description of the same, it is a description of quite another phenomenon.

The problem of the 'unhappiest man' lies in his self-alienation, in the sense of a basic incapacity to be 'present to himself' in either memory or hope. He can not really enter into either, and so is deprived of both the two most elementary forms of consolation in grief; for his is a misery compounded by the 'reflective' mental habits of 'objectivity'. He cannot be reconciled to the irretrievable loss of his first 'immediate' happiness. But the only possible way forward in the direction of a valid 'second immediacy' is closed off to him as well, since that would involve a decisive plunge into the processes of subjectivity: recognition of the element of guilt in his predicament, repentance, faith and acceptance of divine forgiveness.[87] Without a passionate appropriation of memory and of hope, of course, such a movement can not even begin to get underway. His problem is, thus, one of spiritual paralysis: 'He cannot become old', as Kierkegaard puts it,' for he has never been young;

he cannot become young, for he is already old. In one sense of the word he cannot die, for he has not really lived; in another sense he cannot live, for he is already dead. He cannot love, for love is in the present, and he has no present, no future, and no past.[88]

This notion of the 'unhappiest man' helps define the basic problematic with which Kierkegaard, in his work as whole, is dealing, in much the same way as the notion of the Unhappy Consciousness does for Hegel.

Perhaps for Kierkegaard it had to be harsh case of 'either/or' between a thinking grounded in the one problematic and a thinking grounded in the other – in the circumstances, perhaps there was no other way for him to break free into the radical otherness of his own intellectual domain. But again I see no decisive reason why it should have to be that way, for us.[89]

Adorno

When we come to Adorno, we find ourselves, obviously, in a very different sort of intellectual world. Adorno's is a critique of modernity appealing neither to the authority of the gospel nor to that of classical philosophy – but, on the contrary, at least to some extent deriving from the radically anti-Christian and anti-Platonist thought of Nietzsche. (As a thinker concerned with the comprehensive critique of all identity thinking purely and simply as such, Adorno may also be seen as belonging to the same historical moment in European culture as Martin Heidegger – although he was also of course an extremely vigorous opponent of Heidegger, whom he considered not so much a genuine critic as a purveyor of reactionary mystification.)

Adorno presents his 'critical theory' as a species of Marxism. On the other hand, Gillian Rose is no doubt right: 'Interpretation of Adorno suffers when his aims and achievements are related solely to Marx or to a Marxian tradition which is sometimes undefined and sometimes overdefined.'[90] He also took a considerable interest in Kierkegaard: his first major published work was a book on Kierkegaard; and this was followed by two quite significant later essays, in 1940 and 1963.[91] To be sure, as a Marxist he criticizes Kierkegaard's rejection of politics, and the consequent abstractness of Kierkegaard's notion of what it means to 'love one's neighbour': the effective dissociation, in Kierkegaard's theology, of the ethical demand from any concrete consideration whatsoever of the realities of social inequality and oppression which divide one from one's neighbours. Kierkegaardian 'subjectivity', he argues, is in this sense still a radical one-sidedness – a critical thinking still trapped within quite arbitrary limitations. (He himself, therefore, uses 'subject'/ 'object' terminology quite differently.) And he further calls in question Kierkegaard's relative depreciation of the aesthetic realm, as something set over against the ethical or the religious; a move he sees as being implicated in, and reinforcing this abstractness. But, with that proviso, it is clear that the Kierkegaardian attack on the 'objectivity' of Christendom does find a powerful, secularized echo, in Adorno's critique of the intrinsic authoritarianism of modern popular culture.[92]

When it comes to Hegel, he is also certainly a good deal more moderate in his views than Voegelin is; his Marxism does at least

ensure that. He reiterates, but in the process, at the same time, to a considerable degree refines the traditional Marxist verdict.

So: (1) in metaphysical terms, he confronts Hegelian idealism with Marxist materialism. However, his usage of the term 'materialism' is both very specific and very broad: as he develops it, 'materialism' comes to be used, in fact, as a direct antonym to 'identity thinking'. For 'identity thinking' (his own coinage) he further borrows and adapts the terms 'ideology' (from the Marxist tradition in general) and 'reification' (from Lukács and Benjamin in particular).[93] 'Idealism', then, tends to become a term for any form of philosophy in which the critique of such thinking is, in any way, blunted or distorted.

On the other hand, Adorno's materialism also stands, if anything, just as far removed from positivism – which in its subordination of philosophy to 'science' may indeed, in a sense, abandon 'identity thinking' at the level of philosophy itself, but which, nevertheless, quite fails to preclude its reinstatement at the other, 'scientific' level; especially, in a sociological guise. And at the same time therefore this interpretation also leads to a decisive relativization of the more sweepingly anti-metaphysical elements within traditional Marxism, as well. The challenge of idealist philosophy, for Adorno, can by no means simply be marginalized, as being a mere phenomenon of the cultural 'superstructure'. Over against the 'transcendent' character of that sort of view, he re-affirms the necessity of an 'immanent' critical method: one which

> takes seriously the principle that it is not ideology in itself which is untrue but rather its pretension to correspond to reality. Immanent criticism of intellectual and artistic phenomena [thus] seeks to grasp, through the analysis of their form and meaning, the contradiction between their objective idea and that pretension.[94]

'Through the analysis of their form and meaning' – that is to say, rather than by the abrupt application of Leninist 'party principle'. No matter how reactionary its general drift, every genuine product of culture, as opposed to the 'culture industry', also has its critical moments to be brought to light. And such a method is therefore just as much opposed to the instant dismissiveness of a culture-'transcendent' Marxist dogmatism as it is, for instance, to a positivistic 'sociology of knowledge' in the liberal-technocratic Mannheimian mode. 'The traditional demand of the ideology-

critique is itself subject to a historical dynamic', Adorno argues. 'The critique was conceived against idealism, the philosophical form which reflects the fetishization of culture.' And, however unbalanced, it will always have an obvious validity, as a corrective, over against any philosophy in which the material interests underlying ideology are glossed over or ignored. In that sense, a purely 'immanent' critique, on its own, can never be sufficient.[95] But the trouble is that today 'the definition of consciousness in terms of being has become a means of dispensing with all consciousness which does not conform to existence'; so that (as 'vulgar' Marxism develops its own 'scientific' kitsch) 'In the name of the dependence of the superstructure on base...ideology is controlled instead of criticized.'[96]

'At its most materialistic' – in this sense, he can even say – 'materialism comes to agree with theology.'[97] Namely, with 'the theological ban on images': the theology of Exodus 20: 4–5, the tradition of the *via negativa*. In relation to the givenness of cultural tradition, such materialism bears an immanent but uncompromising witness to the transcendent nature of truth in much the same way as, at its best, such theology does. Even though they might be surprised to learn it, by Adorno's definition it seems as though both Kierkegaard and Voegelin would have to be counted as, so to speak, honorary 'materialists', or at least near-'materialists' – along with quite a number of other unsuspecting non-Marxist thinkers.

(2) As the basis for an immanently critical approach to Hegel himself, Adorno then takes up the classic Marxist attack on what Engels for instance speaks of as 'the...dogmatic content of the Hegelian *system* [which] is declared to be absolute truth, in contradiction to his dialectical *method*, which dissolves all dogmatism'.[98] If Hegel is an idealist, in other words, it is essentially because of the way in which he locks his dialectic up into a philosophical 'system'. For Adorno, the very idea of a philosophical 'system' has clear overtones of authoritarianism (as indeed it also appears to have for Kierkegaard and Voegelin, very similarly):

It is well known that in its strong Hegelian version, as distinct from the deductive version operative in the positive sciences, the concept of the system has to be understood organically: as the growing together and logical coinherence of all the parts, by virtue of a whole indwelling within each one of them from the outset. This system-concept implies an unfolding and eventually all-inclusive, absolute identity of subject and object; and the

truth of the system stands or falls with that identity. But that the Spirit has indeed accomplished such a final reconciliation within the antagonistic reality of the world is no more than an assertion. The philosophical anticipation of reconciliation blasphemes against reality; it dismissively ascribes whatever contradicts it to the laziness of existence (*der faulen Existenz zu*), as being unworthy of serious attention. Completed reconciliation is by no means to be equated with a watertight system. But, instead, the coherence of the system is itself grounded in unreconciled violence. Only now, one hundred and twenty five years later, has the systematic way in which Hegel conceived the world come to be matched by literal reality: that is, in the satanic system of a radically socialized society. It is to be reckoned one of Hegel's most magnificent achievements to have anticipated, in his conceptual reading of society, the systematization his own native Germany, so backward in its bourgeois development, was only so much later actually able to achieve (!)[99]

The ironic hyperbole is characteristic.

Lifted somewhat arbitrarily out of its original context in Hegel's inheritance from Schelling, and Schelling's appropriation of Spinoza, the 'identity of subject and object' thus becomes a sort of shorthand here for Hegel's whole (alleged) 'idealist' compromise with 'identity thinking' in general. Over against this, Adorno wants to liberate the, as he sees it, essential, but repressed, 'negativity' of the Hegelian dialectic. He homes in, for example, on the Hegelian phrase 'negation of negation', and gives it a similarly new, un-Hegelian, extended sense: namely, as an overall definition of the function of the 'system', and of what is wrong with it.[100] For him, everything depends on staying with the original moment of negativity, closing off any way out.

Here again, though, in the means he adopts in order to achieve his purpose, he ends up departing a long way from the Marxist Founding Fathers. For, by contrast to their 'scientific' approach, he turns – like Kierkegaard, only more so, or like Nietzsche – to a much more radically anti-systematic method of philosophizing in 'fragments'. He constructs his position according to the anti-systematic principle of 'constellation': a term borrowed from Benjamin, signifying a thinking as free as possible from the rigid definition of concepts – hence, as little disposed as possible to pre-empt or distort the spontaneous emergence of meaning out of the clustering of particular observations.[101] His form, therefore, is the essay: minimally structured, relentlessly epigrammatic. In short, whereas the Hegelian system arises as a paedagogic device, born of Hegel's

paedagogic style, Adorno's style is expressionistic. Literary and provocative in intention, rather than academic, it is a style pertaining to a conversation of equals (a somewhat exclusive club of equals, that is).

(3) On the Hegelian philosophy of history in particular, Adorno reiterates Marx's conclusion: that, in its idealist and systematic character, it is a species of 'mystification'. At this level, he argues, the Hegelian position represents a complex amalgam of truth and falsehood: 'the World Spirit is; but it is not a spirit.'[102] It 'is' in the sense that, yes, true self-knowledge *would* require us to admit that we always are a good deal less autonomous in our thinking, as individuals, than we would like to suppose. All the prevailing ideology of our world wants to pretend otherwise; in this sense, it seeks to cover the real 'predominance of the universal' with an 'individualistic veil'. For

> to see through selfhood as nonexistent, as an illusion, would easily turn the objective despair, shared by all, into a subjective one. It would rob them of the faith implanted in them by individualistic society: that they, the individuals, are the substance.[103]

And then there might be trouble. So too, in another passage, he speaks of this 'illusion' of selfhood as 'the spell': 'In the spell, the reified consciousness has become total':[104] this is his description not only of the psychology of actually existing totalitarianism, but of the whole direction in which modernity appears to him to be moving. And the Hegelian doctrine of the 'World Spirit' may, on the one hand, he suggests, be seen as a registering of that reality. On the other hand, in speaking of it as a 'spirit' Hegel is at the same time guilty of 'deifying the spell'. Adorno, in fact, comes very close to the crudest sort of 'Doctor Pangloss' interpretation of Hegel's theodicy.

Not that he is any more orthodox a Marxist in this respect than in either of the others. For he then goes on to extend the same argument to *all* forms of 'historicism', as such; the mainstream Marxist version included. Indeed, he can even speak of the residual 'idealism' of the Founding Fathers themselves here: 'It was a matter of deifying history, even to the atheistic Hegelians, Marx and Engels.'[105] On this issue, as well, he actually seems to stand closer to Kierkegaard. When it comes to the question of historical teleology, his is the radical 'melancholy' of Kierkegaard – only now transposed in to the world of Auschwitz.

In Adorno's thinking Hegel thus becomes the symbolic focus for a much more wide-ranging attack: on 'idealism' in general, on system-thinking in general, on historicism in general. In accentuating Hegel's greatness, he aims to dramatize the intrinsic element of corruption in each case. However, as Rose remarks 'Unfortunately, much of Adorno's discussion of Hegel's philosophy consists of general statements of its metaphysical intent which remain far removed from any detailed reconstruction of the process of any one or other of Hegel's texts.'[106] Despite his professed adherence to the 'immanent' method, he certainly does not confront Hegel on Hegel's own terms; and in particular, it is evident that he is not interested in christology in any sense whatsoever. His Hegel is, to all intents and purposes, a Hegel minus the christology. Heretical though he may otherwise be, in this myopia at least he is still all too typically Marxist; inasmuch that focussing on the Hegelian 'method' as something distinct from the 'system' inevitably means up-rooting it from its original *raison d'être*.[107] Hegel does not begin with a method which he then applies to the data with which he works; he begins with an insight, and proceeds to develop a method appropriate to the unfolding and setting into context of that particular insight. Neither is it at all surprising that a critique which ignores this should end up as a railing against the 'mystificatory' character of Hegelianism – since such a critique has itself mystified what it is criticizing.

For Adorno, as for Kierkegaard, a thinking in terms of the 'World Spirit' is incompatible in principle with a proper respect for the individual. (On this basis, he can even speak of Hegel's 'contempt for the individual'!).[108] But he appears quite oblivious of the very different relationship Hegel envisages as subsisting here by virtue of the Incarnation. In this account (just as with Voegelin) all that is most *specific* to Hegel has simply disappeared.

Once more, therefore, we are left with two opposing fundamental philosophical visions of reality, with considerable scope for further negotiation between them. However valid Adorno's general position may be, his actual reading of Hegel is surely quite another matter.

Foucault

Foucault, by contrast, is very far from being a Marxist. On the contrary, his thinking is in very large measure part of the widespread philosophical reaction, during the 1960s and 70s in France, against the repristinated and 'Hegelianized' (or Kojèvian) Marxism which

had exercised such a dominant influence on the preceding generation of intellectuals; as represented by Sartre, for instance. Nevertheless, his essential affinity to Adorno in spirit is both obvious and acknowledged.[109]

What Foucault adds that is distinctively his own, of course, is a whole new philosophical (or anti-philosophical) approach to the business of *historiography*. This, in a sense, is already foreshadowed in Adorno's work. 'The World Spirit is; but it is not a spirit' – and therefore, if we are ever to be liberated from it:

> Universal history must be [both] construed and denied. After the catastrophes that have happened, and in view of the catastrophes to come, it would be cynical to say that a plan for a better world is manifested in history and unites it. Not to be denied for that reason, however, is the unity that cements the discontinuous, chaotically splintered moments and phases of history – the unity of the control over nature, progressing to rule over people, and finally to that over people's inner nature. No universal history leads from savagery to humanitarianism, but there is one leading from the slingshot to the megaton bomb. It ends in the total menace which organized humankind poses to organized men and women, in the epitome of discontinuity.[110]

In the light of twentieth-century 'horror', the task of 'construing', coming to terms with, 'universal history' as such is indeed what Hegel was one of the first to perceive it to be: an urgent moral need. But only so that we can be set free from the complacencies of the 'progressive' present. And for that purpose Hegel has also got to be 'stood on his head': 'It is the horror that verifies Hegel stands him on his head.'[111] What is required, in other words, is a historiography which – far from focussing, as Hegel does, on the historical development of theoretical articulacy about freedom – will focus instead on the underlying *persistence*, beneath the various shifting cultural forms, of actual unfreedom (or humanity's procession 'from domination to domination', as Foucault also calls it):[112] a directly opposite project.

Adorno takes a first step towards developing such a historiography in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the work he co-authored with Max Horkheimer. Here he attempts to sketch the story of 'control over nature, progressing to rule over people, and finally to that over people's inner nature' in very general terms, illustrated by a wealth of literary allusion; above all to the *Odyssey* on the one hand, and the works of the Marquis de Sade on the other. Foucault takes the next step, earthing the story no longer in literary allusion, but rather in

the meticulous analysis of developments in a particular set of social and intellectual practices.

As a 'genealogist of ethics' like Nietzsche, or as an 'archaeologist of knowledge', Foucault sets out to trace the remote origins of prevailing attitudes – the better to call them into question. In each case it is a matter of getting back deep enough into the past to reach a standpoint from which the assumptions which constitute the essential mental framework of the present cease to appear self-evident; so far as possible, prising loose the ideological grip of the familiar by rendering it strange. He does this with regard to our whole modern understanding of science. He does it with regard to the way we understand sanity and insanity, crime and punishment; going back to the world before the creation of the modern institutions of asylum, clinic, prison. With regard to our still deeper seated assumptions about sexuality, he is driven back yet further: to the very different problematization of sex in the world of pre-Christian classical antiquity.

At times it may be that the results come to seem almost 'a kind of Whig history in reverse'.[113] But, if so, then this is just a corrective reaction to the continuing prevalence of the progressive 'Whig' view as the educational norm – with its main rival a Marxism which, for Foucault, is still by no means adequately distanced from it. He is certainly not intent on glorifying the past, any more than the present; that would be a much more fragile enterprise. Rather, what he values is the sort of 'historical sense' which

> corresponds to the acuity of a glance that distinguishes, separates and disperses – the kind of disassociating view that is capable of decomposing itself, capable of shattering the unity of man's being through which it was thought that he could extend his sovereignty to, the events of the past.[114]

Like Adorno, in short, Foucault wants to clear away the false patterns of coherence that have been projected onto the past by the various propaganda-needs of modernity.

It is to this end, therefore, that he makes the two other moves which most decisively characterize his polemical standpoint:

(1) His Nietzschean insistence on interpreting every development of 'scientific' knowledge in terms of the 'will to power' which it expresses and serves needs to be understood as a direct counter to modernity's most obvious source of boasting. Modernity, after all, largely consists of a massive and rapidly growing accumulation of knowledge, of all sorts. The elementary prejudice Foucault is

challenging is that this growth of knowledge, in particular our knowledge about each other and ourselves, is in itself always a liberating factor. It is not. And so he develops an approach to history the fundamental purpose of which is to highlight all the other things it might be; that is, as an instrument of domination by the knowledgeable. (When Foucault speaks of 'power', be it noted, it is invariably in this sense of domination.) Hence, for instance, the vivid symbolic significance he attaches to Bentham's scheme for a 'Panopticon':[115] an ideal prison, architecturally so designed that a single warder in a central tower can see into every cell at will without himself ever being seen.

What is modernity? One provocative answer Foucault suggests is that it is what began when people started dreaming of Panopticons, and the like. Embodied and symbolized, in its ideal form, in this architectural notion is a basic mechanism of power which one also finds at work in a whole range of other institutions: in the factories, schools, barracks, hospitals of modernity. Modernity is the age of systematic surveillance. And then comes the apparatus of theoretical knowledge, to set these practices of surveillance into a conceptual framework, and to legitimate them: the enormous proliferation of discourses on the overlapping topics of criminology, psychiatry, and sexual 'health'.

(2) His attempt at an analysis of power (or domination) at what he terms the 'capillary' level needs to be understood as a direct counter to the exclusive preoccupation of political parties and their ideologues with power at the level of the state. Foucault does not try to explain society as a whole. Instead, he seeks to understand the specific effect of each one of the various different disciplinary mechanisms he considers *in itself*, on the individuals subjected to it. What interest him, he says, are 'the modes of objectification which transform human beings into subjects'.[116] That which, in this respect, at the deepest level distinguishes the culture out of which modernity has developed from all others, he argues, is the invention of a whole new species of power – in the first place, by Christianity. Namely: the phenomenon of '*pastoral*' power;[117] power centred on the stimulative practice of confession. The modern world has witnessed, and been formed by, a spectacular multiplication and diversification of techniques in the exercise of this type of power:

> The confession has spread its effects far and wide, it plays a part in law, medicine, education, family relationship and sexual relations, in ordinary, everyday matters and in the most solemn rites; one confesses one's crimes,

one confesses one's sins, one confesses one's thoughts and desires, one confesses to one's past and to one's dreams, one confesses to one's childhood, one confesses one's illnesses and troubles; one sets about telling, with the greatest precision, what is most difficult to tell; one confesses in public and in private, to one's parents, to one's teachers, to one's doctor, to those one loves; one confesses to oneself, in pleasure and in pain, things it would be impossible to tell anyone else, the things people write books about... Western man has become a confessing animal.[118]

Foucault is attempting to comprehend this type of power in its full *universality*. This includes its utility to the state – so often in association with the inflicting of torture, under authoritarian, or totalitarian regimes; but only, as it were, incidentally.

Such analysis requires a basic shift away from the traditional interests of modern political philosophy:

Despite differences of objective from one period to another the representation of power has remained haunted by monarchy. In political thought and analysis we have still not cut off the head of the king. Hence the importance still accorded in the theory of power to the problems of right and violence, law and illegality, will and liberty and, above all, the state and sovereignty (even if sovereignty is no longer embodied in the person of the sovereign, but in a collective being). To conceive of power in these terms is to do so from within a historical form – juridical monarchy – that is peculiar to our own societies. Peculiar and, after all, transitory.[119]

It is also to curtail the scope of critical thinking, in a quite unjustifiable way. Foucault thus moves beyond an analysis of disciplinary power as an attribute of, a participation in, and a derivative from sovereignty; to an understanding of it as something that 'comes from everywhere',[120] and to a fragmentary analysis of particular examples, on that basis. He is drawing attention to all that a conventional political theory (that is, one still primarily oriented towards the justification or assessment of claims to a formal share of sovereignty) ignores.

Whereas conventional theory, focussing as it does on the interplay of different groups (castes, peoples, classes) with conflicting claims at that level, finds it relatively simple to impose order on history, Foucault's work is deliberately designed to run athwart all such schemes. As a paradoxical corrective, he even goes so far in places to speak of 'power' itself, in the abstract, as the ultimate agent of history.[121]

At all events, it is clear that such an approach does stand in radical

contrast to the Hegelian notion of history as the self-unfolding activity of 'Spirit'.

But why should we suppose that there is only one philosophically significant way of doing history, to the exclusion of all others?

The undeniable authority of the Foucaultian form of historiography – with all its exaggerations and rhetorical flourishes – lies in its capacity to force us to face up to those unacceptable aspects of reality which the kitsch of modernity wants to suppress or deny: the manipulative play of power, within our world, by which individuals, without any real necessity, are both set apart from the support of communal solidarity, and also pressed into complying with quite narrowly stereotypical roles – in such a manner, however, as altogether to preclude any simple cure from on high.

And its potential usefulness from a theological point of view is equally plain. That is, perhaps, most of all the case with *Discipline and Punish*. For it is surely one of the most pressing problems for a contemporary proclamation of the gospel that the original symbolism of the cross – as a disciplinary institution – has become so remote from us. If we are to grasp the full potential significance of the symbol nexus crucifixion/resurrection today, we surely do need to ponder just what it is that has now replaced the classical institution of the cross, and how.

Of course, there are obvious, glaring contrasts in this respect, within the modern world: between societies with the death penalty, and societies without it; between societies where torture is commonplace, and societies where it is not; between societies where the rule of law prevails and societies where it does not (and we have seen how this latter is in fact the central issue for Hegel, politically). However, it is no doubt also salutary, at least for once in a while, to be reminded of those other, common elements: the things that constitute the distinctive 'modernity' of *any* modern disciplinary system, regardless of such differences; and all the more so, since they are less easily perceived. From a theological point of view, one might say, Foucault can help us see how the collective fury which crucifixion represents in its most concentrated symbolic form has, as it were, been dispersed and diffused right through the far more extensive penal regimes of the modern age.

For Foucault himself, on the other hand, there can be no *rapprochement* with theology. It is ruled out by the way he tends to elevate the particular sceptical requirements of his historiographical

method to the status of absolute philosophical first principle. Thus, the essential philosophical interest of his method may be said to lie in its role as a set of devices for systematically calling into question a whole class of moral judgements: those we apply to other ages, other cultures, over against our own. But from there he then slides over into an *absolute* denial of all absolutes, on which such judgements might be based; a strictly negative view of history, as witnessing to neither God nor Man in any comprehensive sense at all. Here again he appears as a follower of Nietzsche: his most significant formulations of this general standpoint are to be found in two essays, the first entitled 'Nietzsche, Freud, Marx', the second (from which I have already quoted) 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History'.[122] In his enthusiasm for Nietzsche, he takes his stand alongside such other (somewhat wilder) contemporary figures as Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, Jean-François Lyotard. And the basic problem, as I would see it, with Foucault is a problem which afflicts this whole Nietzschean tradition. It lies in the (often remarked!) difficulty of developing from such premises any truly *effective* theoretical basis for organized solidarity in resistance to tyranny and exploitation.

What all these philosophers have in common is a fundamental refusal to wrestle with Christianity, in particular, on its own terms; or to attempt to turn it against itself. One may compare Hegel's more general critique of 'Scepticism' in the *Phenomenology*. When Nietzsche declares that there is '*only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective "knowing"',[123] the function of this observation is to rule out any appeal to such an overarching normative tradition. And it does not allow any search for substitutes, either. Certainly, Nietzsche practises 'immanent critique' in Adorno's sense; but only of more or less non-conformist individual artists and thinkers. Instead of appealing to any 'higher' authority, for Nietzsche:

> Authentic philosophers... are [themselves] commanders and law-givers: they say 'thus it *shall* be!', it is they who determine the Wherefore and Whither of mankind... Their 'knowing' is *creating*, their creating is a law-giving, their will to truth is – *will to power*.[124]

It is 'will to power' they scorn to conceal – in stark contrast to the concealment practised by an un-creative conventional moralism.

But what does that lead to? In Nietzsche's own case, it leads to a 'joyful' acceptance of radical isolation: the 'untimely', pioneering philosopher, for the time being all alone in the world. On the other hand, of course, his rhetoric also had a considerable appeal to, and

influence on, the original theorists of fascism. They too, were looking for a clean break from the Christian past; they too were stirred by the romance of shattering every previously established form of order. Foucault emphatically does not want the same as they. Yet neither does he seem to want Nietzsche's form of isolation. At least he does not indulge in the same positive glorification of solitude as Nietzsche. And he chose to participate in some quite concrete political campaigning to highlight poor conditions in French prisons in the 1970s; a campaigning with fairly modest liberal reformist objectives, at least in the short term. There is a real unclarity as to how that type of commitment ties in – from a practical point of view – with his Nietzschean total renunciation of moral appeal to Christian or humanitarian tradition. In fact, in interviews, when pressed on the political implications of his work, he shows a marked tendency towards a sweeping anarchistic rhetoric of absolute 'anti-disciplinarianism'; whilst, on the other hand, declining to offer any explanation of how a society purged of objectionable discipline might actually function, or what it would look like – 'I think that to imagine another system is to extend our participation in the present system.'[125]

In a little essay he wrote at the end of his life on the Kantian notion of 'Enlightenment', he concludes by advocating 'an attitude, an ethos, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them'.[126] An experiment on what basis in principle, though? And to what end? Again, the vagueness is deliberate – but without at least *some* consensual basis to appeal to it is hard to see how any real political organization worth the name would ever be possible. The apparent contradiction, from this point of view, between Foucault's Nietzschean theory and his political practice seems to me to be irresolvable.

Suppose, however, that he were to jettison his Nietzscheanism – what would he *lose*? He would of course lose a certain protection against any too close encounter with the detailed problems of theology. But (given his quite un-Nietzschean political commitments) I do not know what else. His archaeological/genealogical project does not in itself, in any way, necessarily *require* its Nietzschean absolutization. De-absolutized, it is by no means obvious that it would lose any of its real bite.

Reverting to the sort of theological terms which such a shift would,

once more, at least arguably, make available to us, one might thus, perhaps, describe the critical element in the Foucaultian analysis of 'the modes of objectification which transform human beings into subjects' as pertaining to the all-pervasive '*anonymous*' denial of Christ in the history of our culture. There being, so to speak, the three levels of denial: (1) outright denial in the form of unbelief; (2) the concealed denial, present in any sort of authoritarian distortion of the gospel – that is, no doubt (and here one may very well concur with a good deal of the Nietzschean polemic) at least to some degree, in virtually all actual Christian tradition itself; (3) anonymous denial, in this sense.

But, then, one might also say that what Hegelian christology provides, by virtue of its philosophic form, is just a uniquely appropriate conceptual means of articulating the implicit links between these three different levels.

CHAPTER 4

Hegel's political theology

To go back to the point where we began – to the plight of Sabina, in Milan Kundera's novel: her condition is that of one who is inwardly, in a double sense, an exile; in flight not only from the kitsch propagated by the ruling official orthodoxy in her homeland, but also, equally, from the opposing forms of political kitsch prevalent in her place of refuge. Her experience, thus, serves to highlight the underlying sameness – at a certain level – of the mass-psychological mechanisms at work, over four decades, on both sides of the Cold War.

In Europe, the Cold War split in half the traditional heartlands of Christendom.

In view of the fateful consequences of the split, in the twin phenomena of competitive neo-colonialism and the nuclear arms race, what is one to make, in particular therefore, of the historic failure of the churches, on both sides, to bear a more effective prophetic witness against it?

And how ought we to respond at a theological level; so that our thinking may be equal to the full depth of all the problems uncovered by that failure?

The argument up to now may have been somewhat roundabout; in the nature of the case, it has had to be. But this whole work springs from an original preoccupation with just these questions. If I have wanted to reconsider Hegel, it is because I think he has insights which can be of some real practical help in the search for answers here.

COMPARISON WITH CONTEMPORARY 'POLITICAL THEOLOGY': J. B. METZ

It is for instance very interesting, I think, to compare the Hegelian project with other, more recent forms of 'political theology' – such as that of *Johann Baptist Metz*. The comparison is interesting not least

because it is clear that, at one level, Metz stands very close to the basic Hegelian position. Metz's response to present realities is closely linked to a reflection on the catastrophe of the Nazi period, and on the historic failure of the German churches, as a whole, to rise to the challenge with which they were then confronted. What was it about the theology of those churches that led to, or that permitted, such a failure; a failure which in retrospect it is so painful to contemplate?[1] His diagnosis echoes the basic polemic on two fronts in which, as we have seen, Hegel was already involved with regard to the relationship between religion and politics.

On the one hand, he builds his theology on a criticism of the general 'privatization' of religion which he, like Hegel, sees as the overriding tendency of the 'bourgeois' (*bürgerliche*) culture arising out of the Enlightenment: the process by which 'religion became a private affair of the bourgeoisie'.[2] On the other hand, he also criticizes the merely reactionary or 'rigoristic' response to this, characteristic of so much of the official thinking of the Catholic Church, its dominant tone prior to Vatican II: the nostalgic authoritarianism of an institution on the retreat. Whatever limited justification there may be for either one of these two opposing attitudes derives solely from each one's character as a critical rejection of the other. But was it not, exactly, a combination of both which did the damage when the churches were put to the test in Germany in the 1930s? It surely was.

And are these not, as well, the most obvious components of the present problem? Again, they surely are. Not only in Germany, but throughout the traditional heartlands of Christendom – as these are of course by no means phenomena which are peculiar to the German tradition, but are more or less universal. (It is very far from clear whether any of the other national churches elsewhere in Europe would have fared all that much better – had they had to face the same circumstances – back in the 1930s, either.)

Already, right at the very beginning of the age of post-Enlightenment modernity, we find Hegel urgently exploring the possibilities of another, more radical, third alternative. In this sense he may certainly be seen as a pioneer – in the event, quite a lonely pioneer – of what we know today as 'political theology'. And any comparison between the Hegelian approach and that of a contemporary thinker like Metz has to begin from that original affinity.

Writing against the background of twentieth-century experience, it is true that Metz develops a number of new themes, which are either absent or at any rate much less prominent in Hegel.

(1) Metz's concern is in effect with what he sees as the *impoverishment* of religion.

He focusses on the way in which religious narrative functions as a medium of communal memory, bringing the otherwise dead data of the past, as it were, to life. Without such a medium, he wants to suggest, or where it has atrophied, we are lost. One has only to look at what happens under totalitarianism: 'It is not by chance that the destruction of memory is a typical measure of totalitarian rule. The enslavement of people begins when their memories of the past are taken away.' And so too, of course, under the more aggressive sorts of colonial regime.[3] Loss of 'community with the dead', however, is also a feature of bourgeois culture in general: insofar as the exchange principle becomes the dominant measure of value, no room is left for a relationship which *a priori* excludes exchange.[4] And then associated with this is the danger of what Metz terms the 'euthanasia of politics' – in any sense of the word 'politics', that is, which goes beyond mere issues of technocratic efficiency. 'Are we not witnessing', he asks, 'an increasing self-paralysis of political reason and its consequent degeneration into instrumental reason in the service of technological and economic processes and their anonymous "power-systems"?'[5] Such a culture would be religiously impoverished to a perilous degree.

But in order to challenge this corruption of bourgeois culture there is needed a genuine church '*of* the people'. One of the chief problems Metz has with both the 'pre-bourgeois paternalistic church' and the 'bourgeois supply – or services – church'[6] is that they so signally fail to play this vital role.

In the case of the latter, this is in large measure due to its theological inheritance from the highly elitist rationalism of the Enlightenment.[7] And what Metz is looking to help establish, therefore, is a theology which would be critical in quite a different sense:

> The critical interest of this theology... must always be governed by the conviction that the symbols, stories and collective memories of the people in the church are absolutely necessary to any theology that wishes to avoid losing all foundation. Its critical attitude, in other words, should not lead to direct criticism of the symbolic world of the people. It ought, on the

contrary, to lead to making the people more and more the subject of their own symbolic world.[8]

Thus, one might say, Metz's preoccupations resemble those of Hegel's earlier, pre-philosophic period far more than Hegel's later ambitions – although from a much more orthodox point of view than Hegel's in that period.

(2) Metz's critique of the privatizing tendencies of 'bourgeois religion' is at the same time closely tied in with a critique of modern 'evolutionary' ideology, which is indeed explicitly anti-Hegelian. He invokes Kierkegaard, for instance. He speaks of 'the history of triumph and conquest which is proclaimed in a concentrated form in Hegel's idea',[9] and he argues that this manner of thinking leads to a disastrous insensitivity to that other basic aspect of the historical, the history of human suffering:

> A Christian soteriology cannot be a casuistic cover-up for real suffering. The history of freedom remains much more and always a history of suffering. Pain, sorrow and melancholy remain. Above all, the silent suffering of the inconsolable pain of the past, the suffering of the dead continues, for the greater freedom of future generations does not justify past sufferings nor does it render them free. No improvement of the condition of freedom in the world is able to do justice to the dead or effect a transformation of the injustice and the non-sense of past suffering. Any emancipative history of freedom in which this whole history of suffering is suppressed or supposedly superseded is a truncated and abstract history of freedom whose progress is really a march into inhumanity.[10]

Over against such a 'march into inhumanity', with its cynical principle of *Vae victis*, Metz places at the very heart of Christian praxis a spirituality of, as he puts it, 'solidarity with the dead and those who have been overcome'.[11] What he is advocating is a 'political consciousness *ex memoria passionis*, political action in the memory of humanity's history of suffering'.[12]

It is in short a matter of giving the most definitive possible authority, in the shaping of our political thinking, to memories such as that of Auschwitz – and resisting any sort of hope, whatsoever, which would circumvent them. So, for Metz, the essential validity of Christian eschatology appears in its character as a fundamental antithesis (as he sees it) to the whole cast of mind represented by 'evolutionary logic'. And whereas this latter depends on an illusion of, so to speak, stepping outside of time, to gain a panoramic overview of it, the proper task of theology on the contrary is

constantly to be recalling us to the reality of our situation *within* time.[13]

These no doubt are quite significant correctives; highlighting undeniable areas of omission in the Hegelian scheme of things. And yet perhaps the contrast here could also be expressed another way.

What is the essential subject matter of 'political theology'? Let us say: it has to do with the gospel as a practical basis for the belonging-together of a community. Not just at the level of all speaking the same religious language, or all operating within a common framework of symbolism and ritual; but at a much deeper, and broader, level than that. This deeper level is constituted, partly, by a body of shared *experience*, underlying and coming to expression in the symbolism and ritual. And partly it is constituted by a set of shared *ethical standards*, a general consensus as to what is to be admired and what condemned, or how disagreements are to be managed and resolved. The contrast between Metz's approach to political theology and Hegel's seems to me, in fact, largely to correspond to that fundamental distinction.

Metz builds his political theology on the basis of a critique of the hindrances and distortions affecting the processes of experience-sharing, both in the contemporary church and in society as a whole. Hegel, on the other hand, is far more directly concerned with questions relating to the shared ethical standards (*die Sittlichkeit*) which would constitute rational community.

The problem in this latter case is that of distinguishing the essential ethical truth of the gospel, as decisively as possible, from the various additional inessentials with which it has tended to become encumbered in traditional Christian orthopraxy/orthodoxy. And we have seen how Hegel's christology is an attempt at that. Hegel, one might say, systematically confronts the intrinsic ambivalence of Christian tradition: its continual oscillation between freedom and kitsch. He does so by stepping right out, as a philosopher, on to the outermost *margins* of the tradition. The sharp disagreements among subsequent commentators as to exactly where he stands with regard to the basic issue of belief versus unbelief are not due simply to a regrettable inability on his part to make his position clear. Far rather, surely, he is confronting the inadvertent ambivalence of the tradition with an opposite and quite deliberate ambivalence of his own. Does the *Aufhebung* of Christian faith into philosophical form

signify an ultimate going beyond faith – or does it signify faith's fulfilment? It all depends, of course, on what one *really* means by faith. That is the key question, which Hegel's whole theological purpose is to keep as awkwardly alive as possible.

This is what Hegel has in common with someone like Heidegger, for example. In both cases we find a similar enterprise: both thinkers are continually circling around the domains of religious faith; both, however, are equally intent on forging their own altogether new idiom for the purpose – so as to come at things afresh. (The one vital difference, from the present point of view, is that Heidegger does not even begin to formulate a christology, or any effective equivalent to one. Heidegger's thought is a miracle of poetic ingenuity, working within, as a result, a very much narrower, more concentrated spiritual compass – with such fecundity. Yet what lies behind the absence here, Heidegger's reluctance to follow the liberal Hegelian path, which he in fact closes off, in a very different way from Kant or Spinoza, but just as effectively? Is it not, in the last analysis, because of his only half-sublimated participation in the reactionary *völkisch* ideology of his milieu?)

Metz's priorities, at any rate, are quite different. And it is clear that he does have considerable misgivings, in particular, about the implicit *elitism* he sees in any approach which would tend to set the inner substance of the gospel apart from its given form in church tradition. He does not directly criticize Hegel on this score. Compare, however, his critique of Karl Rahner – a theologian to whom he otherwise stands very close, but one who has also, in a number of ways, been influenced by Heidegger. Metz sets his own 'narrative and practical' programme for theology over against Rahner's 'transcendental and idealistic' approach; as evidenced, above all, by Rahner's theory of the possibility of 'anonymous Christianity' – or rather, perhaps, by the polemical prominence this idea attains in Rahner's thinking as a whole. (Metz is not seeking actually to contradict it outright.) 'Does the doctrine of transcendental faith that is at the basis of this theory', he asks, 'not bear too strongly the marks of an élitist idealistic gnoseology? The great mass of people are saved by virtue of the *fides implicita* and their attitude of *bona fides*. The real relationships [including the actual conditions for the possibility of what is here spoken of as anonymous "faith"] are known to the few who possess the "high gift of the wise"'[14] – and only to them.

If one is concerned about the implications of this type of emphasis

in Rahner's relatively conservative thought, then how much the more one must be in Hegel's! Nor, moreover – if one cares about the political efficacy of theology, its ability to communicate as widely as possible – can one deny the reality of the risk. It is obviously a risk inherent in more or less any criticism of popular religious kitsch, as such.

But, at the same time, that cannot mean that the problem of religious kitsch is therefore just to be passed over in silence. Absolutely not. For – to go back to the question, on what we are to base our response to the privatized religion of the mainstream bourgeoisie, or the usual false alternative offered by the various current forms of traditionalist 'Christian' authoritarianism? – there can, after all, be no doubt that both of these, to a very large extent, depend for their continued existence precisely on the appeal of such kitsch. That is what constitutes the main protective shield by which these sorts of attitude are insulated from the actual pressures of reality. And Hegel, in this sense, surely does go right to the deepest theological roots of the problem.

TRUE CITIZENSHIP: HEGEL AND ARENDT

Another very interesting comparison is with the political thinking of *Hannah Arendt*. Although by no means irreligious,[15] it is true that Arendt is very far from being a Christian thinker. And it is also true that she is, on the whole, far more concerned to emphasize her differences from Hegel than the points of convergence. Nevertheless, here too we have a great admirer of the lost *Sittlichkeit* of Greek antiquity; a thinker profoundly critical of the culture of modernity, on that basis. In fact, of all subsequent major political thinkers, Arendt is perhaps the one who stands closest to Hegel in this vital respect.

Arendt is at one with Hegel as well, for instance, in her fundamental critique of *Stoicism*: like Hegel, what most troubles her in Stoicism is its character as an inner withdrawal from worldly conflict. And, like him, she interprets its flourishing in the world of the Roman Empire primarily as a symptom of, and contribution to, that world's state of political decay.[16]

Over against the political experience of freedom in action, so vividly present in the heyday of the *polis*, she argues, Stoicism represents a flight from action: a flight from the intrinsic

unpredictability of its results, its riskiness, the individual's inability to control how others may respond. Dreaming of an otherwise unattainable self-sufficiency or 'sovereignty' as an individual – and mis-identifying freedom with such a state – the Stoic is driven in consequence, as she puts it, to 'exchange... the real world for an imaginary one': a purely interior one where, so to speak, 'those others would simply not exist'.[17]

Similarly, again, there are also distinct parallels to be traced between Arendt's critique of an anti-political *goodness*[18] and Hegel's attack on the anti-political Romantic ideal of the *Beautiful Soul*. Arendt differs from Hegel in that she associates this species of 'goodness', first and foremost, with the actual teaching of Jesus – and, although criticizing it, treats it with corresponding respect – whereas he, as we have seen, focusses on the all too easy descent of such an ideal into altogether more sterile forms of rigourism. But, still, the essential point in both cases remains very much the same. Arendt cites the saying in Matthew 6: 3. 'Do not let not your left hand know what your right hand is doing'; and takes this as extending, by implication, well beyond its original context of almsgiving. An undiscriminating adherence to such a principle would, it is clear, more or less disqualify one from any sort of active participation in political life; since that life (the beautiful ideal of the *polis*) is, by its very nature, a matter of public performance, public display. And she further refers here to Machiavelli (a thinker whom Hegel, incidentally, also held in considerable esteem): perhaps, she suggests, if this is what 'goodness' is to mean – if, that is to say, it is to mean my loving 'my own soul' more than 'my native city' – there really is a sense in which, as Machiavelli, speaking of princes, dared to put it, we too need to learn 'how not to be good'.[19] Namely: for the public good.

Arendt criticizes the attitudes which come to their simplest and most consistent expression in these two types of thinking, Stoicism and the cult of 'absolute goodness', because, like Hegel, she wants to celebrate just what they devalue. In order to illustrate this, in *On Revolution*, she takes the example of the American revolution: she highlights, in particular, the way in which the American revolutionaries spoke of their own political experience, as an enjoyment of what they termed 'public happiness';[20] her central concern might be defined as the celebration of the phenomenon of 'public happiness', in whatever form it takes.

But, at another level, the happiness in question here is surely also quite directly opposed to the *un*-happiness of the Unhappy Consciousness, in Hegel's analysis. For is not this exactly what the Unhappy Consciousness becomes, in relation to the political: the most basic of all mental obstacles to such enjoyment? Where Arendt speaks of 'public happiness' Hegel speaks, in his distinctive way, of 'the state' as 'the actuality of concrete freedom'.[21] He comes at matters from a very different angle. But the gist is not dissimilar.

For Arendt, admittedly, this then becomes the basis for a swingeing attack on the whole tradition of western political philosophy; a polemic for which one does not find any straight equivalent in Hegel. She rejects the designation of political 'philosophy' for her own thought, since 'political philosophy necessarily implies the attitude of the philosopher towards politics';[22] and that attitude is, she thinks, well captured, in caricature, by 'Pascal's splendidly impertinent remark' in the *Pensées*:

> We can only think of Plato and Aristotle in grand academic robes. They were honest men, and like others laughing with their friends, and when they wanted to divert themselves, they wrote the 'Laws' or the 'Politics', to amuse themselves. That part of their life was the least philosophic and the least serious... If they wrote on politics, it was as if laying down rules for a lunatic asylum; if they presented the appearance of speaking of a great matter, it was because they knew that the madmen, to whom they spoke, thought they were kings and emperors. They entered into their principles in order to make their madness as little harmful as possible.[23]

The description is, perhaps, less applicable to Aristotle than to Plato; but Plato's influence has from this point of view been the more dominant, and in fact, she argues, 'the greater part of political philosophy since Plato could easily be interpreted as various attempts to find theoretical foundations and practical ways for an escape from politics altogether.'[24] Christianity, in its other-worldliness, has helped compound the initial Platonic turn away from the 'public happiness' of the *polis*;[25] and modernity has only further confirmed it. As a result, political philosophy has taken on the role of adjunct, not to citizenly participation, but to *ruling*, the craftsmanlike vocation of Plato's philosopher-king – with politics being treated merely as a means of attaining something quite extrinsic to itself, some 'allegedly "higher"' end: 'in antiquity', that is, 'the protection of good men from the rule of the bad in general, and the safety of the philosopher in particular, in the Middle Ages the

salvation of souls, in the modern age the productivity and progress of society'.[26]

However, the difference here ought not to be exaggerated. For even though Hegel may be happier with the title of 'philosopher', he himself does not by any means conform to what Arendt envisages as the Platonic model.[27] And Arendt, too, whilst she celebrates political action, still does so very much as an outsider: as a thinker, personally, rather than as a doer. At a conference on her work in 1972, indeed, she went out of her way to emphasize the real affinity of her work to philosophy in the Hegelian mode:

> I can very well live without doing anything. But I cannot live without trying at least to understand whatever happens.
> And this is somehow the same sense in which you know it from Hegel, namely where I think the central role is reconciliation.[28]

(She also loved to quote Isak Dinesen: 'All sorrows can be borne if you put them into a story or tell a story about them.') In fact, this sort of detachment from immediate political goals and struggles is doubtless an absolute pre-requisite for doing justice to the *intrinsic* worth of political life, in general. 'I think I understood something of action precisely because I looked at it from the outside, more or less', she goes on. Which is surely, though, just what Hegel for his part, means by 'philosophy'.

A thinking which draws so deeply from memories of classical antiquity cannot easily be contained within any of the ordinary, given categories of modern politics. Hegel's philosophy plays a major role in the pre-history of socialism, but of course is not socialist. It is doubtful if he can properly be called a liberal – but even more doubtful whether he can be called a conservative, either. And so too with Arendt: the politics she celebrates are not the politics of any actual political party, or even of any potential one. They are not, in the first instance, party politics at all.[29]

Yet the urgency of what she has to say is also obvious. And if Hegel – belonging as he does to a world still innocent of the nightmares of totalitarianism – appears to that extent remote from us, it is nevertheless fascinating to observe the resurgence here of some of the most significant themes of his philosophy, in a thinking which springs directly out of painful reflection on those nightmares. Thus (like Metz) Arendt's advocacy of political life issues from her perception of the way in which, when the danger arises, the lack of a properly

participative existing political culture renders a society so much the more vulnerable to the totalitarian virus.

In this sense, her study of the Eichmann trial may be seen to play a crucial role in the underpinning of her broader arguments. The famous sub-title, 'A Report on the Banality of Evil', encapsulates the vigorous polemic she is conducting here against what is surely a universal tendency of the kitsch mentality: its impulse, namely, to push evil off into the distance by conceiving of it always in, on the contrary, demonic terms. Eichmann's 'banality' consists in his radical incapacity to think, to will, to judge for himself – and therefore also to act autonomously in any way.[30] Granted all the obvious differences in context and mode of expression, these are of course also the essential consequences of the Unhappy Consciousness. Eichmann was not, she contends, as the prosecutors in Jerusalem sought to portray him, demonic; he was just an exceptionally 'banal' individual:

> It was sheer thoughtlessness... that predisposed him to become one of the greatest criminals of that period... That such remoteness from reality and such thoughtlessness can wreak more havoc than all the evil instincts taken together which, perhaps, are inherent in man – that was, in fact, the lesson one could learn in Jerusalem.[31]

The Unhappy Consciousness is likewise not at all a demonic phenomenon, but purely banal; and in Hegelian terms Eichmann was, also, without any question among the 'unhappiest' of men. Just as the struggle against the Unhappy Consciousness is fundamental to Hegel, so, one might say, the struggle against 'banality' is to Arendt. To reject the distancing mechanisms of the kitsch mentality is not to deny the singularity of an Eichmann. Arendt does *not* want to speak of 'the Eichmann in each one of us'; she is even quite scornful of that sort of retreat into cloudy rhetorical abstraction. (Nor does she in any way seek to minimize the particular moral *responsibility* of Eichmann: as a prisoner in Jerusalem he may have been pathetic, as a young officer in Berlin he had no doubt cut a very different figure.) But, even so, if the lesson here is indeed to be learnt, one must recognize its application, as well, to all those features of other societies, one's own included, which tend to promote and give power to this sort of personality.

In a strongly political culture – that is, one in which individuals are positively encouraged, as independent citizens and not just as officials or party loyalists, to play an active personal part in public

affairs – nothing remains unquestioned. This kind of thoughtlessness, at any rate, is made impossible. Ours however is not such a culture, to any adequate degree.

Why not? Arendt's main attempts at a longer-term analysis of the particular weaknesses, in this respect, of modernity in general are to be found in *The Human Condition* and *On Revolution*. (Having in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* looked at the immediate historical predecessors, and sources, of actual totalitarian ideology, Nazism especially, in these works she thus moves on to consider some of the more fundamental pre-conditions for the possibility of its eventual rise to power.) And here, once more – at least in its essential substance, if not form or method – her argument may be seen as representing a decisive *radicalization* of Hegelian themes, in the mid-twentieth-century context. In particular, it may be seen as a radicalizing of the fundamental Hegelian opposition between the state proper and 'civil society' (*die bürgerliche Gesellschaft*).

The conceptual distinction here is in fact one of the most original features of the *Philosophy of Right*. And the very structure of that work, in which he leads up to his discussion of 'the state' by way of 'the family' first, and then 'civil society', reflects his overriding determination to relativize, and to transcend the reductionist view of the state, which would envisage it as nothing more, in effect, than the institutional framework of 'civil society'. 'Civil society' is the realm of the 'bourgeois' (*der Bürger*).[32] The term here functions in much the same way as we have already seen in the theology of Metz: it denotes, in the first instance, a species of attitude rather than a social class – although, of the three classes Hegel distinguishes in his day, 'the agricultural class', 'the business class' and 'the class of civil servants', he has no doubt that the second is the one most liable to be infected by it.[33] If the Hegelian ideal is the individual whose individuality is affirmed by the christologically grounded 'principle of subjectivity' but for whom that principle is also, in the fullest possible sense, identified with 'the interest of the universal', that is, the non-authoritarian, and therefore accommodating, wider political community,[34] the bourgeois in this sense is definable as the social product of a situation in which, on the contrary, 'universal and particular have fallen apart';[35] politically bonded to others (beyond immediate family) by economic self-interest, perhaps, but by little more.

A-political pietism is the most natural religious expression of the bourgeois attitude; the Beautiful Soul is, simply, its ultimate moral

refinement. 'Civil society' in other words is his designation in the *Philosophy of Right* for the whole broader sociological background to such phenomena.

From this point of view, one might say, the essential function of the state becomes reduced to ensuring that the trains can run on time. This is 'the state as *Verstand* envisages it'[36]; for which, so long as law and order is maintained, and property protected – by a good police force and by a judicious social welfare policy designed to alleviate the more dangerous extremes of poverty without too greatly injuring the rich[37] – all is well; and it does not really matter what opportunities are, or are not, offered for public-spirited citizenly participation. Hegel's own view of course is the exact opposite. Hence, his account of 'civil society' concludes with a consideration of those places or institutions in which, in practice, the mental transition from bourgeois to participative citizen tends most naturally to be made. These are what he terms 'corporations' (*Korporationen*): churches are one sort of corporation, as are charities; but mostly he appears to have such things as business or professional associations in mind; and he also places the various organs of local government on the same level.[38] He does not romanticize these sorts of body.[39] But they do constitute the most accessible places for people to come to acquire 'work of a public character over and above their private business';[40] and, as such, they actually play a quite pivotal role for him. The lack of a vigorous political life at this level, linking into the parliamentary politics of 'the Estates' in the closest possible way, amounts to a fundamental weakness in any state, for which no amount of resulting extra efficiency in a more centralized administration can compensate: this was his verdict on post-revolutionary France, for instance.[41] And it is clear that he would have had much the same basic criticism to make of most, if not all, twentieth-century states as well. He would unquestionably have deplored the way in which the modern mass media and the political parties tend to render politics today – little more than a spectator sport for the masses; with elections won or lost, for the most part, on the basis of an appeal to the most mercenary instincts; with policies 'marketed' by advertising agencies; with *glasnost* permitted and encouraged by the central authorities, if at all, only for the sake of greater economic efficiency. In Hegelian terms, all of this must surely represent a quite disastrous subjugation of the state to the values of 'civil society'.[42]

It seems to me that Arendt's argument in *The Human Condition* represents a very interesting variation on and independent develop-

ment of essentially the same basic line of polemic, against a different background. Thus, its underlying structure is determined by her three-fold phenomenological categorization of the elements of the *vita activa*: as 'labour', 'work' and 'action'.

To cite her own definitions:

Labor is the activity which corresponds to the biological process of the human body, whose spontaneous growth, metabolism, and eventual decay are bound to the vital necessities produced and fed into the life process by labor. The human condition of labor is life itself.

Work is the activity which corresponds to the unnaturalness of human existence, which is not imbedded in, and whose mortality is not compensated by, the species' ever-recurring life-cycle. Work provides an 'artificial' world of things, distinctly different from all natural surroundings. Within its borders each individual life is housed, while this world itself is meant to outlast and transcend them all. The human condition of work is worldliness.

Action, the only activity which goes on directly between men without the intermediary of things or matter, corresponds to the human condition of plurality, to the fact that men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world. While all aspects of the human condition are somehow related to politics, this plurality is specifically *the* condition – not only the *conditio sine qua non*, but the *conditio per quam* – of all political life.[43]

From the way she goes on to use it, it at once becomes clear that the basic of this categorization, in fact, to help articulate a systematic foundation for her own view of politics. The true citizen, from this point of view, is one whose whole attitude to existence is shaped by the ethos of political action. Set over against this ideal citizen, on the other hand, is the modern individual whose approach to politics is essentially determined by an ethos either of work – the value-system of *homo faber*; or of labour – the value-system of the *animal laborans*.

Arendt characterizes the early modern period as the period of 'the victory' (over the mediaeval ascendancy of the *vita contemplativa*) 'of *homo faber*'. The classical representative of this in the field of political philosophy, she suggests, is Thomas Hobbes. Actually, as we have seen, the spirit of *homo faber* is already dominant in the political thinking of Plato and, to some extent, Aristotle: Hobbes's attempt to found an 'art of man', a theoretical basis for the construction of the state as 'an artificial animal' or an 'automaton [an engine] that moves [itself] by springs and wheels as doth a watch' echoes Plato's view of the philosopher-king, who is also a craftsman; his modernity lies simply in the introspective empiricism of his method, his beginning from a theory of universal human nature in the raw.[44] The

characteristic ideal of *homo faber* is, in general, just to build a state with the maximum of stability and durability; a reliable bulwark against the chaos of nature.

Later on, however, she argues, we see the relative decline of *homo faber*, along with a corresponding rise of the *animal laborans* – and the classic political theorists here are, to some extent, Adam Smith and, still more, Karl Marx.[45] For even as Marx devotes all his energies to the struggle against the bourgeoisie as a class, he is still very far, in his theoretical understanding of that struggle, from transcending what Hegel, before him, had criticized as the 'bourgeois' instrumentalization of politics; and his notion of *praxis* is still poles apart from the Arendtian concept of action. Instead, in this regard his thinking simply reflects and furthers the increasingly dominant assumptions of the age. What Arendt is particularly concerned with in this connection is that aspect of Marx's thought which links him to such diverse other thinkers as Nietzsche and Bergson, or (although they are so much cruder) the Social Darwinists, for instance: that is, its 'life'-centredness: the way his whole theory therefore focusses on the state primarily in its integral relationship to the natural history of the species. Where the outlook of *homo faber* had reduced politics to the business of maintaining an orderly framework for civilization, that of the *animal laborans* reduces it, essentially, to a part in the maximization and administration of consumable wealth; the furtherance of the 'life' process, at that most basic level.

For examples of the opposing ethos of the citizen, she refers not only to Periclean Athens, but also to the Roman republic – which she judges much more favourably than Hegel;[46] the American Revolution;[47] the councils, *sociétés populaires*, soviets and *Räte* embodying the initial, and most creative moments of modern European revolutions – 1789–1792 and 1870–1871 in France, 1905 and 1917 in Russia, 1918–1919 in Berlin and Munich, 1956 in Hungary;[48] and more recent dissenting movements such as the American civil rights and anti-Vietnam war campaigns.[49]

As for Hegel's 'civil society', her term for this is just 'society' *tout court*. The difference in the historical background against which they are writing leads to a certain difference in emphasis. Whilst Hegel, reflecting on an earlier stage of capitalism, stresses the tensions between civil society and family life,[50] Arendt, reflecting on the welfare state or state socialism, stresses the continuities: 'the collective of families economically organized into the facsimile of one super-human family is what we call "society"'.[51]

But here too we have to do with the interplay of competing material interests. The politics of the free-spirited citizen, on the other hand, are an interplay of freely formed *opinions* – which is quite another matter. Indeed, for Arendt, the affairs of 'society' are not, in the strictest sense, 'political' at all: she wants to highlight the contrast here by reserving the term 'politics' only for what would have been recognized as such in the ancient *polis*; and in that world, she argues, 'the very term "political economy" would have been a contradiction in terms: whatever was "economic", related to the life of the individual and the survival of the species, was a non-political, household affair by definition.'[52] Of course, it is hard to think of anything on which one might have a political opinion which does not also, at some point, involve a conflict of interests. It is a basic question, though, of priorities: what one begins from, the way the cause is presented, how it is actually fought for. Interests are the property of groups or classes: 'Opinions, on the contrary, never belong to groups but exclusively to individuals, who "exert their reason coolly and freely", and no multitude, be it the multitude of a part or of the whole society, will ever be capable of forming an opinion.'[53] She praises ancient Athens as, in that specific sense, 'the most individualistic and least conformable body politic known to us'.[54] This sort of citizenly 'individualism' is of course the exact opposite to the modern phenomenon of bourgeois 'individualism'; for whereas the latter pertains first and foremost to the private realm, there, in ancient Athens, it was on the contrary the public realm which was 'reserved for individuality'.[55] And so she draws attention to 'the fact... that the Greeks always used such metaphors as flute-playing, dancing, healing and seafaring to distinguish political from other activities, that is, that they drew their analogies from those arts in which virtuosity of performance is decisive'.[56] But 'if, then', she goes on, 'we understand the political in the sense of the polis, its end or *raison d'être* would be to establish and keep in existence' – precisely – 'a space where freedom as virtuosity can appear':[57] virtuosity, that is, in the art of rational persuasion. With the modern subordination of the political to the social, it is just this which becomes endangered. It tends to be supplanted by a (from the point of view of the interested parties, more immediately effective) non-politics of covert intrigue, crassly manipulative propaganda, coercion.

Hegel would surely have sympathized with much if not all of this

argument. In Hegelian terms what Arendt is describing is a radical decay of the state. In fact, she also puts it that way herself – as, with ironical reference to Marx, she remarks that, after all, 'the withering away of the state' has not needed a revolution, but is underway everywhere anyway, inasmuch as it is dissolving into 'pure administration',[58] or that 'most social form of government', faceless bureaucracy.[59]

This may not have been a threat which he himself ever envisaged. And yet what, after all, could be further from the Hegelian ideal than Arendt's nightmare:

> the last stage of the laboring society, the society of jobholders, [which] demands of its members a sheer automatic functioning, as though individual life had actually been submerged in the over-all life process of the species and the only active decision still required of the individual were to let go, so to speak, to abandon his individuality, the still individually sensed pain and trouble of living, and acquiesce in a dazed, 'tranquilized', functional type of behaviour[60]

as, again, was already so clearly the case with Adolf Eichmann, that good bureaucrat who was just doing his job?

The comparison with Arendt is moreover, I think, particularly illuminating when one comes to consider the usual objections levelled against Hegel's argument in the *Philosophy of Right* from protagonists of, in contemporary terms, more 'orthodox' right- or left-wing positions.

Objections from the political right: the alleged danger of such a 'positive' *notion of freedom*

Isaiah Berlin in his seminal essay 'Two Concepts of Liberty' takes Hegelianism generally as a classic example of what he is warning against.[61] He does not discuss Hegel, or any other particular thinker, in detail. But he nevertheless ranks Hegel with Plato, Spinoza, Fichte, Marx, as one of the historically most significant exponents of the 'positive' view, identifying liberty with 'self-realization' or conformity to reason – as opposed to the 'negative' view, which would define it, rather, as the simple enjoyment of an 'area within which [one] can act unobstructed by others'. The original source of this actual terminological distinction appears to be the 'Hegeli-

anism' of T. H. Green; and the whole drift of Berlin's argument is, of course, to reverse Green's prioritization of the former over the latter.

The essential moral force of this argument clearly derives from the experience of totalitarianism: what troubles Berlin about the positive view is its all too easy corruptibility and incorporation into authoritarian ideology, where 'big brother' begins to lay claim to a privileged insight into what liberty *qua* rationality involves. What is interesting in this context about Arendt, however, is that here we have a thinker whose whole position arises precisely out of an anguished preoccupation with that experience – and yet for whom the implications are very different. For the doctrine of liberty Arendt ends up with is actually just as positive as Hegel's.

Not that the positive character of the Hegelian doctrine should by any means be exaggerated. Hegel truly is a long way removed from Fichte; just because of its christological underpinning, the Hegelian state does after all require quite a considerable degree of negative liberty, in practice.[62]

But, all the same, let us pursue the question: if one is looking for intellectual road blocks to set up against totalitarianism, is this distinction of Berlin's really the most effective strategy for the purpose? Compare Oakeshott's distinction between the 'civil association' and the 'enterprise association' models of the state. Fichte apart, the active protagonists of authoritarian ideology do not often present themselves *primarily* as champions of 'liberty', however redefined. All of them, though, have a good clear idea of the type of 'enterprise' they want the state to be; the more authoritarian, the clearer. And we have already noted Hegel's strict adherence to the opposite: the 'civil association' model.

Simple negative libertarianism, moreover, also has its own ambiguities. Being negative, it can scarcely be regarded as an end in itself. So how is it to be justified? If it is not to be justified (as in Hegel's case) on the basis of a prior positive notion of liberty – the attainment of which is seen to depend on the individual's being allowed sufficient moral space and independence – then it must be on some sort of prudential grounds.

Perhaps the prime systematic example of a strongly libertarian position developed in this way is provided by the work of F. A. Hayek. Thus, for Hayek the essential logical basis for liberty is human *ignorance*. 'If there were omniscient men', he argues, 'if we

could know not only all that affects the attainment of our present wishes but also our future wants and desires, there would be little case for liberty:'[63] everything could be rationally planned and organized from above. But so deep is our inevitable ignorance in actual fact, that the attempt rationally to plan and organize things from above is almost always more of a hindrance than a help to us. The more that is left to the free operation of market forces the more efficient the economy; in the long-term interest of all. The more tolerant a society, even of what might seem most abhorrent, the more creative it will tend to be intellectually and culturally. The less coercion the more progress in every way. Hayek counterposes to the illusions of 'rationalism' the wisdom of 'evolutionism'.[64] He argues for the absolute maximum of negative liberty compatible with the stable and effective rule of law, essentially as a means of maximizing society's 'evolutionary' potential.

Nothing, on the other hand, could more vividly illustrate the fundamental difference between the two species of 'individualism', the citizenly and the bourgeois, than this doctrine. Hayek presents himself as a radical 'individualist';[65] it is, though, the purest form of bourgeois individualism he stands for. So he distinguishes liberty in the negative sense he means from 'political freedom', that is, liberty as citizenly action – only to underline the complete separation he wants to make between the two.[66] His concern is not with 'political freedom', but with freedom *from* politics: 'the containment of power and the dethronement of politics'.[67] And, the way he reads history, the lesson to be learnt from the experience of totalitarianism is also just the same: the original sin of totalitarianism on this view, it seems – the source of all its innumerable other evils – is its attempted *total destruction of privacy*.[68]

Now, obviously there is a good deal of truth in this last point. It is also one of Arendt's basic complaints about modernity in general that, even at its most liberal, it has set in train a vast expansion of the 'social' realm which endangers privacy.[69] Nor does she (any more than Hegel) advocate that anyone's privacy be invaded by the state's imposing participation in its affairs as a compulsory duty: however much she for her part may identify liberty, in a positive sense, with citizenly action, she still wishes to uphold the possibility of freedom from politics, too, as 'one of the most important negative liberties we have enjoyed since the end of the ancient world'. (Such freedom, she goes on to argue, which was never given official

recognition in classical antiquity, remains 'politically perhaps the most relevant part of our Christian heritage'; and even if one would question the reductionist understanding of Christianity which this implies, the connection is very plausible.[70])

But after all, if one is looking for a response to the moral challenge posed by totalitarianism, can such a purely negative libertarianism as Hayek's ever really be sufficient in itself?

The problem is that, in a way, it seems to offer too easy an answer. Such an approach defines liberty in terms of the actions of others: those who might, but who do not oppress one. It does not consider it as a form of action on the part of the free individual him- or herself. Therefore, it does not raise the question of what is involved in an active *overcoming* of oppression. Or, at least, it does not make that question central. Granted, radical bourgeois individualism is as incompatible as anything can be with support for totalitarianism. But that is very far from being the same as a reliable promise of positive action for freedom; for such action, one surely does need the free-thinking, co-operatively organized, concerned citizen. And if that is true in the case of totalitarianism, how much the more so in the case of such other pressing contemporary issues as the desperate plight of the world's eco-system, or the global insanity of the arms race. A position like Hayek's may not, in principle, exclude a decisive response to these problems; but it can hardly be said to be all that rich in the type of spiritual resources needed to tackle them. They just do not belong to his area of concern.

Take, for example, the role our society allots to the functionaries of 'nuclear deterrence', at the very heart of our contemporary darkness: those, today, whose professional lives are spent planning nuclear war. Henry T. Nash, in his essay 'The Bureaucratization of Homicide', describes from first-hand experience how that system operates.[71] He worked for some years as an intelligence analyst for the Air Targets Division of the US Air Force. Reviewing his 'haunting memories' of this time, he asks:

What was it about work with Air Targets that made me insensitive to its homicidal implications? I and my colleagues, with whom I shared a large office, drank coffee and ate lunch, never experienced guilt or self-criticism. Our office behaviour was no different from that of men and women who might work for a bank or an insurance company. What enabled us calmly to plan to incinerate vast numbers of unknown human beings without any sense of moral revulsion? At least no signs of moral revulsion surfaced when

we were having an extra martini or two at lunch to celebrate the inclusion of some of our government control centres [his speciality] in a Joint Chiefs list of prime Soviet targets.[72]

His answer has partly, of course, to do with the ideology of the Cold War. Partly, it has to do with the way such work is organized. The 'complex vastness' of the Defense Department strongly inhibits any awareness of personal responsibility: one is part of a team, given a very specific task, in an extremely hierarchical set-up. The team provides a warm camaraderie; being given special security clearance represents 'a flattering experience sharpened by the quality of selectivity, not unlike the feeling accompanying acceptance by a fraternity or country club'. And everything is done to help distance the worker psychologically from the real meaning of his work: by the consistent use of hypothetical 'worst case scenarios', discussed always only at the most technical level and veiled in the most euphemistic possible terminology.

Are *these* people 'free'?

If Hegel were writing the *Phenomenology of Spirit* today, he might very well include the figure of the Pentagon bureaucrat in his portrait-gallery, as a most graphic illustration of the limits of negative liberty. For in the strict negative sense no doubt the answer is, to a very large extent, yes. No one forces them to do this work; they are free to leave the job if they want to; then they can even write about it, and criticize it as Nash does. They live in a society notable for the relatively high degree of negative liberty it allows; indeed, that of course is just what they are supposed to be defending. Yet this is, also, a completely bourgeois freedom.

At the end of his essay Nash refers to Arendt's book on Eichmann. True, the officials of the Third Reich never enjoyed anything like as much negative liberty; nevertheless, he suggests, the bureaucratic mechanisms in operation, designed to anaesthetize those involved in process, are disturbingly similar. And (I would want to ask) do we not need a political theory which has the capacity to address the similarities, as well as the differences?

Objections from the political left: political liberty as a phenomenon of the 'superstructure'

By comparison with the anti-socialism of a thinker like Hayek, socialism itself seems to stand in an altogether more ambivalent relationship to the Hegelian/Arendtian ideal: if, in some forms, it appears much closer in spirit, at the same time, in other forms, it can also represent a far more dangerous and extreme adversary. The issues emerge quite clearly from Marx's discussion of Hegel in his lengthy but unfinished early essay, probably of 1843, entitled 'Critique of Hegel's Doctrine of the State'.

In this work Marx develops his criticism of Hegel on two distinct levels: at the level of Hegel's interpretation of particular political institutions, and at the deeper level of his general methodological practice. He complains, at this second level, about the way in which Hegel 'subjectivizes the state in a mystical way'.[73] In the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel speaks of 'the idea' (of the true state) as an active principle which develops itself, 'sundering itself into the two ideal spheres of its concept, family and civil society',[74] giving space to the centrifugal forces dominant in those realms, only to draw them back into an expanded unity in the end. The problem with this, Marx argues, is that it produces a built-in tendency towards justifying the *status quo*: as he sees it, 'the whole point of the exercise is to create an *allegory*, to confer on some empirically existing thing or other the *significance* of the realized Idea'.[75]

This is, on the face of it, a somewhat curious argument. Hegel is not a revolutionary; he gives a number of empirical reasons why not (with the experience of the Jacobin Terror always in the background). One may consider that many of his particular judgements on political circumstances in his own day were over-conservative.[76] As regards its detailed institutional structure, the rational state he outlines in the *Philosophy of Right* was perhaps already quite a dated ideal by Marx's day – in particular, had he been writing twenty years later he might well have included a far greater degree of independent political representation for the burgeoning proletariat, over against their employers. But it is still very far from clear why this manner of speaking, in itself, should necessarily have the sort of effect which Marx attributes to it. For, after all, even though 'the Idea', as Hegel conceives it, presses towards fulfilment, it can also just as well be blocked and frustrated.

On the other hand, in speaking of the state in this way Hegel *does*

very firmly underline the essential orientation of his thinking towards a transcending of the, in his view, limited perspectives of family or civil society. And it is true, that is not what Marx wants at all. Where Hegel is preoccupied by the conflict between civil society, as a whole, and the state, Marx is preoccupied by the conflicts within civil society, and with affairs of state only as a reflection of those conflicts.

Marx seeks to justify his position by pointing to the *material* dependence of state life on the spheres of family and civil society. 'The political state cannot exist without the natural basis of the family and the artificial basis of civil society' – and yet in Hegel's thinking 'the condition is posited as the conditioned, the determinator as the determined, the producer as the product'.[77] This of course is because Hegel is talking about the *spiritual* dependence of family and civil society on the state – inasmuch as it is only by virtue of what they make possible in that broader context that the life of these spheres becomes fully meaningful.

So too, according to Marx, the 'real subject' of political theory is not 'the Idea' but 'man'.[78] 'The Idea', in Marx's thinking, becomes ideology: a phenomenon to be causally explained in terms of the relationship of 'political sentiment and political institutions' to 'family and civil sentiment, and family and social institutions'.[79] He borrows Feuerbach's formula here:[80] properly understood, 'the Idea' is thus not so much 'subject' as 'predicate'; and Hegel's essential error, he declares, is to have 'reversed' subject and predicate. In other words, he simply rules out any talk of 'the Idea' as an agency, rivalled by other more restricted interests, in the actual *formation* of our thinking.

When all is said and done, the prohibition appears quite arbitrary. For is not the rivalry Hegel has in mind real enough?

Switching now, however, from Hegelian to Arendtian terminology: the same basic contrast can also be expressed as the difference between two ways of talking about 'power'. A thinking which concentrates on the conflicts originating within (civil) society naturally conceives of 'power', or the goal of political struggle, as what one group has over another group or groups, or one individual over others. 'Power' as domination: this is a notion which the Marxist tradition holds in common with the classical liberalism of someone like Lord Acton, say; or, as we have seen, the Nietzscheanism of Foucault – to take just two notable examples. But a thinking which concentrates, instead, on the underlying conflict of

principle between (civil) society and the state, as two distinct entities, will by contrast conceive of 'power' as that which participative political consensus *generates*; and as that which is, conversely, diminished by an un-political social atomism. This is, implicitly, the Hegelian view; and explicitly the Arendtian.

Arendt in fact distinguishes carefully between a number of concepts that are often confused: power, strength, force, authority, violence.[81] Power, in her preferred sense of the word, is not the same as authority, because it rests not on unquestioning acquiescence but on persuasion.[82] She does not deny that such power can corrupt; for she acknowledges the potential destructiveness of what Nietzsche analysed as *ressentiment*, the power of the weak acting in concert against the strong, those more gifted by nature.[83] But it need not corrupt. And at the same time it is also the one thing that 'keeps the public realm, the potential space of appearance between acting and speaking men, in existence'.[84] It is, above all, incompatible with violence. Violence is, by definition, the foundation of tyranny, and she cites in particular Montesquieu on tyranny:

> Montesquieu realized that the outstanding characteristic of tyranny was that it rested on isolation – on the isolation of the tyrant from his subjects and the isolation of the subjects from each other through mutual fear and suspicion – and hence that tyranny was not one form of government among others but contradicted the essential human condition of plurality, the acting and speaking together, which is the condition of all forms of political organization. Tyranny prevents the development of power, not only in a particular segment of the public realm but in its entirety; it generates, in other words, impotence as naturally as other bodies politic generate power. This, in Montesquieu's interpretation, makes it necessary to assign it a special position in the theory of political bodies: it alone is unable to develop enough power to remain at all in the space of appearance, the public realm; on the contrary, it develops the germs of its own destruction the moment it comes into existence.[85]

Totalitarianism, on this account, is thus in essence a power vacuum. Nor is power by any means necessarily diminished by being divided; but 'the interplay of powers with their checks and balances is even liable to generate more power, so long, at least, as the interplay is alive and has not resulted in a stalemate'.[86] The ancient Greek *polis* maximized power, because 'it defined itself explicitly as a way of life that was based exclusively upon persuasion and not upon violence'.[87]

One of the fundamental problems with the sort of approach represented by Marx's critique of Hegel, one might say, is that it more or less precludes the development of a proper conceptual basis for exploring the contrast between true power, so defined, and violence. For in such thinking the difference is reduced to a tactical choice between alternative means in the struggle between competing social groups; its vital significance for the very possibility of maintaining a political domain over and above the mere administration of (civil) society disappears from view.

And what is also especially interesting in this connection is the way in which Arendt goes on to apply this analysis to the comparative study of revolutions. Marx himself is very far from glorifying violence in the manner of Sartre, Fanon or Sorel; as she emphasizes.[88] Nevertheless, the whole drift of his thinking leads him simply to accept its inevitability in the revolutionary situation. 'Violence', he remarks, 'is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one';[89] for him, that is just the way things are. For Arendt, however, everything depends on clearly distinguishing those particular elements in revolutions which have led to violence from the countervailing elements, also present in them, of authentically 'political' creativity: the spontaneous 'reemergence', there, 'of real politics, as in antiquity'.[90]

Hence, her argument in *On Revolution* centres on the contrast between the French Revolution and the American. 'The men of the French Revolution, not knowing how to distinguish between violence and power, and convinced that all power must come from the people, opened the political realm to this pre-political, natural force of the multitude and they were swept away by it, as the king and the old powers had been swept away before';[91] the American revolutionaries had a much clearer understanding of power, and made no such mistake. 'The singular good fortune of the American Revolution is undeniable. It occurred in a country which knew nothing of the predicament of mass poverty and among a people who had a widespread experience with self-government.'[92] Given the very different social background out of which it arose, the violence of the French Revolution was after all only too natural, 'although the whole record of past revolutions demonstrates beyond doubt that every attempt to solve the social question with political means leads into terror, and that it is terror which sends revolutions to their doom, it can hardly be denied that to avoid this fatal mistake is

almost impossible when a revolution breaks out under conditions of mass poverty'.[93] She borrows the terms, 'the social question', from Robespierre's cry – 'La République? La Monarchie? Je ne connais que la question sociale'.[94] And citing Robespierre again, on the ocean-like character of the nation, she comments: 'it was indeed the ocean of misery and the ocean-like sentiments it aroused that combined to drown the foundations of freedom'.[95]

Where the Americans founded freedom on the strictly 'political' basis of the Rights of Man, the Jacobins transformed the Rights of Man into the rights of the Sans-Culottes;[96] and on that 'social' basis could only destroy freedom. 'It is as though the American Revolution was achieved in a kind of ivory tower into which the fearful spectacle of human misery, the haunting voices of abject poverty, never penetrated', she remarks.

> Since there were no sufferings around them that could have aroused their passions, no overwhelming urgent needs that would have tempted them to submit to necessity, no pity to lead them astray from reason, the men of the American Revolution remained men of action from beginning to end, from the Declaration of Independence to the framing of the Constitution. Their sound realism was never put to the test of compassion, their common sense was never exposed to the absurd hope that man, whom Christianity had held to be sinful and corrupt in his nature, might still be revealed to be an angel.[97]

The advantages of the American Revolution were of course – like the freedom of the *polis* – largely dependent on the institution of slavery; prior to the rise of modern technology, she concedes, it was seemingly an 'old and terrible truth that only violence and rule over others could make some men free'.[98] It was only by not confronting that prior violence that the American Revolution could proceed with such a minimum of violence itself. And yet, she argues, it is nevertheless a real misfortune that the French Revolution should have had so great a continuing influence, the American Revolution so little; that the 'professional revolutionists' of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries should always have conceived of their task on the model of the former rather than of the latter. The subsequent revolutions, when they came, were never in the first instance the work of the professional revolutionists. They were spontaneous outbreaks; and precisely in that spontaneity, in fact, contained a far richer creative potential than the professional revolutionists – whom they 'liberated... from jail, or from the coffee house, or from the library', and who came hurrying home to take control – were ever

theoretically equipped to appreciate.[99] The councils, *sociétés populaires*, *soviets* and *Räte* which in each case immediately sprang up constitute, in themselves, for Arendt, the real 'lost treasure' of the revolutionary tradition.[100] A *lost* treasure, because one which the already organized parties of the professional revolutionists never properly recognized. Those parties, both the Marxist and the non-Marxist alike, obsessed as they were with the 'social question' and resigned as they were to the inevitably of violence, were never so much concerned to foster these bodies for their own sake, as to seize control of them, and exploit them. 'The councils everywhere', she contends, 'in contradistinction to the revolutionary parties, were infinitely more interested in the political than in the social aspect of revolution.'[101] Rapidly federating together, they could have become a lasting system of government, highly participative and non-violent;[102] something not dissimilar to the 'ward' system so vigorously advocated by Thomas Jefferson in his later years, as the true fulfilment of the American revolutionary ideal.[103] But the great sadness is that, even in the grossly mis-named Soviet Union, they were never given the chance. No approach to politics grounded in the orthodox Marxist view of the state could allow them the necessary space.

Doubtless Jürgen Habermas is right, up to a point:[104] a comprehensive theory of power would, in the end, have to include *both* aspects. To focus, the way Arendt does, on 'the communicative engendering of power' cannot be sufficient on its own. Even if one accepts the essential validity of her argument so far as it goes, that does not mean there is nothing more to be said about power as an object of 'strategic competition' – or, therefore, about 'ideology' or 'structural violence'. To think in such terms need not, after all, automatically commit one to the sort of sheer instrumentalizing of politics one finds in Marx.[105]

Yet her analysis remains, at any rate, one very vivid illustration of how the basic Hegelian distinction between the state and civil society might be further developed, and adapted, in response to the later nineteenth- and twentieth-century experience of revolution.

ARENDT CONTRA HEGEL, HEGEL CONTRA ARENDT

Like all the other thinkers we have considered, Arendt does have a very different set of historiographical priorities from Hegel. Where Hegel is aiming always, above all, at a 'world-historical' compre-

hensiveness of vision, her focus is much sharper: what she is seeking is, very largely, to escape that false wisdom of hindsight which would obscure the inherent 'miraculousness' and unpredictability of authentic action.

There is a real tension here; one which Arendt, moreover, tends to exaggerate somewhat by caricaturing the Hegelian position. This is particularly the case, for example, in the 'Postcriptum' at the end of volume I of *The Life of the Mind*, where she professes to take sides with Kant. She presents us in this passage with just two elementary alternatives: 'we either can say with Hegel: *Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht*, leaving the ultimate judgment to Success, or we can maintain with Kant the autonomy of the minds of men and their possible independence of things as they are or as they have come into being'.[106] Such a way of putting it is, surely, highly misleading. The phrase, '*Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht*' (world history is the world's court of judgment') actually derives from a poem by Schiller. Hegel quotes and adapts it, more or less in passing.[107] What, though, is he saying? Nothing much more than that his interest in world history is a philosophical one, rather than one of simple neutral curiosity. Does it mean 'leaving the ultimate judgment to Success'? The history Hegel has in mind is a history of Spirit; the only sort of success that counts, therefore, is spiritual success, that is, the success of being found worthy of remembrance as an authentic advancement of some aspect of truth, of 'the Idea'. There can certainly be no question of affirming the altogether unspiritual success of a successful tyranny, for instance, or of reinforcing just any dominant ideology; for that of course would be a sheer surrender to the Unhappy Consciousness. And when it comes to the often complex business of disentangling the spiritual from the unspiritual we are at once thrown back, precisely, on to 'the autonomy of the minds of men and their possible independence of things as they are or as they have come into being'. Not quite in the same way as Kant, to be sure. But then – as we have seen – that is another issue.

Elsewhere, she develops a more considered critique. As with Voegelin and so many others besides, Arendt is very much one of those who come to Hegel by way of Marx (and Kojève); her basic objections to a philosophical focus on world history as a whole evidently derive from her perception of the practical mischief resulting from the world-historical ideological pretensions of Marxism.

By its very nature all thinking requires at least a certain measure of detachment from action, the operation of the will. So how is one to reconcile the rival claims of thinking and willing? *The Life of the Mind* is systematically constructed around this question; and Arendt acknowledges that 'no philosopher has described the willing ego in its clash with the thinking ego with greater sympathy, insight, and consequence for the history of thought than Hegel'.[108] This is how she sees the Hegelian philosophy of history: as a grandiose attempt to reconcile the future-orientedness of willing with the eternal present of pure thinking.[109] In the end, though, the attempt fails – and at this point her argument overlaps with Kierkegaard's and with Metz's; crudely speaking, the attempt fails because, in the last analysis, it still remains over-balanced in favour of thinking. It falls prey to the basic 'fallacy' of 'describing and understanding the whole realm of human action, not in terms of the actor and the agent, but from the standpoint of the *spectator* who watches a spectacle'.[110] The more detached the spectator, the more everything appears as if moved by necessity.

The problem here lies in the all too easy complicity of such a purely contemplative standpoint with the brutal self-assurance of political fatalism, with the sort of activism that poses as an instrument of inexorable destiny. This is Arendt's most fundamental objection to Hegel.[111]

There are, as well, a number of other more immediately practical points of difference between them. In particular, they do have very different approaches to the question of the ideal political constitution.

Thus: Arendt's admiration for the American Revolution also extends to the republicanism of the constitution it established; and what she values above all as 'perhaps the greatest American innovation in politics as such', again sharply differentiating the American from the French revolutionary tradition, is 'the consistent *abolition of sovereignty* within the body politic of the republic'.[112] She cites for instance Justice James Wilson's remark in 1793: 'to the constitution of the United States the term sovereignty is totally unknown'.[113] (The disastrous error of the French Revolution being that it did not so much abolish sovereignty as transfer it in theory from the king to 'the people', thereby legitimating the replacement of absolute monarchy by a no less absolute despotism exercised in the name of 'the people', or 'the general will'.[114]) Hegel on the contrary, on the basis of what little he seems to have known about

it, rejects the post-revolutionary United States of his day as an essentially bourgeois culture; a society without a 'real state' because, with its lack of any serious threat from hostile neighbours and with the ever-present possibility of emigration westwards to ease all economic problems, it did not *need* one.

A comparison of the United States of North America with European lands is therefore impossible; for in Europe such a natural outlet for population, notwithstanding all the emigrations that take place, does not exist. Had the woods of Germany been in existence, the French Revolution would not have occurred. North America will be comparable with Europe only after the immeasurable space which that country presents to its inhabitants shall have been occupied, and the members of the political body shall have begun to be pressed back on each other.[115]

He insists on the organic nature of the true state. And, as a political organism needs a head, he therefore argues for a system in which there is the clearest possible vesting of absolute sovereignty in the representative person of a constitutional monarch.

On the other hand, the actual role he envisages for this monarch is 'only to say "yes" and dot the "i"'.[116] The Hegelian state, like the American, is all checks and balances; even if he is just as anxious as Arendt that this should not be seen in anti-political terms, the way 'abstract *Verstand* handles it', as a structure of mere 'mutual restriction'.[117] Hegel's monarch is there, in the end, just to ensure that the division of powers never results in sheer deadlock. As regards the state's internal functioning the practical differences are thus, perhaps, not so very great after all.

The real point at issue, it would appear, has much more to do with foreign affairs. For what Arendt is responding to is the challenge posed to the traditional European ideal of the sovereign state – *by the new realities of modern warfare.* She is concerned with the theoretical requirements for a new, more viable international order, which might be better able to cope with the consequences of the new technology of mass destruction; and she sees this as being, in the long run, only attainable by way of a general abandoning of that ideal.[118] Alas, twentieth-century America has come to behave pretty much like any other 'sovereign' state, only now on the scale of a superpower. Nevertheless, America's revolutionary past does at least provide a glimpse of the sort of federative arrangements it would be necessary to develop and extend world-wide.

The newly problematic nature of war and peace is also, obviously, one of the main factors behind Arendt's affirmation of *civil disobedience* – which constitutes another major contrast.

Hegel had no experience of any equivalent to the twentieth-century practice of civil disobedience. He takes a very dim view of the refusal of military service by Quakers and Anabaptists; although in the *Philosophy of Right* he argues that a strong state ought to tolerate it.[119] Arendt, however, is anxious to stress the gulf that separates conscientious objection of that sort – so far as it goes, a quite un-political phenomenon – from the modern use of civil disobedience as a species of political action *in extremis*. The former is an affair of private individuals as such, intent on the salvation of their own souls, or, like Socrates or Thoreau, seeking to preserve their own personal integrity in self-chosen isolation from the wider political community.[120] The latter is a citizenly enterprise, forming part of a whole calculated strategy of public consciousness-raising in relation to specific issues of current concern. And it is this latter that Arendt affirms (she wants representatives of civil disobedience campaigns to be accorded the official status of registered lobbyists in Washington, for instance).[121]

The intolerable advance of military technology, coupled with our ever-increasing global economic and ecological inter-dependence, creates the need; the rapid progress of communications technology creates the opportunity. As a result there is now emerging a phenomenon which the framework of the *Philosophy of Right* cannot contain: namely, a living and durable international political counter-culture of radical yet non-violent opposition, everywhere, to the *status quo*, precisely on internationalist grounds.

In Hegel's Prussia the only sort of radical political counter-culture in existence was the pan-German nationalism of the *Burschenschaften* and the Wartburg Festival, as represented by Fries – sentimental, anti-semitic, full of latent violence, pure kitsch. Internationalism might be espoused by a philosopher like Kant, in the shape of utopian proposals for 'perpetual peace'; but there was no actual forum, whether formal or informal, in which such ideas could ever be worked through, or given any practical impetus. The kind of free-spirited *Sittlichkeit* Hegel was interested in was indeed only conceivable within the confines of the sovereign state. Given the lack of effective scope for trying to do away with war, there was nothing for a realistic philosophy to do except attempt to comprehend it, as

the inescapable fact of life it was.[122] Now, none of this any longer applies. And (for all the horror of the attendant circumstances) from the standpoint of a liberative philosophical christology such a development must, moreover, in itself surely be welcomed.[123]

'The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk.' As with Hegel's philosophy of history, in short, so too with the *Philosophy of Right*: what remains alive here, now that night has finally fallen on his world, is the underlying project, its critical first principles – bound up as these are, above all, with his christology. What would a state look like, which might be practically realizable here and now, but which does not in any way depend on the exploitation of the Unhappy Consciousness in order to maintain its authority? That is to say: a state which recognizes the presence of God in each and every individual and, to the greatest possible extent, embodies and seeks to guarantee that recognition in its laws and institutions? The twentieth century has obviously transformed the context of the question: both by the new forms of tyranny it has made possible, and by the new forms of cultural pluralism. (Again, one might also refer to the feminist movement in this latter connection.) We have learnt new things. As an attempt always to stay with the changing realities of history, the Hegelian argument here thus necessarily points beyond itself. And at this level, therefore, I think there is every reason to prefer the Arendtian position.

Yet, in Arendt's thinking politics and theology are still held rigidly apart. That is what seems to me, in the end, most seriously questionable about it.

Hence her particular sympathetic interest in republican Rome, for instance;[124] for here we have a model of political culture in which theology plays only the most formal or marginal of roles. As in the case of Israel, the political life of Rome was based not so much on cosmological speculation as on an historical foundation myth. But it is a foundation myth without any serious equivalent to Israel's God. Arendt views Roman antiquity through the eyes of the French and American revolutionaries, who referred back to it continually as a basic source of political wisdom. The major focus in her discussion is on what the two models of Israel and Rome, or the Pentateuch and the Aeneid, have in common: 'the astounding fact that both legends... hold that in the case of foundation – the supreme act in which the "We" is constituted as an identifiable entity – the

inspiring principle of action is love of freedom, and this both in the negative sense of liberation from oppression and in the positive sense of the establishment of Freedom as a stable, tangible reality'.[125] However, as she also remarks, it was the example of Rome, not that of Israel, which was the major influence on the revolutionaries. They may have found it necessary to invoke the authority of (to use John Adams' phrase) 'the great Legislator of the Universe', as an ultimate undergirding for their own work of legislation; but as men of the Enlightenment they no longer had any real use for the God of Israel. So too, at a more abstract level, she contrasts the political self-understanding of the early Puritan colonists in America – centred as this was on the Old Testament notion of the covenant of Israel, a covenant between the human community and its God – with the very different, because non-theological, concept of the 'social contract'.[126] The latter she insists is, in itself, a deeply ambiguous concept, inasmuch as everything depends on whether the contract is envisaged as being concluded between a people and its ruler (the Hobbesian sense which she rejects), or between all the individual citizens considered as equals.[127] She very much admires the achievement of the early American colonists as an actual experience of the forming of a social contract in this second sense – which their theologically formed self-understanding, on the other hand, served only to obscure.

Hegel, in this respect, remains far more 'Greek'. In his thinking, as we have seen, ancient Greece and ancient Rome are consistently opposed: Greece symbolizing the possibility of a culture in which everything, politics included, is bound together into a single vibrantly religious whole; and the relative lifelessness of Roman religion being a decisive indication of that culture's comparative spiritual decadence, in general.[128] He also emphatically rejects the concept of the social contract, in any form. He does so precisely because of its secularizing implications, because of the way he sees the dissociation of politics from religious tradition here mirroring a fundamental loss of concern for the underlying spiritual coherence of the state. The version of social contract doctrine he has most in mind is that of Rousseau; and its essential untruth is revealed for him above all by its adaptability, via Rousseau, into the fatal ideology of Jacobinism.[129]

Arendt closes off the path towards political theology in what is surely a very arbitrary fashion – in the first place, by the quite anti-

political significance she attributes to Jesus in *The Human Condition*, as a representative embodiment of 'absolute goodness'. Her account of this is extremely sketchy, a type of Rousseauesque or Dostoyevskyan imaginative construct. She quotes – out of context – 'Do not let not your left hand know what your right hand is doing'; she ignores 'You are light for all the world. A town that stands on a hill cannot be hidden' etc.; neither, for example, does she consider the prophetic resonances of the driving of the merchants and money-changers out of the temple. It is of course true that the gospel lacks any great positive model for concerted political action. The fate of Jesus, one might say, only goes to show how limited the scope for such action actually was in first-century Palestine: he ran so quickly up against the limits. But is not that, in itself, a vital part of the *negative* symbolism of the cross? (Whereas, on her interpretation it is hard to see why, in reality, the crucifixion should ever have taken place at all.)

And then, secondly, she also retreats into a radical form of Kantian agnosticism. Kant, she remarks, 'stated defensively that he had "found it necessary to deny *knowledge*... to make room for *faith*", but he had not made room for faith; he had made room for thought, and he had not "denied knowledge" but separated knowledge from thinking'.[130] She does not want to venture, in any positive sense, into theology even as far as Kant does. Yet she takes her stand very firmly on the basic Kantian dualism of *Verstand/Vernunft* – which she expands in terms of 'knowledge' versus 'meaning' or 'opinion'. She too wants first and foremost, in this context, to 'make room for' thinking: that is, to safeguard the pursuit of meaning, the proper domain of opinion – where it is each individual for him- or herself – from what she regards as misplaced truth-claims, the despotism of tradition.[131]

In her view, Kant's thought represents an absolute watershed in the history of philosophy. He is the true inaugurator of philosophical modernity; Hegel, by contrast, was 'for us the last ancient philosopher', by virtue of having been the last to have managed to 'sneak past' the Kantian challenge, ignoring the Kantian boundaries.[132] 'Sneak past' is certainly a curious way of putting it, in view of the reams Hegel actually wrote on Kant! But Arendt nowhere seriously considers Hegel's critique of Kant.

In one place in *The Life of the Mind* she criticizes Hegel for what she speaks of as his all too urgent desire to be 'at home' in the world.

She cites Nietzsche: 'German philosophy as a whole... is the most fundamental form of... homesickness there has ever been: the longing for the best that has ever existed. One is no longer at home anywhere; at last one longs for that place in which alone one can be at home: the *Greek* world! But it is in precisely that direction that all bridges are broken – except the rainbow-bridges of concepts.'[133] Nietzsche in fact includes Kant among the 'homesick'; but, she suggests, this is *especially* true of Hegel (although she also speaks of Nietzsche himself, and Heidegger, taking the same path). Yearning to be at home in the world, as the first founders of philosophy had supposedly been, he set about building a 'ghostly home' for himself, of 'personified concepts', supposedly active in and making sense of world history. Arendt, however, stoutly rejects any such approach: 'I did not want to cross the "rainbow-bridge of concept"', she writes, 'perhaps because I am not homesick enough, in any event because I do not believe in a world, be it a past world or a future world, in which man's mind, equipped for withdrawing from the world of appearances, could or should ever be comfortably at home.'[134]

What, though (beneath the colourful rhetoric), does this really amount to in practice? Again, I doubt whether it is fair to say that Hegel ever expected to be *comfortably* at home in the world. But, yes, of course, he *does* want to find his place – a spiritual home of some sort, however uncomfortable – alongside others, in a living community of faith. That is, a community bound together by a common traditional vision of salvation history. He wants this precisely because of his sense of the proper *political* vocation of philosophy: that it should issue in a deeper exploration of that salvation history.

Arendt, like Kant, is depriving herself of this, quite *a priori*. One might perhaps define the central concern of Hegel's philosophy of religion as being with the pre-political preconditions of freedom. And, in a sense, that is also the essential subject matter of Arendt's *The Life of the Mind*. Yet she has so constructed her argument in these two volumes as more or less completely to exclude any sort of properly theological issue, as such, from ever arising. And how, after all, can that be anything but a regrettable gap?

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

'TO LIVE WITHIN THE TRUTH ...'

Kundera's Sabina is an intellectual and an artist. Vàclav Havel, in his well known *samizdat* essay of 1979, 'The Power of the Powerless', considers the case of a somewhat more mundane individual in Communist Czechoslovakia: the manager of a fruit and vegetable shop.

This man places in his window, among the onions and carrots, a poster bearing the slogan, 'Workers of the World, Unite!' 'Why does he do it?' Havel asks.

> What is he trying to communicate to the world? Is he genuinely enthusiastic about the idea of unity among the workers of the world? Is his enthusiasm so great that he feels an irresistible impulse to acquaint the public with his ideals? Has he really given more than a moment's thought to how such a unification might occur and what it would mean?
>
> I think it can safely be assumed that the overwhelming majority of shopkeepers never think about the slogans they put in their windows, nor do they use them to express their real opinions. That poster was delivered to our greengrocer from the enterprise headquarters along with the onions and carrots. He put them all into the window simply because it has been done that way for years, because everyone does it, and because that is the way it has to be. If he were to refuse, there could be trouble. He could be reproached for not having the proper 'decoration' in his window; someone might even accuse him of disloyalty.[1]

(After all, as Miroslav Kusy remarks, 'The greengrocer who refused to display the assigned slogan, or who replaced it with a more relevant one, such as "Workers of the world, Eat Vegetables!" or "Vegetarians of the World, Unite!", might have stood a chance of increasing his turnover, were he not prevented from doing so by

immediate dismissal for loss of confidence according to Section 53, paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Labour Code.'[2])

The effective semantic content of the slogan here, Havel suggests, is thus: '"I, the greengrocer XY, live here and I know what I must do. I behave in the manner expected of me. I can be depended upon and am beyond reproach. I am obedient and therefore I have the right to be left in peace"'. Or, at another level: '"I am afraid and therefore unquestioningly obedient."'

However, he would be ashamed openly to say just that. And the system therefore provides him with a way of saying it in code, more or less unconsciously, without losing his self-respect, and without thinking. It provides him with an ideology, the essential function of which is that 'it offers human beings the illusion of an identity, of dignity, and of morality while making it easier for them to *part* with them'. By virtue of its character as 'the repository of something "supra-personal" and objective', such ideology 'enables people to deceive their conscience and conceal their true position and their inglorious *modus vivendi*, both from the world and from themselves'. In the process every aspect of reality is mystified:

> Individuals need not believe all these mystifications, but they must behave as though they did, or they must at least tolerate them in silence, or get along well with those who work with them. For this reason, however, they must *live within a lie*. They need not accept the lie. It is enough for them to have accepted their life with it and in it. For by this very fact, individuals confirm the system, fulfil the system, make the system, *are* the system.[3]

A movement like Charter 77, in this context, simply played the role of the child in the story of the Emperor's new clothes.

In the liberal West with its free market economy, on the other hand – which Czechoslovakia and the other countries of central Europe are now rejoining – we have long had a plurality of competing lies. Just because they cannot establish themselves on anything like the same basis of outright fear, these lies have to be a good deal better packaged and marketed. The kitsch needs to be a good deal more sophisticated, in method.

Deep down, it is clear that, underlying all the various particular crises facing both East and West, there is one fundamental issue which is common to both: Havel for instance quotes Heidegger's formulation – 'the ineptitude of humanity face to face with the planetary power of technology'. He takes his stand with those who argue that, for us to come to terms with this new power, nothing less

than an 'existential revolution' is now required; in other words, 'that a solution cannot be sought in some technological sleight of hand, that is, in some external proposal for change, or in a revolution that is merely philosophical, merely social, merely technological or even merely political', but only one that incorporates all of these together. He is looking, in this essay, for much more than just an import (or, in the Czech case, a revival) of Western liberalism. In fact the experience of subjection to what he terms a 'post-totalitarian' system – deprived as one is there of any normal political life – does at least, he suggests, have this 'positive aspect': it does help drive one's thinking straight down to that deeper level. Whereas 'the more room there is in the western democracies (compared to our world) for the genuine aims of life, the better the crisis is hidden from people and the more deeply do they become immersed in it'; the easier it is for them to be complacent, or distracted.[4]

Perhaps, analogously, it was no accident that the New Testament revelation itself emerged from within the culture of a subjugated and oppressed people; in, as Hegel argued, a morally more or less bankrupt empire. Perhaps the same point applies in both cases.

Be that as it may, let us at any rate take up – theological terms – the basic question which Havel's essay poses. If this is what it means for a whole culture to be 'living within a lie', what would the opposite look like: namely, a whole culture 'living within the truth'? And what would *a church* look like – the entire spiritual life of which was oriented towards the pursuit of that ideal? Or more specifically, for example: what would a church *have* looked like – which was truly equal to the challenge inherent in the political transformation of Europe, the new situation for which Havel's own election as president of his country stands as such a vivid and poignant symbol?

In the first place, such a church would surely be ecumenical, in a radical sense: with a commitment to solidarity on the basis of 'living within the truth' over and above the bonds of actual church membership – to a decisive extent, indeed, *superseding* those bonds as the proper matrix for theology.

In response to the unprecedented traumas of the twentieth century there has, it seems to me, quite recently begun to emerge, as never before, a real movement in this direction. I have in mind here not so much the more institutional 'faith and order' species of ecumenism, but rather the broader movement centred on issues of 'justice, peace and the integrity of creation'. I am thinking, in

particular, of some of the less 'official', grassroots elements of the 'conciliar process' initiated by the Vancouver Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1983;[5] or, in European terms, for instance, the sort of groups whose work might most creatively feed into the processes of the new 'Helsinki' European Citizens' Assembly in Prague. Where 'faith and order' ecumenism has directly to do with the resolution of the traditional quarrels between the various denominations, here by contrast the divisions are *aufgehoben*, by being transposed into another context – a much more worldly one.

How, though, are we to go on to articulate this alternative basis for solidarity, theoretically? It requires, on the one hand, a *political* theology: to build a church responsive to the God-given dignity of political life, where this is considered as a good in itself; and responsive to the fragility of that good – crying out as it does for participative support from every possible quarter. But not only that. In Latin America it may be different; but in Europe at least, given that we no longer live in the relative uniformity of Christendom, but in a collection of mostly quite secular, and often quite multi-cultural societies, it surely does also require a *philosophical* theology. For only so do we have a real basis for listening – in an open way and in a spirit of genuine equality – to voices of truth from outside the church.

One might very well, therefore, regard Hegel as being a leading pioneer here. He is never, to say the least, likely to become popular reading. His thinking, in many ways, reflects quite a distant by-gone age. And yet – maybe it is only now that the philosophic cocoon of that thinking (the 'sanctuary' to which he refers at the end of the 1821 lectures on religion) is, at long last, ready to be broken.

The need is for a theology like Hegel's, both political and philosophical, because, in the last analysis, it has to be a theology which can give a name to that deepest principle of true solidarity, which cuts across all cultural borders. In the old days of the Cold War, for instance, when the Warsaw Pact was constantly putting 'peace' into its propaganda and NATO was for ever using the rhetoric of 'human rights', Western peace campaigners and Eastern human rights activists found themselves, at one level, manoeuvred into apparently opposing corners; even though they were at another level – at the level, that is, of confronting the ruling 'lies' – very much each other's natural partners. It is a question, then, of getting down to that other level.

As Havel's essay proceeds the greengrocer is shown making the shift out of the life 'within a lie', into a life 'within the truth'. Even though he knows the price he is liable to pay, he stops sticking slogans up in his window, he stops voting in meaningless elections, he starts to speak his mind. In Hegelian terminology, we have here a classic parable of liberation from the Unhappy Consciousness.

When it comes to the life of the church, the prayers of the Unhappy Consciousness can either be fervent and fanatical like the slogans of the crowd abandoned by Sabina; or they may fade away to the point where they resemble the slogan in the greengrocer's window. Either way, it is a matter of neurotic compulsion: jubilantly celebratory of, or anxiously propitiatory towards, an authoritarian God, in the same way as the crowd of demonstrators is jubilant, or the greengrocer is anxious to propitiate the Party. These prayers may share many of the same formulations with true prayer. But whereas the latter might be defined precisely as a disciplined attention to reality; that is, a disciplined taking to heart of just those aspects of reality which are the most difficult, which kitsch would tend to censor out – the work of the Unhappy Consciousness is the exact opposite. It is a ritual flight from reality. It is a ritual submission to the prescribed world-view of an authoritarian order, regardless of one's own experience of the truth.[6]

Hegel – with, as I have tried to show, unique radicalism – tries to think this through as *the* central issue of theology. And is he not right to do so? I think he is.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1 Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, p. 100.

2 In taking up this term from Kundera in what follows, I use it as designating a perennial phenomenon. It might well be objected that it is a mid-nineteenth-century term in origin, arising out of and reflecting a specifically modern type of cultural development (see for instance Gillo Dorfles, *Der Kitsch*). I would like to distinguish here, however, between kitsch as a term for a set of artefacts, a species of style, and kitsch as a term for a set of attitudes, or a type of mentality. The mentality of course informs the style. But it also transcends it. In the former sense of the word, it is certainly the case that, with the rise of the new bourgeois mass market for cultural commodities and the resulting new opportunities, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have witnessed a quite unprecedented efflorescence of kitsch; in this sense, consequently, the word also comes to be used for every sort of modern bad taste, no matter how marginal its implications in moral terms. Following Kundera, on the other hand, my use of the word is primarily in the second sense. (This is also closer to how Hermann Broch uses it: see his two classic essays on the subject, included in Dorfles' book, pp. 49–76.)

In relation to kitsch-as-style, the kitsch mentality might be defined as the state of mind of one unable to tell the real difference between kitsch and non-kitsch; one whose aesthetic capabilities are thus exclusively at the level of kitsch; one more or less incapable of a positive response to any spiritual product, except *as if it were* kitsch.

What is new in the nineteenth century is the mass production of items whose *sole* function is to cater to a demand for kitsch. Economic developments made this possible. The deeper impulses underlying that demand, though – which as it were come to light in this way – surely are as old as civilization itself.

3 *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, pp. 248–9.

4 Ibid., pp. 250–1.

5 Ibid., p. 249.

6 Ibid., p. 257.

7 Ibid., p. 248.
8 Ibid., p. 253.
9 Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, p. 66.
10 Ibid., p. 63.
11 Variations on this particular formulation are to be found in *LPR*, III, pp. 135, 138, 339–40; *EL*, p. 227; *LPH*, p. 334.
12 See, for example, E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism.*
13 See especially Martin Hengel, *Crucifixion.* As Hengel points out (pp. 62–3), when the hymn quoted in Philippians 2: 6–11 speaks of Christ both as 'assuming the form of a slave', and also as 'humbling himself even to the point of death, death on a cross', the two ideas really belong together: for in a sense, as any contemporary would immediately have appreciated, the former is simply the presupposition of the latter.
14 Ibid., pp. 39–45.
15 Ibid., p. 86. On the whole issue of the relationship between the political and the religious in first-century Judaea, see also Ellis Rivkin, *What Crucified Jesus?*
16 No doubt the scandal was accentuated for a Jewish audience by the influence of Deuteronomy 21:23, which Paul quotes in Galatians 3:13 (c.f. Hengel, *Crucifixion*, pp. 84–5).
17 Jesus refers to himself as a prophet most explicitly in Luke 13:33; he describes his own fate as the typical fate of a prophet, ibid. v. 34 and Matthew 23:37; and all four gospels quote his saying about a prophet being dishonoured in his own country, which clearly refers to himself: Matthew 13:57; Mark 6:4; Luke 4:24–7; John 4:44. There is also ample evidence that this was the natural category, for his contemporaries, in which to place him: Matthew 16:13–14, 21:11, 21:46; Mark 8:27–8; Luke 7:16, 7:39, 9:7–8, 9:18–19, 24:19; John 4:19, 6:14, 7:40, 7:52, 9:17.
18 'Some boast of chariots and some of horses; but our boast is the name of the Lord our God', as the psalmist sings (Psalm 20:7). In the prophecy of Hosea, on the other hand, we read: '*Because* you have trusted in your chariots, in the number of your warriors, the tumult of war will arise against your people, and all your fortresses will be overthrown' (Hosea 10:13–14). When Isaiah lists the sins of the people (Isaiah 2:6–9) one of the charges, alongside those of consorting with 'soothsayers speaking like Philistines', piling up 'silver and gold', and idolatry, is that: 'Their land is full of horses, and there is no end to their chariots.' With God's promise of help to the people in Hosea 1:7 goes the caveat: 'I shall save them not by bow or sword or weapon of war, not by horses and horsemen, but I shall save them by the Lord their God.' And there are several versions (Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3; Hosea 2:18; Zechariah 9:9–10) of the famous dream of a future age of peace, when God will 'break bow and sword and weapon of war, and sweep them off the earth' – which also however means that the

king, in one of his most important roles, will have been made redundant!

19 For a detailed survey of this, see Frank Crüsemann, *Der Widerstand gegen das Königtum*.

20 1 Samuel 8, 10:17–19, 12:12. This is set over against the parallel account of Saul's election to the throne in 1 Samuel 9:1–10, 16, which is generally supposed to come from another source and which is distinctly less critical.

21 And see Hosea 8:4, where the legitimacy of the monarchical succession is denied, though not in the name of any rival line.

22 See Crüsemann, *Der Widerstand gegen das Königtum*, pp. 19–32.

23 Which is not, of course, to say that the apostolic church consistently lived up to such principles: see, for example, Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, Chapter 4, on the probable social background to Paul's complaints in 1 Corinthians 11:17–34 about the divisive eucharistic practices of the Corinthian church.

24 It may not have been specifically the Christians who were meant in the letter the emperor Claudius sent his subjects in Alexandria in AD 41: the date is probably too early for that. But this only renders his remarks all the more interesting when, in this letter, he forbids the Alexandrian Jews to harbour visitors from 'over the waterways from Syria or Egypt', and adds, 'If they do not obey my decree I will persecute them with all the means at my disposal, as the carriers of a plague which is being spread all over the world'. See W. H. C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church*, pp. 145–6.

It is also notable that it was at exactly this period that the authorities for the first time found themselves faced with the problem of a virulent anti-Semitism among sections of the neighbouring population: pogroms are reported in Alexandria in AD 38, and in Antioch in (probably) AD 40.

25 On Romans 13 as a model loyalty oath, see Luise Schottroff, 'Gebt dem Kaiser, was dem Kaiser gehört, und Gott, was Gott gehört'. Die theologische Antwort der urchristlichen Gemeinde auf ihre gesellschaftliche und politische Situation, in Jürgen Moltmann, ed., *Annahme und Widerstand*.

26 The whole passage, Romans 5–8, shows this quite clearly; or see, for example, 1 Corinthians 15:56.

27 Romans 6:1–4.

28 Hengel stresses this particular function of Docetism: *Crucifixion*, pp. 15–21. (And, as it so happens, Milan Kundera also refers to Gnostic Docetism as a classic instance of kitsch: *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, pp. 245–7.)

29 As is so aptly expressed in the practice of the dramatic reading of the passion story on Palm Sunday, at the point where the whole congregation joins in the cry of 'Crucify him! Crucify him!'

30 That is to say, even setting aside the whole debatable question of

whether Jesus, in speaking of 'the Son of Man', originally was or was not referring to himself – and simply accepting what would presumably have been the evangelist's assumption, that he was.

31 *Christ the Representative*, pp. 32–5, 79–84.

1 HEGEL'S CHRISTOLOGY

1 On the term *Vorstellung* see Emil Fackenheim's comments in *The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought*, pp. 154–5:

> We render Hegel's term *Vorstellung* with the conventional but obscure and artificial 'representation' because all more natural terms have false connotations. (In this case, artificiality would appear to have its uses.) Thus 'notion' (Walter Kaufmann) and 'idea' (in the translation of *Philosophy of Religion* by E. B. Speirs and J. B. Sanderson) suggest subjectivism, and 'picture-thinking' (J. N. Findlay) is inadequate because the 'picture' may be a merely finite, nonreligious *Bild*, and because the 'thinking' would have to refer, not only to the thinking aspect of religious existence, but also to religious existence as a whole.

2 English translation: *Why God became Man and the Virgin Conception and Original Sin.*

3 *Summa Contra Gentiles*, IV, 44; *Summa Theologica*, IIIa, Q. 1 (especially art. 2).

4 Howard P. Kainz, *Hegel's Phenomenology, Part 1: Analysis and Commentary.*

5 *PS*, p. 49.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., p. 56.

8 Ibid., p. 126.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid., p. 127.

11 Ibid. The 'Bondsman'-consciousness 'is *itself* a simple, hence unchangeable, consciousness, and hence is aware that this consciousness is its own essence, although in such a way that again it does not *itself* take the essence to be its own.' The phrasing is perhaps awkward: it seems to imply a sense of the immortality of the soul, and it is unclear quite where this can have come from in terms of the preceding argument. But the basic point remains.

12 In *Le Malheur de la Conscience dans la Philosophie de Hegel.*

13 *ETW*, *passim.*

14 *Genèse et Structure de la Phénoménologie de l'Esprit de Hegel*, pp. 184–208.

15 *Hegel, a Re-examination*, pp. 100–2.

16 *Freedom and Independence*, pp. 66–8.

17 *In the Spirit of Hegel*, pp. 465–70.

18 *Hegel's Phenomenology*, pp. 97–111.

19 Ibid., p. 106.

20 *Consciousness and Reality: Hegel's Philosophy of Subjectivity*, pp. 121–2 (my emphasis).

21 *PS*, p. 455.
22 In his later lecture course on the philosophy of religion and the philosophy of history, Hegel associates the 'infinite sorrow' which prepares the way for the Incarnation rather more specifically with the spiritually oppressive nature of the Roman Empire, and with the history of Judaism: *LPR*, II, pp. 229, 699, 760; III, p. 137, 307–10, *LPH*, pp. 320–3. See also the reference back to the Unhappy Consciousness in the passage entitled 'Legal Status', *PS*, p. 293, in which again Hegel obviously has pagan Rome in mind.
23 *PS*, p. 456.
24 *A Reading of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, pp. 118, 122. Of course the Unhappy Consciousness is more completely present in certain marginal forms of Christianity than it is in the mainstream; but that is not to say it is only present there. And of course it would be a caricature of the mainstream tradition to describe it as a *pure* manifestation of the Unhappy Consciousness. But then again a caricature can also be a valid medium of critique.
25 As in the work of Judith Shklar or Robert C. Solomon, for example. Other examples would be: Walter Kaufmann, Karl Löwith, Alexandre Kojève, Roger Garaudy.
26 *PS*, p. 128.
27 Ibid.
28 *LPR*, III, pp. 136–42; 224–33; 330–3.
29 *PS*, p. 129.
30 Ibid., pp. 461–2; c.f. also p. 326.
31 See Erich Heller's essay on Kafka in *The Disinherited Mind*, especially p. 192.
32 *Hegel*, p. 26.
33 E.g. *LPR*, II, p. 663:

> Freedom constitutes the cheerfulness or serenity of this cultus. In the cultus, honour is bestowed upon the god, but revering God turns into the reverence proper to humanity itself, the reverence that makes the consciousness of one's affirmative relationship and unity with the gods valid in one's own self. In this worship, human beings celebrate their own honour.

34 Ibid., p. 460.
35 Ibid., p. 660; c.f. also pp. 475–7, 756; *LPH*, pp. 249–50.
36 Cf. *LPR*, II, p. 669.
37 *LPH*, pp. 18–19 (translation amended). On Christianity and the abolition of slavery: *EL*, pp. 227–8; *LPR*, III, p. 340; *LPH*, p. 334. And see ibid. p. 252, where he argues that: 'That very subjective freedom which constitutes the principle and determines the peculiar form of freedom in *our* world – which forms the absolute basis of our political and religious life, could not manifest itself in Greece otherwise than as a *destructive* element.' A point illustrated here by reference primarily to the Sophists; and in *LHP* also Socrates and Plato: I, pp. 365–6; 444–5; II, pp. 98–9.

38 It is in this sense that the Unhappy Consciousness is the 'truth' of Stoicism and Scepticism (*PS*, p. 293): looking at the problem of the Unhappy Consciousness shows us the true inadequacy of those standpoints.
39 One may note Hegel's own characterization of the type of social context most favouring the development of such modes of thinking: 'As a universal form of the World-Spirit, Stoicism could only appear on the scene in a time of universal fear and bondage, but also a time of universal culture which had raised itself to the level of thought' – *PS*, p. 121; and c.f. ibid., pp. 290–4, where the reference is to both Stoicism and Scepticism. The Hellenistic Age is the prime example here; although, of course, he is not *only* speaking about the actual Stoic and Sceptical schools of that epoch. Another example would be the phenomenon of 'internal emigration' in Nazi Germany, say.
40 *PS*, p. 122.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid., p. 123.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid., p. 125.
45 Ibid., p. 126.
46 Ibid., p. 130.
47 *LPR*, III, p. 137.
48 Ibid., p. 138.
49 Ibid. On the particular significance of the cross in this connection see pp. 128–30.
50 *PS*, p. 131.
51 Ibid., pp. 132–5.
52 Ibid., p. 135.
53 Ibid., p. 137.
54 Ibid.
55 *FK*, p. 190.
56 *PS*, p. 476.
57 Ibid., p. 493.
58 *FK*, p. 191.
59 See also *LPR*, III, p. 326, where he refers to this notion ('expressing' as it does 'the awareness that the human, the finite, the fragile, the weak, the negative, are themselves a moment of the divine, that they are within God himself') as 'the highest idea of spirit'.

    For a detailed analysis of the various 'death of God' texts, see Eberhard Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, pp. 63–100; and Küng, *The Incarnation of God*, pp. 207–2.
60 *Genèse et Structure de la Phénoménologie de l'Esprit de Hegel*, p. 184.
61 *PS*, p. 389.
62 The term derives primarily from the ironical 'Confessions of a Beautiful Soul' in Part 2 of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*.
63 *PS*, p. 400.

64 Ibid., p. 398. The nearest historical approach to this sort of association, for Hegel, would seem to be in the more contemplative forms of monasticism, or in certain other-worldly Protestant sects. See, for example, *LHP*, pp. 94–5.
65 *PS*, p. 399.
66 Ibid., pp. 400–3.
67 Ibid., pp. 403–5; Hyppolite, *Genèse et structure*, p. 508.
68 *PS*, p. 406.
69 Ibid., p. 409: 'The reconciling *Yea*, in which the two "I"s let go their antithetical *existence*, is the *existence* of the "I" which has expanded into a duality, and therein remains identical with itself, and, in its complete externalization and opposite, possesses the certainty of itself: it is God manifested in the midst of those who know themselves in the form of pure knowledge.' (The allusions to Fichte in this passage do somewhat complicate matters: see below pp. 46–7.) Navickas (*Consciousness and Reality*, p. 248) questions the strict *necessity* of the transition here; and it is true that Hegel has not tried very hard to spell it out. Nevertheless, it surely is in perfect accord with his general theological priorities.
70 Hegel also discusses the concept of Conscience in *PR*, pp. 90–104. In this passage he makes a sharp distinction between the 'true' principle of Conscience and the merely 'formal' principle; which then leads into a survey of various corruptions of the merely 'formal' principle. Here the dialectic of forgiveness is missing; there is no place for it in this particular context. However, as his reference back to the *Phenomenology* shows, his basic view of the matter remains unchanged.
71 Sölle, *Christ the Representative* pp. 78–83.
72 Ibid., p. 73.
73 Ibid., p. 78.
74 See ibid., pp. 31–8.
75 It is interesting to note that, whereas Sölle sees Hegel as restoring the original balance inherent in Luther's doctrine, Jüngel (*God as the Mystery of the World*, pp. 94–5) charges him with a tacit 'restitution' of the Patristic christology of 'deification' – as expressed in the classic formula originally of Irenaeus: 'If the Word has been made man, it is so that men may be made gods' (Adv. Haer. V, preface).

Certainly any such tracing of precedents needs to be qualified by a recognition of the great transformation that has occurred here: one seeks in vain, in Patristic thought, for any *explicit* analysis of the distinction between 'exclusive' and 'inclusive' christology. However, 'imputation' and 'deification' do have at least this much in common: they are both soteriological themes with a distinctly 'inclusive' *feel* about them.

Historically, the idea of 'deification' appears increasingly to have died away in the Middle Ages. Meister Eckhart is the great exception, as one who in a strikingly radical way revived the old theme – but Eckhart was in this respect quite a maverick. And on the whole it

would seem that it was just as this idea faded from prominence that the idea of Christ's death as a penal 'satisfaction' of God's justice (or, more crudely, a 'ransom' paid to the devil) gained weight, in its place, as *the* basic principle of explanation. The originality of Anselm lies simply in the systematic genius with which he elaborates a particular version of what had already become the general consensus.

Although Hegel himself nowhere specifically discusses the history of christological tradition, from an Hegelian point of view this no doubt represents quite a retrogressive development – which the Reformation then opens up a new way to reverse.

As for Jüngel's critique here: this evidently rests on considerations broadly similar to those of Barth, which I consider below, in chapter 2.

76 *PS*, p. 477. Cf. *LPR*, III, p. 128.

77 *LPR*, III, p. 324. 'But already in the sphere of morality, and still more in that of religion, spirit is known to be free': the reference to 'morality' here is possibly a reminiscence of Kant's justification of the notion of divine forgiveness in his *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*. See Allen W. Wood, *Kant's Moral Religion*, pp. 239–48.

78 *LPR*, III, p. 332.

79 *FK*, p. 62.

80 See Charles Taylor's comments on the overall structure of the *Logic* in his *Hegel*, pp. 346–8.

81 *FK*, p. 63.

82 *EL*, p. 138.

83 One would of course scarcely choose the term 'speculative' today, with its current connotations of haziness, or even financial impropriety; but this is, basically, what it means for Hegel: a thinking which serves to open up to philosophical questioning the realm of the concrete and actual. See Walter Cerf's introduction in *FK*, pp. xi–xiii, xvi–xxiv.

84 *L*, I, p. 168.

85 See Hegel's comments on Fichte in *FK*, pp. 168–9.

86 *L*, I, p. 162.

87 Ibid.

88 See H. S. Harris, The Young Hegel and the Postulates of Practical Reason, in Darrel E. Christensen, ed., *Hegel and the Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 61–78.

89 *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* pp. 34–9.

90 Ibid., pp. 54–5.

91 Ibid., pp. 132–3.

92 Ibid., pp. 65–71.

93 The essential difference between Kant and Fichte has to do with the presence of what might be termed yet a third dualism in Kant's thinking: namely, the ontological dualism of phenomena versus noumena – which Fichte rejects.

What is at stake here is the issue of determinism: Fichte wants to be

much more dogmatic than Kant in his repudiation of Spinoza, for instance; he refuses to leave *that* issue in the 'unknowable' domain of the noumenal. (When, on the other hand, in his later writings he comes to clarify his idea of God, things turn out somewhat differently: he may have rejected the terminology – but to all intents and purposes his God is as noumenal as Kant's ever was.)

94 See Allen W. Wood, *Kant's Moral Religion*, pp. 109–11; 210–12.

95 See for example W. H. Werkmeister's discussion, Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind as a Development of Kant's Basic Ontology, in Darrel E. Christensen, ed., *Hegel and the Philosophy of Religion*.

96 On Fichtean politics, see George Armstrong Kelly, *Idealism, Politics and History*, Part 4; J. L. Talmon, *Political Messianism: The Romantic Phase* pp. 177–201. (Isaiah Berlin also criticizes Hegel for an excessively 'positive' view of freedom. I discuss this below, pp. 164–8).

97 *FK*, p. 180. See also *LPR*, I, p. 325: 'Spirit *is* spirit and nature... the unity of itself and another.'

98 On the whole clash of Romantic 'expressivism' with Kantian/Fichtean rationalism, see Charles Taylor, *Hegel*, chapter 1, Aims of a New Epoch.

99 H. S. Harris, *Hegel's Development*, I, p. 499.

100 In *ETW*.

101 This is less so of Fichte in his more popular and less systematic writings. Here the whole emphasis shifts away from the Kantian setting of limits on 'faith' to a much more enthusiastic advocacy of its claims, over against *Verstand*. Jacobi's initial reaction to *The Vocation of Man*, for instance, was to charge Fichte with plagiarism.

102 *EL*, p. 98.

103 See especially Lecture VII in Proofs, pp. 203–11. Also relevant here is *LPR*, pp. 414–25.

For a general discussion of Hegel on the proofs, see Mark C. Taylor's article on the subject in the *Journal of Religion*, 57, 1977, pp. 211–31.

104 Proofs, p. 164. And see *LPR*, I, pp. 417–19.

105 *EL*, p. 81.

106 Hegel discusses the Ontological argument in a variety of different places: *L*, II, pp. 343–6; *EL*, pp. 84–5, 258–9; *LPR*, I, pp. 433–41; III, pp. 65–73, 173–84, 278–9, 351–8, 360–1; Proofs, pp. 353–67; *LHP*, III, pp. 62–6 (Anselm), 234–8 (Descartes), 453–5 (Kant). He regards it as the most significant of the arguments (e.g. *LPR*, III, p. 352) and as having a particularly Christian character: it is no mere coincidence that it was first developed in a Christian context (in volume II of the *Lectures* he discusses the Cosmological and Teleological arguments, separately, as part of the 'metaphysical conception' characteristic of 'the sphere of spiritual individuality', which includes Judaism, Greek and Roman religion).

107 Proofs, p. 354.

108 Ibid., p. 355.
109 Ibid., p. 365.
110 Ibid., p. 364. Kant's attempted rebuttal of the argument by the analogy of a hundred dollars which is still a hundred dollars, the same, whether it is just an idea in my head or real money in my pocket, only goes to illustrate the basic inadequacy of his ontology in Hegel's view: he has, in effect, reduced God to something finite like a hundred dollars! Whereas the whole point of the Ontological argument lies, on the contrary, in the absolute uniqueness of the true infinite, which it highlights.
111 Ibid., p. 365.
112 Ibid.
113 Ibid., p. 366.
114 The lectures on the proofs are primarily concerned with the Cosmological argument. See also *LPR*, I, pp. 426–7; II, pp. 250–66, 395–404. On the Teleological argument, see ibid., I, pp. 427–31; II, pp. 195–206, 404–21, 703–19, 748–52; Proofs, pp. 328–51.
115 Proofs, pp. 281, 289; see also p. 259.
116 Ibid., pp. 342–3, 350–1.
117 *LHP*, III, pp. 476–7.
118 For this particular phrase: *LPR*, I, p. 382; III, p. 246; Proofs, pp. 193–4; *EL*, p. 198; *PM*, p. 298; *LHP*, II, pp. 73, 135; Preface to H. F. W. Hinrich's book *Die Religion im innern Verhältnisse zur Wissenschaft*, trans. A. V. Miller, in Frederick G. Weiss, *Beyond Epistemology* p. 243. Besides the various texts already cited, the same theme recurs, especially, throughout *LPR*, I, in the shape of a general polemic against 'the standpoint of the present age'.
119 The *Critical Journal* in which *Faith and Knowledge* first appeared was the joint production of Hegel and Schelling. It was thanks to Schelling that Hegel had gained his post at the University of Jena in 1801 – Schelling having been appointed to a chair there in 1798 at the age of 23, following a whole series of publications. Hegel's first published work, on the *Difference between the Philosophical Systems of Fichte and Schelling* (1801) takes the form of a simple advocacy of the latter against the former.
120 On Hegel's theological relationship to Spinoza, see e.g. Raymond Keith Williamson, *Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 234–49.
121 *LHP*, III, p. 283.
122 Ibid., p. 257 (my emphasis).
123 Ibid., pp. 261–3; Spinoza, Letter XXIX, renumbered Letter XII, in *The Correspondence of Spinoza*, trans. and ed. A. Wolf (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1928).
124 Amongst other things, this was one of the very first pioneering works of modern Biblical criticism. Regrettably Hegel nowhere discusses it, his chief interest being in the *Ethics*. (One might compare this with his

neglect of Kant's *Religion*, remarked upon above. In both cases he goes straight to the metaphysical heart of the matter, whilst leaving it to us to spell out the direct links – which are nevertheless quite clear to see – with his christological concerns.)

125 Ibid., chapter 7; and see also chapters 13 and 15.

126 References in Errol E. Harris, *Salvation from Despair*, pp. 225–6. In fact, the whole of chapter x of Harris's study is relevant here.

127 Leibniz, too, builds upon the Ontological argument.

128 *L*, II, p. 170.

129 Thus, apart from trying to show the logical coherence of an alternative vision, he is unable to develop any systematic argument why Spinoza's view should be rejected.

130 Admittedly, inasmuch as Leibniz, just as much as Spinoza, is a philosopher of the 'true infinite', there is *at that level* a certain sense in which his thought, too, might be termed 'monist'. But then they diverge entirely.

131 *PS*, pp. 9–10.

132 The passage in the *Phenomenology* obviously refers to the Spinozist doctrine of Substance, but Hegel then goes on also to speak of Kant, Fichte and Schelling:

> On the other hand, the opposite view, which clings to thought as thought, to *universality* as such, is the very same simplicity, is undifferentiated, unmoved substantiality. And if, thirdly, thought does unite itself with the being of Substance, and apprehends immediacy or intuition as thinking, the question is still whether this intellectual intuition does not again fall back into inert simplicity, and does not depict actuality itself in a non-actual manner.

133 *LHP*, III, p. 283.

134 Ibid., p. 282.

135 *L*, II, pp. 168–9; *LHP*, III, pp. 267–9.

136 *L*, II, p. 168.

137 *PS*, p. 10.

138 *L*, II, p. 168 (my emphasis). It should be noted that Hegel has been criticized, by various writers on Spinoza, for somewhat exaggerating the differences between their two systems: see especially the discussion in Williamson, *Introduction* pp. 234–49. Whilst there may well be a certain 'dynamic, active aspect of Spinoza's Substance', though, to which Hegel fails to do justice, the fact remains that it is still only in the abstract.

139 *LHP*, II, p. 450.

140 For a brief overview of this aspect of Philo's thought, see Samuel Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria*, pp. 91–7.

141 Hegel provides a vigorous defence of the Patristic theologians in general terms, and explicitly contrasts their philosophically superior trinitarianism with that of the Neo-Platonists, in the introduction to part II of *LHP* (vol. 3).

142 *LPR*, III, p. 187; pp. 273–4.
143 *PM*, pp. 299–300; *LPR*, III, pp. 186, 273.
144 *PS*, p. 465.
145 *LPR*, III, pp. 187, 273–4.
146 *LHP*, III, p. 288 (my emphasis).
147 *LPR*, III, p. 289. The comparison with Spinoza is in *LHP*, III, p. 288.
148 *LPR*, III, pp. 194–5.
149 *Hegel and the Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Darrel E. Christensen, p. 159. Smith also ties this in with Hegel's Lutheran critique of Roman Catholicism, for which (as Hegel puts it) 'the Spirit is more in the church merely as hierarchy, and not in the community' (Proofs, p. 231; cf. *LPR*, III, p. 231. Similarly, *LHP*, III, p. 57: 'In theological form it may be said that, in general, the Middle Ages signify the dominion of the Son and not of the Spirit; for this last is still in the possession of the priesthood'.)
150 Raymond K. Williamson focusses especially on this development: *Introduction*, chapter 3.
151 *LPR*, III, p. 87. See Wolfhart Pannenberg, The Significance of Christianity in the Philosophy of Hegel, in *Basic Questions in Theology*, III, pp. 163–4.
152 See Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, pp. 267–70.
153 *The Incarnation of God*, pp. 538–58. This first appeared in 1970. And Jüngel in particular has also gone on to develop the theme further, in his *God as the Mystery of the World*.
154 Moltmann, *The Crucified God*; Sölle, *Suffering*.
155 'This then is the point relating to the formation of the community... [It] is the transition from externality, from appearance, to inwardness. What it is concerned with is subjectivity, the certainty felt by the subject of its own infinite nonsensible essentiality, the certainty with which it knows itself to be infinite, to be eternal, immortal' (*LPR*, III, p. 223): the essential question underlying this final section of the *Lectures* as a whole is, thus, what it might mean actually to establish a community on this basis.
156 Ibid., p. 162.
157 Ibid., pp. 159–60.
158 Ibid., pp. 342–7. See Hodgson's introduction, ibid., p. 47.
159 Ibid., pp. 242–4.
160 Ibid., p. 344. Clearly, this is not a considered verdict on the whole complex historical phenomenon of pietism. Pietism, for Hegel, is simply a derogatory term. The description here would scarcely apply, for instance, to those aspects of the pietist tradition in Hegel's own native Old-Württemberg on which Laurence Dickey focusses.
161 Ibid., p. 160. One finds very much the same note e.g. in *PR*, pp. 4–5.
162 *PS*, p. 485.
163 Ibid., p. 483.
164 Ibid., p. 482.

2 PHILOSOPHY AND DOGMATICS

1 Karl Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 384.
2 Ibid., p. 385.
3 Ibid., p. 387.
4 Ibid., p. 388.
5 Of course they are both philosophical theologians, and obviously do have a certain amount in common, simply as such. (See Joseph Fitzer's article Hegel and the Incarnation in the *Journal of Religion*, 52, July 1972, pp. 240–67, for example).
6 Schleiermacher came from a thoroughly pietist background: being educated at a Herrnhuter (Moravian) school and seminary. He came to reject the naive anti-rationalism of that tradition, and was fiercely critical of pietist excesses in the 1820s – but nevertheless still continued to think of himself as, to use his own phrase, 'a Herrnhuter of a higher order'.
7 *FK*, pp. 151–2.
8 *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 417.
9 Thus, for example: 'When we come to consider Schleiermacher we shall have to ask very seriously whether his secret is a different one from that of Hegel, only that with Hegel' – admittedly – 'it might be a secret which was to a great extent more respectable and at all events more instructive than that of Schleiermacher' (ibid., p. 421). And see p. 411, where he speaks of an underlying 'identity of interests' between them – 'as we shall see'. Not that the chapter on Schleiermacher really seems to me to clarify the point all that much. (It is true that some later nineteenth-century thinkers – e.g. Isaak August Dorner, Wilhelm Dilthey – did come to see themselves as, in some sense, bringing the two together in their own thought; but it is also debatable how successful they are.)
10 It is not only in *Faith and Knowledge* that Hegel is specifically critical of Schleiermacher: he also attacks Schleiermacher's *Doctrine of Faith* in his foreword to H. F. W. Hinrich's book – though again without actually naming him. The deeper differences between them were further complicated by their quite bitter clashes at the level of university politics: for an account of this, see Richard Crouter, Hegel and Schleiermacher at Berlin: A Many-Sided Debate, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 48; also, John Edward Toews, *Hegelianism, The Path Toward Dialectical Humanism, 1805–1841*, chapter 3.
11 *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century* pp. 450–3. Barth also contrasts Schleiermacher's characteristic mode of argument with that of Hegel – but only in quite formal terms.
12 Such as he speaks of in the passage cited by Barth on p. 397, for example (from the Lasson edition of the *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, I, p. 53); or at the end of *LPH*, p. 457.
13 *The Incarnation of God*.

14 Ibid., pp. 269–70.

15 In his preface to the English edition of *The Incarnation of God* Küng comments on the significance of this particular book (first published in Germany in 1970, but already completed in its first draft nine years before that) as providing the foundation on which he has built in his later works, notably *On Being a Christian* and *Does God Exist?*

16 *Hegel and the Incarnation.*

17 *La Christologie de Hegel: Verbum Crucis.* And see also Brito's other book, of which this is in part an amplification: *Hegel et la Tâche Actuelle de la Christologie.* Brito's interpretation has also been criticized by Paul Lakeland, A New Pietism: Hegel and Recent Christology, *Journal of Religion*, 68, 1988.

18 Ibid., pp. 136–9; also, in relation to the passages on 'faith' and 'revealed religion' in the *Phenomenology*, see pp. 162–7.

19 In this respect he also stands in the tradition of French Catholic Hegel scholars which includes Claude Bruaire, André Léonard and Albert Chapelle.

20 *La Christologie de Hegel: Verbum Crucis*, pp. 610–18.

21 *The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought.*

22 *The Christology of Hegel.*

23 *The Religious Dimension*, p. 10. (It is also one of the texts with which he prefaces his work, p. xiv.)

24 Ibid., p. 235 (my emphasis).

25 Ibid.

26 *The Christology of Hegel*, p. 5.

27 See also the review of Yerkes's book by Stephen Crites in the *Journal of Religion*, 60, 1980.

28 The first publicly to attack Hegel on this basis was the young pietist and Orientalist scholar F. A. G. Tholuck, in his *Die Lehre von der Sünde und vom Versöhner, oder: Die wahre Weihe des Zweiflers*, 2nd edn, in 1825. Tholuck represented a widespread *Erweckungsbewegung* in the Prussia of the 1820s, closely associated with influential conservative political interests. And, as remarked above, Hegel's 1827 and 1831 lectures on the philosophy of religion are, in general, marked by his concern to defend himself from the charge, which was by now being widely repeated, especially in the circles around the new *Evangelische Kirchenzeitung*, founded in 1827: see in particular *LPR*, I, pp. 344–7, 374–80, 432; also *PM* (1830), pp. 304–13; and Proofs, Lecture 16, pp. 313–27.

For a recent systematic consideration of the whole issue, from a somewhat different angle, see part III of R. K. Williamson, *Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy of Religion.* Also, again from another angle: Quentin Lauer, *Hegel's Concept of God.*

29 Toews's excellent book provides by far the best account of the background to this debate.

30 I am thinking here especially of Karl Friedrich Göschel, whose critical review of Richter's work in the Hegelian journal, *Die Berliner*

Jahrbücher, in January 1834 represented the first direct counterblast from the Right; and who then followed it up with two books, *Von den Beweisen für die Unsterblichkeit* in 1835, and *Die siebenfältige Osterfrage* in 1837.

31 See T. W. Adorno, *et al.*, *The Authoritarian Personality*, pp. 736–8: Adorno here remarks on the apparent frequency of the syndrome of belief in God accompanied by disbelief in immortality, among the more 'prejudiced' individuals interviewed in this survey, i.e. those scoring highest for ethnocentrism and other related attitudes. 'Subjects with this point of view', he suggests, 'want a God to exist as the absolute authority to which they can bow, but they wish the individual to perish completely.'

32 *LPR*, III, pp. 138, 208–9, 223. See also II, p. 297: 'The image of immortality is intimately bound up with that of God. The higher the plane on which human nature is affirmed, and the more the power of spirituality is comprehended according to its genuine content, in eternal fashion, the worthier is the image of God and that of spirit, of the human individual.'

33 Ibid., II, pp. 166, 181, 297, 568–70, 627–8, 633–4; also, *LPH*, pp. 216–17.

34 *Gedanken über Tod und Unsterblichkeit aus den Papieren eines Denkers, nebst einen Anhang theologisch-satyrischen Xenien* in *Gesammelte Werke*, I pp. 183–96.

35 Feuerbach simply dismisses, in a single sentence, any suggestion of a resemblance between Plato's doctrine of immortality and later Christian ideas, ibid., p. 185. But he gives no reason why.

36 Ibid., p. 205.

37 The phrase occurs in his letter to Hegel, *Gesammelte Werke*, XVII, p. 105.

38 *The Essence of Christianity*, pp. 50–9.

39 Max Stirner's reaction to Feuerbach and Strauss in *The Ego and His Own* may be somewhat extreme – the radical individualism he sets against their collectivism represents the final unravelling of the Hegelian inheritance in the 1840s – but it is quite instructive all the same. Stirner indeed rejects Christianity for the diametrically opposite reason to Feuerbach: where Feuerbach sees and rejects a form of projected egoism, Stirner on the contrary sees an incipient proto-Feuerbachian species-collectivism – and rejects that. *The Ego and His Own*, pp. 228–9. See also Robert Gascoigne, *Religion, Rationality and Community*, pp. 100–3, on Bruno Bauer's related critique of Feuerbach here.

It is this reference of the symbolism of the Incarnation to species-being rather than individuality which further leads to Strauss's radical dissociation of the philosophic 'truth' of the gospel from the actual historical figure of Jesus *as an individual*. (See Michael Theunissen, *Hegels Lehre vom absoluten Geist als theologisch-politischer Traktat*, pp. 236–42).

40 *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 420.

41 Ibid., p. 418.

42 Thus Küng, summarizing his objections, speaks of the need to re-assert, against Hegel, 'the sharp antithesis between the gracious and benevolent God and guilty and sinful man, between divine revelation and human unbelief' – immediately adding: 'We shall do well not to emulate Hegel's assertion of speculative necessity against the "contingency" of free grace and of speculative knowledge against the "outwardness" of a faith directed to Another than ourselves. It is wiser instead to cling for the sake of both God and man to the irreversible divinity of God and humanity of man': *The Incarnation of God*, p. 457. And see also his further amplification of the same points in *Does God Exist?*, p. 167.

The same arguments are also quite central to Brito's extended critical evaluation of Hegel in pp. 535–656 of *La Christologie de Hegel: Verbum Crucis*. See especially on the Atonement, pp. 545–7, 610–19; and on the Fall, pp. 563–6.

43 *LPR*, I, p. 308, footnote 97. (It should be noted that H. G. Hotho, from whose lecture transcript this particular striking formula originally derives, is not necessarily the most reliable source. However, I see no special reason to question his reliability in this case.)

44 The most extended discussion of this is to be found in *LPR*, III, pp. 104–8; 207–11; 300–4. But see also *PS*, pp. 467–8; *EL*, §24, pp. 42–5; *LPH*, pp. 321–3; *LHP*, III, pp. 8–10.

45 *LPH*, p. 321.

46 The Gospel According to Hegel, *The Journal of Religion*, 46, 1966, p. 252.

47 Ibid., p. 251.

48 *LPR*, III, p. 103.

49 Ibid., p. 207.

50 Ibid., I, pp. 307–10.

51 See for example ibid., p. 88: 'I declare such a point of view and such a result to be directly opposed to the whole nature of the Christian religion, according to which we should *know* God *cognitively*, God's nature and essence, and should esteem this cognition above all else.'

52 W. Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology*, III, pp. 168–70.

53 If, that is to say, he had already in his own lifetime encountered the 'pantheism' charge forcefully expressed in the shape of this particular logical construction – which, perhaps curiously, does not actually appear to have been the case.

54 This point is developed at some length, for example, by Anselm K. Min, Hegel's Absolute: Transcendent or Immanent?, *The Journal of Religion*, 56, 1976, pp. 61–87. And see also Fackenheim, pp. 152–4.

55 *LPR*, III, pp. 285–6. See also ibid., pp. 82–3, 194; and W. Pannenberg's discussion of this text: in *Jesus – God and Man*, pp. 181–3; and *Basic Questions in Theology*, III, pp. 165ff. (Pannenberg further refers in this connection to the *Logic*, pp. 583, 824, 840f.; and to Hegel's approving remarks on the 'much richer concept' of divine personality in the

Christian faith, as compared with ancient Greek religion, for instance, in the Berlin introduction to the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, in *System und Geschichte der Philosophie*, ed. Hoffmeister, p. 67).

56 *Church Dogmatics*, I/1, p. 77.

57 See for example Toews, *Hegelianism*, pp. 141–51, on Daub, Marheineke, Göschel, Conradi and Rust.

58 *Church Dogmatics*, I/2, p. 297.

59 Ibid., p. 280.

60 Ibid., p. 303.

61 Ibid., p. 302.

62 Ibid., p. 299.

63 Ibid., p. 300.

64 Ibid., p. 303.

65 Ibid., pp. 324–5. 'The abrogation which is a genuine and dangerous attack on religion is to be found in another book, beside which the books of mysticism and atheism can only be described as completely harmless.'

66 Ibid., p. 325.

67 See for example Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth, His Life From Letters And Autobiographical Texts*, p. 247 on Barth's personal understanding of the significance of the Barmen Declaration of 1934, which he himself had drafted.

68 Barth, for his part, discusses the general relationship between dogmatics and philosophy in numerous places. Most extensively: in his 1928 lectures on ethics, *Ethics*, pp. 19–45; in his 1929 lectures on Schicksal und Idee in der Theologie; and in an essay, written in 1958 in the 'Festschrift' for his philosopher brother Heinrich, *Philosophie und christlicher Existenz, Festschrift für Heinrich Barth*. He too is concerned to emphasize the essential separateness of the two disciplines: this is his whole theme. But he is always much clearer on what philosophy *cannot* do than on what it positively *should* be doing. His point of view is perhaps most pithily expressed in the remarks quoted by Eberhard Busch, p. 387: 'As Christians we must have the freedom to let the most varied ways of thinking run through our heads.' In fact, notwithstanding all his misgivings, he even goes on to say: 'I myself have a certain weakness for Hegel and am always fond of doing a bit of "Hegeling". As Christians we have the freedom to do this.' Only – 'I do it eclectically.' And, one might add, never actually *as* a philosopher, but always in the specific role of dogmatic theologian.

69 *Church Dogmatics*, I/2, p. 327.

70 Ibid., IV/3, pp. 114–35.

71 See F.-W. Marquardt, *Theologie und Sozialismus. Das Beispiel Karl Barths*.

72 *The Christian Faith*, pp. 31–44. His actual argument in this section runs as follows. First, he deduces the superiority of monotheism over polytheism, and of both over 'idol-worship' – on the grounds that the development here amounts to a progressive clarification of the

distinction between '*absolute*' dependence and any other sort (our dependence on particular natural forces, or 'the human qualities which are operative in social relationships', etc.). The highest religions are therefore the most purely monotheistic: Judaism, Islam, Christianity. Then, secondly, he goes on to contrast an 'aesthetic' piety, where the experience of absolute dependence is bound up with a primarily passive orientation to the world, with a 'teleological' one, where it is bound up with a more active commitment to moral goals. The latter is, to his mind, obviously the higher; and of the monotheistic religions, Christianity is, he contends, the most 'teleological' in this very abstract sense.

73 Hick explicitly grounds his position on Kantian metaphysics in his article Towards a Philosophy of Religious Pluralism in *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie*, 22, 2, 1980, pp. 131–49. He unfolds his 'Copernican Revolution' more generally in *God and the Universe of Faiths*.

74 *Church Dogmatics*, I/2, p. 299.

75 See *Der Historismus und seine Probleme* in Troeltsch's *Gesammelte Schriften*, III, chapter 4, part 2.

76 There is also the particular problem of his approach to Judaism. On this, see Emil Fackenheim, Hegel and Judaism: A Flaw in the Hegelian Mediation, in *The Legacy of Hegel*, ed. J. J. O'Malley, *et al.*, pp. 161–85. Also Peter C. Hodgson, The Metamorphosis of Judaism in Hegel's Philosophy of Religion, *Owl of Minerva*, 19, Autumn 1987, pp. 41–52.

77 Peter C. Hodgson makes this point in his article Logic, History and Alternative Paradigms in Hegel's Interpretation of the Religions, *Journal of Religion*, 68, January 1988, pp. 1–20.

78 See Barth's remarks on the Hegelian passion for truth, in *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 415–17.

79 *Christ the Representative*, pp. 84–91.

80 *Von der Stellvertretung Gottes*, p. 32.

81 Chiefly in her work *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*.

82 This comes out most clearly in *Church Dogmatics*, III/4, pp. 158–77. See for example the critical discussion by Joan Arnold Romero in her article The Protestant Principle: A Woman's-Eye View of Barth and Tillich, in *Religion and Sexism*, ed. Rosemary Radford Ruether.

83 See Joanna Hodge, Women and the Hegelian State, in *Women in Western Political Philosophy*, ed. E. Kennedy and S. Mendus, pp. 127–57.

84 *PS*, pp. 267–87; *PR*, pp. 114–15; *LPR*, II, pp. 665–6; *A*, pp. 1217–18.
As a depiction of the clash between two 'laws' – the 'human law' of the state and the 'divine law' of family piety – it is, he suggests, entirely appropriate both that the issue at stake should be the burial of the dead, and that it should centre on a sister's relationship to her brother. This is because family piety, as something distinct from loyalty to the state, is grounded on loyalty to the ancestral dead. And

because, so he argues, a sister's concern for her brother is in principle that much purer of self-interest than a wife's relationship to her husband, a mother's to her child or a daughter's to her parents. From a philosophical point of view, therefore, the basic conception of the play could scarcely be bettered.

85 *PS*, pp. 287–9. The plays in question are: *Lysistrata*, *Women at the Thesmophoria* and *Women in Assembly*.

86 Barth, for his part, explicitly rejects any such ideal as sheer *hubris* (*Church Dogmatics*, III/4, pp. 159–63), and specifically criticizes Simone de Beauvoir in this context. But has he really grasped the full force of her argument?

Peter J. Steinberger, *Logic and Politics: Hegel's Philosophy of Right* is also relevant here, from another angle: on the implicit sexual egalitarianism of Hegel's doctrine of marriage. (And see also *LPR*, III, p. 138, on the role of Christianity in promoting 'the sexual freedom of women'.)

87 It is only a tentative first step. For the practical purpose of actual reform to the language of Christian liturgy or preaching I would certainly accept Sallie McFague's argument that these Hegelian terms are still too abstract. See her *Models of God*, p. 212.

88 I once spent a year in which I attended, from time to time, the *Kugelkirche* in Marburg-an-der-Lahn, which is dominated by a particularly fine mediaeval version of this. I do not know how common this particular type of image is – but all the ingredients that go into it are familiar enough.

89 The Challenge of Feminism to Christianity, *Theology*, 88, 725, September 1985, p. 345.

90 Janet Morley's comments on this image are also interesting:

> Two major objections have been levelled at it – first that it is 'blasphemous', and second that it is ahistorical. I suspect that the charge of 'ahistorical' is produced to support the gut reaction of the first cry. When we see crucifixes that represent Jesus as white, and fair-haired, we do not even notice their factual inaccuracy. Black Christs are more obviously to us a symbolic representation of Christ's identification with the suffering of black people. Why then is an ahistorical interpretation unacceptable in the case of a female? I suggest that the feeling of blasphemy has nothing whatever to do with the inherent unfitness of women to represent Christ, and everything to do with our learned responses to the conventions of *pornography*. A naked tortured man is tragic, a naked tortured woman is pornographic. Looked at this way, we can see that what the sculptor was attempting to do was not to commit a sacrilege on a hallowed religious symbol, but rather to show how violence against women, indeed pornography which supports it, is itself a kind of crucifixion. (From a talk given at Leeds University, 1985; my emphasis)

91 Obviously, the patriarchal bias of Christian art, in general, is ineradicable; and the use of such discordant imagery, valuable though it is, is not going to solve the problem here by itself. There is also needed a wholesale reassessment of the role of religious art, as such. But

in this context, too, one might perhaps cite Hegel – on the historical fate of modern art: where he makes his notorious remark that 'art, considered in its highest vocation, is and remains for us a thing of the past'; *A*, p. 11. Art's 'highest vocation', from this point of view, would lie in its giving authoritative expression, fully adequate *in itself*, to a whole community's perception of what constitutes the highest truth. Once, Hegel is suggesting, art could do this. Now it no longer can, at least not validly. 'The beautiful days of Greek art, like the golden age of the later Middle ages, are gone' (ibid., p. 10). Subsequently, of course, art can still go on to become more sophisticated, more complex, bolder, funnier. Yet it can never again possess such authority. And why not? Essentially because of the intrinsic inability of any form of art to capture the *full* truth of the Incarnation. The element of polemic in Hegel's remarks here is directed against romantic nostalgia for those 'beautiful days', which would overlook that truth; a species of nostalgia only too common in his time. Had he been alive today, he might well have directed much the same polemic against, for example, the art of 'socialist realism'; but also, it seems to me, against a 'post-Christian' feminist aesthetic... Art no doubt may express the collective spirit of a particular church institution, a particular *polis*, a particular political movement; but the truth of the Incarnation lies at a level deeper than any artistic depiction of it can express – since no depiction can in fact convey Christ's role as representative of every human *individual*, precisely in his or her own individuality. With the result that a spirituality centred on that truth necessarily has to be experienced in the shape of an 'inwardness' set over against the 'externality' of art.

92 As W. Pannenberg has pointed out (*Revelation as History*, introduction) Schleiermacher merely toyed with this idea, in the fifth of his *Speeches on Religion*; he never returned to it later.

93 See James Richmond, *Ritschl*, chapter 6.

3 CHRISTOLOGY AND HISTORY

1 *PR*, p. 13.

2 *The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought*, p. 224.

3 Cf. Yerkes' response to Fackenheim in *The Christology of Hegel*, pp. 166–9.

There is, it is true, the famous passage where Hegel speaks of America as 'the land of the future, where, in the ages that lie before us, the burden of the world's history shall reveal itself... a land of desire for all those who are weary of the historical lumber-room of old Europe' (*LPH*, p. 86). But even here he at once goes on to half-retract what he has said. (In one of his letters he also makes similar remarks about Russia: to von Uexküll, 28 November 1821, in *Letters*, p. 569.)

4 *LPH*, p. 457.

5 *EL*, p. 9.

6 Ibid.; and, earlier, *PR*, p. 10.
7 *EL*, p. 9.
8 Ibid.
9 *PR*, p. 10.
10 The most comprehensive study of the young Hegel's intellectual pilgrimage is H. S. Harris, *Hegel's Development: Towards the Sunlight.*
11 Karl Rosenkranz, Hegel's first biographer, reports that he wrote extensive notes on Steuart's work in 1799, though these have been lost; and he had probably already read it before that. As for Schiller's series of letters – he is actually known to have read these with enthusiasm when they first appeared, in 1795. But there nevertheless remains this time-lag with regard to their major influence upon him. In the background to both Steuart and Schiller there also stands the figure of Adam Ferguson, whom Hegel is known to have read during his schooldays; and in his lectures of 1804 he further refers to Ferguson's pupil, Adam Smith. For a detailed account of the influence of these thinkers here, see Laurence Dickey, *Hegel: Religion, Economics and the Politics of Spirit 1770–1807*, part III. Also see Raymond Plant, *Hegel*, chapter 3, and Paul Chamley, Economie politique et philosophie chez Steuart et Hegel; La doctrine économique du Hegel et la conception Hegelienne du travail, and Les Origines de la pensée économique de Hegel (both in *Hegel Studien*, 1967), Notes de lecture relatives à Smith, Steuart et Hegel (in *Revue d'économie politique*, 1967).
12 Translated into English by T. M. Knox (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975).
13 *System of Ethical Life* and *First Philosophy of Spirit*, trans. and ed. H. S. Harris and T. M. Knox (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1979).
14 *The Religious Dimension of Hegel's Thought*, pp. 235–6.
15 *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, p. 257.
16 Ibid., p. 251.
17 In *Studium Generale*, 24, 1971 pp. 335–68. Voegelin's works, generally, are peppered with hostile references to Hegel. See in particular *Order and History*, volumes IV and V, *The Ecumenic Age* and *In Search of Order*; and his remarks in the volume *Eric Voegelin's Thought: A Critical Appraisal*, ed. E. Sandoz, pp. 189–97 (where he is responding to Thomas J. Altizer's charge that his relationship to Hegel is 'Oedipal'!).

I take Voegelin as a representative figure at this point rather than, say, Karl Popper, who is equally extreme and whose discussion of Hegel in *The Open Society and its Enemies* has no doubt been far more influential in practice, basically because of the much greater intrinsic interest, in my view, of Voegelin's position as a whole; see the discussion in the next section below. I am indebted to Frank Turner for showing me this. (On Popper's discussion of Hegel, see Walter Kaufmann's scathing demolition in The Hegel Myth and its Method in *Hegel: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. A. MacIntyre, pp. 21–60.)

18 There is one point where he, fleetingly, does indicate that there might be just a little more to the matter – in his response to Altizer, p. 195 – but only fleetingly.

19 On this see – even from within the Voegelinian camp, as it were – Dante Germino, Two Conceptions of Political Philosophy, in *The Post-Behavioral Era*, ed. G. J. Graham and G. W. Carey, pp. 243–57. Germino presents Hegel and Voegelin as complementary thinkers, a view with which I agree, although on slightly different grounds.

20 Sandoz's introduction to *In Search of Order*, pp. 3–4.

21 Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel.* Kojève's remarkable influence on the interpretation of Hegel, above all in France, seems to me almost entirely regrettable. His portrait of Hegel is just as fanciful – just as a-christological and therefore megalomaniac – as Voegelin's, with the sole difference that he presents it with approval.

One finds a similar misjudgement of the Hegel/Marx relationship, from much the same critical perspective as Voegelin's, in J. L. Talmon, *Political Messianism.*

22 *On Hegel – A Study in Sorcery*, p. 337.

23 The quotation comes from The Gospel and Culture, in *Jesus and Man's Hope*, ed. D. G. Miller and D. Y. Hadidian, pp. 89–90. His main development of this parallel, however, is to be found in *The New Science of Politics* and *Science, Politics and Gnosticism.* (The theme tends to recede in his later works.)

The charge that Hegel was a 'gnostic' no doubt gains a degree of plausibility from his actual usage of the terms *Wissen*, *absolutes Wissen.* (Voegelin refers in several places for instance to page 3 of the preface to the *Phenomenology* where he describes his goal as being 'to help bring philosophy closer to the form of Science... where it can lay aside the title "*love* of knowing" and be *actual* knowing'.) – But what does he mean by these terms? As he goes on to describe it in the *Phenomenology*, the 'knowing' he is speaking of is no esoteric lore. It is not a doctrine; it is not his philosophical system, as a finished work – even though that is, of course, intended to point towards it. It is not the content of a set of books. Far rather, surely, it is that which would characterize the ideal reader – of any book. As the goal towards which the whole acid logic of the *Phenomenology* is working, it is the very opposite of anything fixed or objectively transmissible. Indeed, it is quite as much opposed to that sort of 'knowledge' as it is to the abstract agnosticism of the 'reflective philosophy of subjectivity'.

Socrates, for instance – who *knew* that he 'knew' nothing – still remains for Hegel an authoritative symbol of this ideal, even if he never did attain to 'the systematic construction of a philosophy' (see the chapter on Socrates in *LPH*, I, especially pp. 398–400). Hegel's stress on 'knowledge', in short, is determined by his polemical antagonism to the 'reflective philosophy of subjectivity'; and needs to be seen strictly in that context, not loosely extrapolated beyond it.

Of course, Gnosticism is also more than just a claim to esoteric knowledge in Voegelin's sense. Nor am I wanting to deny here Hegel's (qualified) affinity to some of the more anti-authoritarian elements in the sort of 'Gnosticism' represented e.g. by Jakob Boehme. (See the papers by David Walsh and Eric von der Luft in *History and System: Hegel's Philosophy of History*, ed. Robert L. Perkins.) But that is something else.

24 This particular phrase comes from the title to chapter XI of *From Enlightenment to Revolution*, ed. J. H. Hallowell.

25 *The New Science of Politics*, pp. 110–21; *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*, pp. 92–9.

26 See *On Hegel – A Study in Sorcery*, p. 337. Nowhere is his ploy of composite-figure construction more blatantly misleading than in this little passage.

27 See J.-F. Suter, Burke, Hegel and the French Revolution, in *Hegel's Political Philosophy: Problems and Perspectives*, ed. Z. A. Pelczynski.

28 *PR*, §258, p. 157.

29 *PS*, pp. 355–63.

30 *PR*, §258, p. 157.

31 In Sibree's translation p. 447; but the version here comes from Charles Taylor, *Hegel*, p. 424.

32 *PR*, §270, p. 165. And see his attack in the addition to §3 on the historical school of jurisprudence for 'obscuring the difference between the historical and the philosophical study of law'.

33 *LPR*, III, pp. 139–40. The other main texts are *PS*, pp. 328–55; *LHP*, III, section 2, Period of the Thinking Understanding; *LPH*, pp. 438–42.

34 *FK*, p. 56.

35 What is Enlightenment?, in *Philosophical Writings*, ed. E. Behler, p. 263.

36 *LPH*, p. 416. See also the discussion in *LPH*, III, pp. 146–55; and his jubilee speech in celebration of the Augsburg Confession, in *SW*, XX, pp. 521–44.

37 *LPH*, pp. 424–7.

38 Ibid., p. 418.

39 *LPR*, III, pp. 340–2.

40 *LPH*, p. 416.

41 Can one really link the three so closely? Merold Westphal has argued that Hegel fails, as a result, to do justice to the distinctiveness of the Reformation: Hegel and the Reformation, in *History and System: Hegel's Philosophy of History*, ed. Robert L. Perkins, pp. 73–92. But cf. David A. Duquette's very convincing defence of Hegel here: ibid., pp. 93–9.

42 *LPH*, III, pp. 150–5.

43 *PR*, §§267, 273, 276. (In the original the same phrase, 'der politische Staat', throughout; in Knox's translation, variously 'the political state' and 'the state as a political entity'.)

44 *LPH*, introduction, p. 96.

45 The Hegelian Conception of the State, in *Hegel's Political Philosophy: Problems and Perspectives*, p. 13.

46 *PR*, §258, p. 157, and addition, p. 279. Knox's translation, 'the march of God', is surely misleading. So too §272, addition, p. 285: 'Man must therefore venerate the state as the divine in earthly form' ('das Irdisch-Göttliches' – translated by Knox as 'a secular deity').

47 Hegel's main discussion of the relationship between religious faith and the state is in *PM*, §552. This passage goes a good deal further than the equivalent discussion in the (earlier) *PR*, §270, in which his distance from the 'zwei Reiche Lehre' is less apparent (although this is probably more a matter of clarification than a real change of mind). On this, see Walter Jaeschke, Christianity and Secularity in Hegel's Concept of the State in *Journal of Religion*, 61, 2, April 1981; Paul Lakeland, *The Politics of Salvation: The Hegelian Idea of the State*.

See also *LPH*, p. 449:

> Nothing must be considered higher and more sacred than good will towards the state; or, if religion be looked upon as higher and more sacred, it must involve nothing really alien or opposed to the constitution. It is, indeed, regarded as a maxim of the profoundest wisdom entirely to separate the laws and constitution of the state from religion, since bigotry and hypocrisy are to be feared as the results of a state religion. But although the aspects of religion and the state are different, they are radically *one*; and the laws find their highest confirmation in religion.

He finds here an irresolvable problem with Roman Catholicism, in any form he knew it. And he attributes the violence of the French Revolution in large measure to its background in a Catholic culture – contrasting the relatively peaceful way in which the Enlightenment was absorbed into the Protestant culture of Germany (ibid., pp. 444–5).

48 *PR*, §260, p. 161 (my emphasis).

49 Ibid., preface, p. 7; §258, p. 158.

50 The central theme of Oakeshott's *On Human Conduct*. Oakeshott cites Hegel as being one of his three 'most memorable' predecessors in attempting a political philosophy along these lines; the other two being Aristotle and Hobbes; ibid., p. 109. See his further discussion of Hegel here, pp. 257–63.

51 See Shlomo Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State*; on Fries and his role in the Wartburg Festival of 1817, pp. 119–22. Von Haller was a Bernese patrician, whose doctrine nonetheless acquired a considerable following within Prussian aristocratic circles. (At the Wartburg Festival his book was ceremonially burnt.)

52 It would seem, as Avineri also argues (ibid., pp. 240–1), that, even while attacking it, he completely misread the historical *significance* of the sort of nationalist ideology represented by Fries; seeing it more as a throwback to the past than as the sinister portent of the future which in reality it was.

53 *LPH*, p. 456.

54 'Love of opinion' – from Plato's usage of the term *philodoxos*.
55 *Anamnesis*, p. 103.
56 In view of the clear affinity between them, it is perhaps curious that Voegelin has so little to say about Kierkegaard; although Eugene Webb does report that he had done some 'extensive reading in Kierkegaard': *Eric Voegelin, Philosopher of History*, p. 20. But then Voegelin tends only to focus on those modern thinkers he most disagrees with.
57 *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, p. 182.
58 It is this transition which lies at the heart of *Philosophical Fragments* and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, in particular. On the tensions involved in the transition, see for example, Herbert M. Garelick, *The Anti-Christianity of Kierkegaard, A Study of the Concluding Unscientific Postscript*.
59 *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, pp. 165–6.
60 *The Point of View of My Work as an Author: A Report to History*, p. 108.
61 Princeton University Press, 1981.
62 E.g. in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, p. 548.
63 Trans. H. V. Hong and E. H. Hong: Princeton University Press, 1978.
64 *Two Ages*, p. 68.
65 Ibid., p. 70.
66 Ibid., p. 90. See the section on Journalism in *Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers*, II. He goes so far here as to say that 'There has never been a power so diametrically opposed to Christianity as the daily press' (2165). In fact: 'Even if my life had no other significance, well, I am satisfied with having really discovered the absolutely demoralizing existence of the daily press' (2163). He even dreams of a total legal ban on any sort of daily press (2147, 2160).
67 *Two Ages*, p. 92.
68 Ibid., p. 94.
69 E.g. *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, pp. 548:

> Of all forms of government the monarchical is best, more than any other it favours and protects the private gentleman's quiet conceits and innocent pranks. Only democracy, the most tyrannical form of government, obliges everyone to take a positive part, as the societies and general assemblies of our time often enough remind one. Is this tyranny, that one man wants to rule and so leave the rest to us free? No, but it is tyranny that all want to rule, and in addition to that would oblige everyone to take part in the government, even the man who most insistently declines to have a share in governing.

70 There are repeated references to mediaeval monasticism, above all, in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, book 2, part II, Section IIA. See also the section on Monasticism in *Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers*, III; e.g. 2548: 'Luther, you do have an enormous responsibility, for when I look more closely, I see ever more clearly that you toppled the Pope – and set "the public" on the throne.'
71 *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, p. 363.

72 The relevant documents are collected in *Kierkegaard's Attack Upon 'Christendom'*, ed. and trans. W. Lowrie.

73 Perhaps the most explicit statement of this is in *Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers*, IV, 4238: 'That the state in a Christian sense is supposed to be what Hegel taught – namely, that it has moral significance, that true virtue can appear only in the state (something I also childishly babbled after him in my dissertation), that the goal of the state is to improve men – is obviously nonsense.'

For a vigorous defence of this aspect of Kierkegaard's thinking, see Merold Westphal, *Kierkegaard's Critique of Reason and Society*.

74 Elrod, *Kierkegaard and Christendom*, p. 34, cites a PhD. dissertation by Robert L. Horn entitled Positivity and Dialectic: A Study of the Theological Method of Hans Lassen Martensen (Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1969): 'Martensen's Hegelianism is so highly colored by his own theological convictions that, as Horn has admirably shown, it would be a mistake to think that one could learn Hegel's philosophy by studying Martensen's theology.'

75 His consideration of Lessing fills the whole of *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, book 2, part I. (Lessing's point of view, of course, is not dissimilar to Kant's.)

76 *Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers*, I, 691.

77 Ibid., VI, 6168.

78 The use of the terms 'qualitative' and 'quantitative' here, as a way of summarizing the contrast, is suggested by Gregor Malantschuk in his *Kierkegaard's Thought*, pp. 349–50.

79 *Training in Christianity*, parts I, II (ii).

80 *The Sickness Unto Death*, p. 208.

81 *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, p. 495.

82 Ibid., pp. 518–19.

83 *The Sickness Unto Death*, p. 253.

84 This of course is one of his works with the strongest element of latent autobiography in it: on this, see Malantschuk, pp. 236–45.

85 It is interesting to compare the treatment of Abraham in Hegel's early essay *The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate*, where Abraham indeed appears as a representative of the Unhappy Consciousness: in *ETW*, pp. 182–8.

86 *Either/Or*, I, pp. 215–28.

87 On the relationship of this figure of the 'unhappiest man' to Kierkegaard's later discussion of the more advanced 'stages on life's way', see for example Malantschuk, *Kierkegaard's Thought*, pp. 273–4, 293.

88 *Either/Or*, I, p. 224.

89 See Stephen Crites, *In the Twilight of Christendom: Hegel vs. Kierkegaard on Faith and History*; and Mark C. Taylor, *Journeys to Selfhood: Hegel and Kierkegaard*; both of whom also attempt to mediate here.

90 *The Melancholy Science: An Introduction to the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno*, preface, p. ix.

91 The three texts, *Kierkegaard Konstruktion des Asthetischen* (1933), *Kierkegaards Lehre von der Liebe* (1940), and *Kierkegaard noch einmal* (1963), are collected in Adorno's *Gesammelte Schriften*, II.
92 This underlying affinity, especially in relationship to Hegel, has also been remarked upon, in particular, by Michael Theunissen, *Hegels Lehre vom absoluten Geist als theologisch-politischer Traktat*, pp. 27–34.
93 In the case of 'reification', his usage oscillates. Sometimes he uses it in his own negative sense, sometimes in the Lukácsian sense. In the latter case – in order to point up the limitations he sees in the Lukácsian 'lament over reification' with its additional overtones of romantic nostalgia for the pre-industrial, or early industrial age, he can also speak of there being such a thing as 'good reification' as well as bad: *Uber Walter Benjamin*, p. 160. And see *Negative Dialectics* pp. 190–2; *Prisms*, p. 106. However, this remains exceptional.
94 *Prisms*, p. 32.
95 'The limit of immanent critique is that the law of the immanent context is ultimately one with the delusion that has to be overcome': *Negative Dialectics*, p. 182. For a detailed discussion which emphasizes the continuing element of 'transcendence' in Adorno, see Andrew Buchwalter, Hegel, Adorno and the Concept of Transcendent Critique, in *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 12, Spring 1987.
96 *Prisms*, pp. 29–30.
97 *Negative Dialectics*, p. 207.
98 *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy* 1888, ed. C. P. Dutt, p. 13; emphases added.
99 Drei Studien zu Hegel; 1: Aspekte, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, 5 p. 273; my translation. Cf. *Negative Dialectics*, pp. 20–31.
100 See *Negative Dialectics*, pp. 158–61.
101 See ibid., pp. 162–6. He cites Max Weber's sociology here as an example.
102 Ibid., p. 304.
103 Ibid., p. 312 (translation slightly amended).
104 Ibid., p. 346.
105 Ibid., p. 321.
106 *The Melancholy Science*, p. 57.
107 In this he is very much at one not only with the orthodoxy stemming from Engels, but also with the 'Hegelianizing' Marxists, such as Lukács and Sartre.
108 *Negative Dialectics*, pp. 342–4.
109 See for example *The Subject and Power*, printed as an Afterword to Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, p. 210.
110 *Negative Dialectics*, p. 320 (translation slightly amended).
111 Ibid.
112 *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, p. 151.
113 As Clifford Geertz remarks in his review of *Discipline and Punish*, in the *New York Review of Books*, 26 January 1978, p. 6.
114 *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, p. 153.

115 *Discipline and Punish*, part III, chapter 3.
116 *The Subject and Power*, p. 208.
117 For this particular phrase see, for example, ibid., pp. 214–15.
118 *The History of Sexuality*, I, p. 59.
119 Ibid., pp. 88–9.
120 Ibid., p. 93.
121 E.g. *Power/Knowledge*, p. 56: 'Power, after investing itself in the body, finds itself exposed to a counter-attack in that same body. Do you recall the panic of the institutions of the social body, the doctors and politicians, at the idea of non-legalized cohabitation [*l'union libre*] or free abortion? But the impression that power weakens and vacillates here is in fact mistaken; power can retreat here, re-organize its forces, invest itself elsewhere... and so the battle continues.' Quoted by Charles Taylor, Foucault on Freedom and Truth, in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, ed. David Couzens Hoy, p. 86; who in fact objects to the paradox, as such.
122 Nietzsche, Freud, Marx, in *Cahiers de Royaumont*. Nietzsche, Genealogy, History, translated in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*.
123 *The Genealogy of Morals*, trans. (with *Ecce Homo*) W. Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale, p. 119.
124 *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, §211, p. 123.
125 *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, p. 230.
126 What is Enlightenment?, in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow, p. 50.

4 HEGEL'S POLITICAL THEOLOGY

1 See especially his article Christians and Jews after Auschwitz, in *The Emergent Church*, pp. 17–32.
2 *Faith in History and Society*, p. 46. (Translation amended: Mann is surely right in his preference for 'bourgeois' over 'middle class' in his translation of *The Emergent Church*.)
3 Ibid., p. 110.
4 Ibid., pp. 37–8.
5 Ibid., p. 102.
6 *The Emergent Church*, p. 86.
7 See for instance *Faith in History and Society*, p. 43.
8 Ibid., p. 150.
9 Ibid., p. 233.
10 Ibid., pp. 128–9.
11 Ibid., p. 57. See also chapter 6, especially.
12 Ibid., p. 105 (translation amended).
13 See ibid., chapter 10.
14 Ibid., p. 159.
15 James Bernauer quotes Philip Rieff as speaking of her 'covert theology': The Faith of Hannah Arendt, in *Amor Mundi* p. 16. This whole essay is concerned with the theological implications of her thought.

16 *Between Past and Future*, pp. 147–8.

17 *The Human Condition*, p. 234. And see also her discussion of Epictetus in *The Life of the Mind*, I, *Thinking*, pp. 154–7; II, *Willing*, pp. 73–83.

18 *The Human Condition*, pp. 73–8.

19 Ibid., p. 77. 'Needless to add, he did not say and did not mean that men must be taught how to be bad; the criminal act, though for other reasons, must also flee from being seen and heard by others. Machiavelli's criterion for political action was glory, the same as in classical antiquity, and badness can no more shine in glory than goodness.'

The Machiavelli quotation comes from *The Prince*, chapter 15. For a discussion of his other saying, 'I love my native city more than my own soul', see *On Revolution* pp. 285–6. (Arendt in fact is still more concerned by what happens when the same sort of uncompromising commitment to what is perceived as 'goodness' enters *into* the public realm: the classic example for this being Robespierre. See *On Revolution* pp. 74ff.)

20 *On Revolution*, pp. 119, 126–35. See also *Crises of the Republic*, p. 203.

21 *PR*, §260, p. 160.

22 *Between Past and Future*, p. 17. Arendt's criticism of 'the great tradition' is scattered throughout her writings. It is well summarized in Bhikhu Parekh, *Hannah Arendt and the Search for a New Political Philosophy*, chapters 1 and 2.

23 *Thinking*, pp. 152–3.

24 *The Human Condition*, p. 222. This whole section, p. 220–30, is relevant here.

25 Ibid., pp. 21, 53–4; *Between Past and Future*, pp. 52, 72–3. (Arendt does not view Christianity as a sheer regression from Greek antiquity, however: see *The Human Condition*, p. 247.)

26 *The Human Condition*, p. 229. She sees Plato's political philosophy largely as a shocked response to the death of Socrates: *Between Past and Future*, pp. 107ff.

27 If Hegel does not criticize Plato on these grounds, it is because he is more concerned with the way in which the Platonic Republic 'has as its essential the suppression of individuality' (*LHP*, II, p. 113). In this respect, he sees Plato's thought as a futile conservative reaction against the dissolvent spirit of individualism then in the process of destroying classical Greek culture.

28 In Melvyn A. Hill, ed., *The Recovery of the Public World*, p. 303.

29 Ibid., pp. 333–6:

> You know the left think that I am conservative, and the conservatives sometimes think I am left or I am a maverick or God knows what. And I must say I couldn't care less. I don't think that the real questions of this century will get any illumination by this kind of thing... So you ask me where I am. I am nowhere. I am really not in the mainstream of present or any other political thought. But not because I want to be so original – it so happens that I somehow don't fit.

30 Arendt herself stresses the continuity between her Eichmann book and her later study of the three faculties of thinking, willing and judging in *The Life of the Mind* in the introduction to that work, *Thinking*, pp. 3–4.
31 *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, pp. 287–8.
32 *PR*, §190, p. 127.
33 Ibid., §250, p. 152. He does not refer to the proletariat as a separate class. Membership of 'die Pöbel', translated by Knox as 'the rabble', although associated with poverty, is also defined by attitude. This is yet another form of self-assertion: 'a...loss of the sense of right and wrong, of honesty and the self-respect which makes a man insist on maintaining himself by his own work', bound up with 'an inner indignation against the rich, against society, against the government, etc.', ibid., §244, p. 150, and addition, p. 276.
34 Ibid., §260, p. 160.
35 Ibid., §184, p. 267.
36 Ibid., §183, p. 123.
37 See ibid., §231–49, pp. 146–52.
38 Churches as corporations: ibid., §270, p. 169; municipal authorities: §288, p. 189.
39 E.g. *PR*, §289, pp. 189–90.
40 Ibid., §255, p. 278.
41 Ibid., §290, p. 290. 'It is true', he goes on here, 'that these associations won too great a measure of self-subsistence in the Middle Ages, when they were states within states...But while that should not be allowed to happen, we may none the less affirm that the proper strength of the state lies in these associations... [I]t is of the utmost importance that the masses should be organized, because only so do they become mighty and powerful. Otherwise they are nothing but a heap, an aggregate of atomic units.' The legal concept of the 'corporation' originates in Roman law, but Hegel is also very critical of the limited scope accorded the corporate principle in ancient Rome: *LPH*, p. 107; *PR*, §357, p. 221. And see also his remarks in his earlier, unpublished essay (written around the turn of the century) on *The German Constitution*, *PolW*, pp. 159–64. Here he remarks on the same deficiency in Frederick the Great's Prussia.

For a further discussion of Hegel's doctrine on this point, see Bernard Cullen, *Hegel's Social and Political Thought: An Introduction*, pp. 91–4, 100–2; and G. Heiman, The Sources and Significance of Hegel's Corporate Doctrine, in Z. A. Pelczynski, ed., *Hegel's Political Philosophy: Problems and Perspectives.*

Cullen criticizes, in particular, the effective exclusion of the proletariat from membership in such bodies. Despite the remark cited about the urgent need for 'the masses' to be corporately 'organized', it is certainly hard to see how wage labourers, or the unemployed, ever could be, within the free market system which Hegel's anti-utopian realism compels him to accept. There no doubt is a real 'discordant

note' here – only faintly audible in the *Philosophy of Right*, more distinct in the earlier *Jenenser Realphilosophie*, where he waxes eloquent on the oppression of the labouring masses, e.g. Hoffmeister edition (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1932) I, p. 239, II, p. 232; but inescapable in principle.

42 In recent years, the term 'civil society' has been widely revived; in the first instance, as a term for the sphere of political spontaneity currently re-emerging with the break-up of totalitarianism in eastern and central Europe. But this is obviously a very different usage from Hegel's: for here 'civil society' means not so much the realm of the bourgeois, as a whole, but – far more specifically – a network of actual or would-be equivalents to his 'corporations'. There are also two other types of phenomenon which simply did not exist in his day: (a) trades unions; and, still more importantly (b) every sort of campaigning group – for peace, for human rights, for the protection of the environment – which remains independent of political parties; whose primary aim is thus not so much to win votes as to keep alive the *moral* dimension of politics. But for Hegel it is exactly this dimension that constitutes the essential holiness of – 'the state'.

This alternative usage derives, in fact, far rather from de Tocqueville; or from Gramsci. See John Keane, ed., *Civil Society and the State: New European Perspective.*

43 *The Human Condition*, p. 7.

44 Ibid., pp. 299–304.

45 See ibid., p. 321.

46 See below, pp. 179–80.

47 The American Revolution scarcely seems to have impinged on Hegel's consciousness.

48 See especially *On Revolution*, pp. 255–75.

49 See especially *Crises of the Republic*, pp. 201–4.

50 See *PR*, §181, p. 122.

51 *The Human Condition*, p. 29.

52 Ibid. In Athens, of course, most economic business was left in the hands of non-citizens – artisans, craftsmen, slaves, resident aliens – in order to free the citizens for politics.

She also refers here to the opening paragraphs of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Economics*, and the way 'it opposes the despotic one-man rule (*mon-archia*) of the household organization to the altogether different organization of the *polis*'. Besides his privileging of contemplation over action, the other revolutionary aspect of Plato's political thought, in her presentation, was his dissolution of the distinction here: the Platonic 'Republic' being nothing other than a *polis* in household form, like one single gigantic family. Ibid. pp. 223–4.

53 *On Revolution*, p. 227.

54 *The Human Condition*, pp. 43.

55 Ibid., p. 41.

56 *Between Past and Future*, p. 153.

57 Ibid., p. 154. And see also *The Human Condition*, pp. 178–81.
58 *The Human Condition*, p. 45; and again p. 60.
59 Ibid., p. 40.
60 Ibid., p. 322.
61 In *Four Essays on Liberty*.
62 See Zbigniew Pelczynski, Freedom in Hegel, in Z. Pelczynski and J. Gray, eds., *Conceptions of Liberty in Political Philosophy*. Pelczynski concludes by questioning whether Hegel may properly be termed a 'positive libertarian' at all. Drawing together a number of separate threads from the introduction to the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* and from the *Philosophy of Right*, he systematically reconstructs the 'informal historical dialectic' of liberty in Hegel, in terms of the contrasts drawn between four different conceptions, to each of which various adjectives are attached: (1) what Hegel speaks of as 'negative freedom', also 'arbitrary' or 'abstract freedom' – that is, freedom as 'ability to do what we please', the freedom of the state of nature; (2) what Hegel speaks of as 'positive freedom', also 'objective' or 'substantive freedom' – freedom in the sense of an unquestioning self-identification with the dominant values of the culture in which one lives; (3) 'subjective', 'particular' or 'formal freedom' – the negative liberty of liberal theory, freedom as a matter of civil rights, associated by Hegel as we have seen with the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the French Revolution; (4) 'rational', 'concrete' or 'absolute freedom' – the ideal, the *Aufhebung* and reconciliation of 'objective' and 'subjective' freedom. 'In the discussions of Hegel and positive liberty generally', Pelczynski remarks, 'there has been a common tendency to identify (2) and (4), and to believe that Hegel and other positive libertarians necessarily placed (2) above (3)'. It is clear, though, that such a view is only possible in so far as one ignores the true rationale of his christology.
63 *The Constitution of Liberty*, p. 29.
64 Ibid., chapter 4. On Hayek's relationship to Social Darwinism, see especially pp. 58–9.
65 His most extended discussion of this is in the essay Individualism: True and False, which appears as the opening chapter of *Individualism and Economic Order*. 'The true individualism which I shall try to defend', he remarks here, 'began its modern development with John Locke, and particularly with Bernard Mandeville and David Hume, and achieved full stature for the first time in the work of Josiah Tucker, Adam Ferguson, and Adam Smith and in that of their great contemporary, Edmund Burke... In the nineteenth century I find it represented most perfectly in the work of two of its greatest historians and political philosophers: Alexis de Tocqueville and Lord Acton' (p. 4). He opposes this to the 'false', because 'rationalistic', sort of individualism, more typical he suggests of the French and German traditions, which is critically oriented less against the centralized power of the state than

against the traditional, as such; the examples he cites are the Encyclopedists, Rousseau, the physiocrats. (He has a particularly ambivalent attitude to John Stuart Mill, whose thinking he sees as wavering between the two.)

66 *The Constitution of Liberty*, pp. 13–14.
67 This is the title of the final chapter of *Law, Legislation and Liberty*, III *The Political Order of a Free People.*
68 See *The Road to Serfdom.*
69 *The Human Condition*, part II, *passim.* Also on the continuity here, as she sees it, between capitalism and state socialism, see *Crises of the Republic*, p. 211–15.
70 *On Revolution*, p. 280. Cf. Parekh, *Hannah Arendt*, pp. 169–72.
71 In *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, 1980; reprinted in *Protest and Survive*, ed. E. P. Thompson and Dan Smith.
72 Ibid., p. 63.
73 *Early Writings*, p. 80.
74 *PR*, §262, p. 162.
75 *Early Writings*, p. 99.
76 The state Hegel describes in the *Philosophy of Right* is one that the historical development of Europe up to that point (1821) had rendered easily imaginable as a practical possibility; it does not correspond to any particular state. As for the Prussian state – judged in the light of the standards outlined here, it had a number of obvious and quite serious deficiencies: a basic lack of constitutional guarantees against the arbitrary misuse of power by the monarch; no parliamentary assembly of estates for the nation as a whole, but only province by provine; no properly public debate in these assemblies; far too little free speech in the press and elsewhere; closed courts; no trial by jury; etc. Moreover, the reform process so vigorously initiated by von Stein in 1807, and later continued by Hardenberg, had by 1821 come to a standstill; the Carlsbad Decrees of 1819 having in this respect marked a decisive turning point. Hegel can only have regretted this, yet it is true that he nowhere expresses such regret openly.
77 *Early Writings*, p. 63.
78 Ibid., p. 149.
79 Ibid., p. 65.
80 See Lucio Colletti's introduction, ibid., p. 23.
81 Most succinctly in *Crises of the Republic*, pp. 142–5.
82 See *Between Past and Future*, pp. 92–3.
83 *The Human Condition*, p. 203.
84 Ibid., p. 200.
85 Ibid., pp. 202–3.
86 Ibid., p. 201.
87 *On Revolution*, p. 12.
88 *Crises of the Republic*, pp. 113–15.
89 *Capital*, I, p. 916 in the Penguin edition. Arendt quotes this in *The*

Human Condition, p. 228; with the comment: 'Marx's dictum...sums up the conviction of the whole modern age and draws the consequences of its innermost belief that history is "made" by men as nature is "made" by God.' We come back here to the contrast between politics as 'acting' and politics as 'making'/'ruling'.

90 Melvyn A. Hill ed., *The Recovery of the Public World*, p. 330.
91 *On Revolution*, p. 181.
92 Ibid., p. 157.
93 Ibid., p. 112.
94 Ibid., p. 56.
95 Ibid., p. 94.
96 Ibid., pp. 60–1.
97 Ibid., p. 95.
98 Ibid., p. 114.
99 She qualifies this, slightly: there are isolated passages in Proudhon and Bakunin which could have helped: ibid., p. 261. She also cites Marx on the councils of the Paris Commune of 1871, and Lenin on the 'soviets' of 1905 and 1917: in both cases pointing to the conflict between the genuine enthusiasm of their initial response and a theoretical framework quite alien to what was actually happening (pp. 256–8).
100 This is the main subject of chapter 6 of *On Revolution*, entitled The Revolutionary Tradition and its Lost Treasure.
101 Ibid., pp. 265–6.
102 The two examples she picks out in particular are the February Revolution of 1917 in Russia, and the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, 'both of which lasted just long enough to show in bare outlines what a government would look like and how a republic was likely to function if they were founded on the principles of the council system', ibid., pp. 266–7.
103 Ibid., pp. 248–55.
104 See his essay Hannah Arendt: On the Concept of Power, in *Philosophical-Political Profiles*.
105 Foucault, for instance, leaves the issue more or less open. See P. Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader*, pp. 377–80: where, in the context of an interview, he hesitantly acknowledges the complementarity of Arendt's work to his own.
106 *Thinking*, p. 216. She also goes on here to cite Cato: 'Victrix causa deis placuit, sed victa Catoni' ('The victorious cause pleased the gods, but the defeated one pleases Cato'). She is here outlining the what would have become the central theme of volume III, on Judging, had she lived to write it.
107 *PR*, §340, p. 216; *PM*, §548, p. 277.
108 *Willing*, p. 39.
109 Ibid., pp. 39–51.
110 *On Revolution*, p. 52; my emphasis. See *Thinking*, pp. 94–6, on the adoption of the 'spectator' standpoint also by Kant.

111 On the Hegel/Marx relationship see especially for instance *On Revolution*, pp. 54–5.
112 Ibid., p. 153; my emphasis.
113 *Crises of the Republic*, pp. 100, 108.
114 *On Revolution*, pp. 155–6. Cf. *Between Past and Future*, pp. 163–4.
115 *LPH*, pp. 84–7. See, on this, the discussion in George Armstrong Kelly, *Hegel's Retreat from Eleusis*, chapter 7, Hegel's America.
116 *PR*, §280, Addition, p. 289. Hegel's doctrine of monarchy has, to say the least, not generally been well received. Theunissen indeed actually sees the representative role he attributes to the monarch as amounting to a sort of disastrous parody on his christology: *Hegels Lehre vom absoluten Geist als theologisch-politischer Traktat*, pp. 443–7. Cf., however, the interesting defence of the doctrine in Peter J. Steinberger, *Logic and Politics: Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, pp. 211–28.
117 Ibid., §272, p. 175.
118 *Crises of the Republic*, pp. 107–8, 229–33.
119 §270, pp. 168–9. Cf. *LHP*, I, p. 443. (Here, in the context of his discussion of the trial of Socrates, his language is somewhat sharper.)
120 *Crises of the Republic*, pp. 58–68.
121 Ibid., pp. 99–102.
122 On Hegel's doctrine of war (*PR*, §§324–40): see especially the discussion in Shlomo Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State*, chapter 10; also D. P. Verene, Hegel's Account of War, in Z. A. Pelczynski, ed., *Hegel's Political Philosophy*.
123 What does it say, for instance, about a community's grasp of the gospel when a text like John 15:13 (from the discourse at the last supper) 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends', is placed, not on a monument to prisoners of conscience, but, of all things, on war memorials?
124 See especially *On Revolution*, chapter 5; *Willing*, pp. 203–14.
125 *Willing*, p. 203.
126 *On Revolution*, p. 172.
127 Ibid., pp. 169–71; *Crises of the Republic*, pp. 85–6.
128 Hegel's verdict on this religion is, thus, unrelievedly harsh. If Greek religion is 'poetry', Roman religion is 'prose'; it lacks beauty, is 'cold' and 'abstract'; its gods appear 'old and grey', even 'mechanical'. He describes it as 'a practical religion, a religion of utility' or 'expediency', characterized by a narrowly functional 'preoccupation with finite purposes' – whether, as in the case of the cult of Fortuna Publica or Jupiter Capitolinus, concerned with the promotion of military power, or, as in the host of minor cults, with the promotion of particular economic or household interests. It is an expression of unfreedom. In the 1821 manuscript of the lectures on religion, he terms it a 'religion of *Verstand*': *LPR*, II, pp. 190–9, 206–31, 498–512, 687–99; *LPH*, pp. 289–95.
129 *PR*, §258, p. 157.
130 *Thinking*, p. 14.

131 See especially ibid., pp. 13–16, 57–8, 62–5. On 'opinion': in particular, the conclusion to her essay on Lessing, in *Men in Dark Times*, pp. 34–8.

132 What is Existenz Philosophie?, *Partisan Review*, Winter 1946, p. 39. This article, one of the first works of Arendt's intellectual maturity, is framed as an advocacy of the philosophical standpoint of Karl Jaspers.

133 *Willing*, p. 157; the quotation comes from *The Will to Power*, §419 in the Kaufmann edition.

134 *Willing*, p. 158. See also her remark in What is Existenz Philosophie? p. 41 on the intrinsic 'homelessness' of 'the human condition'.

5 CONCLUSION

1 *The Power of the Powerless*, in *Living in Truth*, p. 41.

2 *The Power of the Powerless*, p. 160.

3 *Living in Truth*, p. 45.

4 Ibid., pp. 114–16.

5 When it comes to official pronouncements and consensual documents, the commitment to truth here is somewhat less evident, with worthy abstraction so often diplomatically preferred to the naming of names. The complete failure of the final document of the European Ecumenical Assembly in Basel, in May 1989, even to mention the horrific situation in Romania is just the most glaring example.

6 See Charles Taylor, *Hegel*, p. 494. Taylor asks, 'How does a Hegelian philosopher *pray*? Certainly the prayer of petition has no meaning for him. Nor can he really thank God. What he does is to contemplate his identity with cosmic spirit, which is something quite different.' It would surely be more accurate to say that the prayer of petition *in the form the Unhappy Consciousness gives it* (i.e. as an evasion of responsibility, shoving responsibility off onto the great intervening magic maker above) has no valid meaning. But petition in its true form, from a philosophic point of view, becomes in a quite straightforward way the discipline of harmonizing subjective desire with objective reality; not repressing it, but purging it of wish-fulfilling fantasy. – 'Thy will be done'. Whilst as for thanksgiving: again, all that Hegel excludes is the confusion of this with a spirit of servility.

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Index

Abelard 18
Abraham 133, 214
Acton, Lord 171, 220
Adams, J. 181
Adorno, T. W. 123–5, 135–42, 203, 215
Advaita Vedanta 58
American Revolution 156, 163, 173–5, 219
Anselm of Canterbury 17–18, 39–40, 49, 51, 69, 76, 84, 196–7
Antigone (Sophocles) 35, 98–9
anti-semitism 11–12
Aquinas, Thomas 18, 49, 71–7
Arendt, H. 155–83, 216–19, 221–4
Aristophanes 23, 99
Aristotle 72, 75, 157, 162, 212
atonement *see* forgiveness, incarnation
Avineri, S. 212, 223

Bacon 113
Balthasar, H. U. von 64
Barth, K. 59, 64, 71–7, 83, 86, 90–7, 100, 123, 196, 201, 205–7
Bauer, B. 203
'Beautiful Soul' 36–7, 41, 47, 67, 120, 156, 160, 194
Beauvoir, S. de 99, 206
Benjamin, W. 136, 138
Bentham, J. 143
Bergson, H. 163
Berlin, I. 165–6, 197
Boehme, J. 62, 211
Bonhoeffer, D. 64
Brito, E. 76, 83–4, 204
Broch, H. 189
Bruaire, C. 202
Buddhism 58
Burke, E. 114

Chapelle, A. 202
'Christa' 101, 207
christology *see* incarnation
'civil society' 160–4, 170–2, 219
Clement of Alexandria 60
Comte, A. 26, 111–3
Condorcet, M. J. A. N. C. de 113
confession *see* forgiveness
conscience 35–41, 47, 49, 67, 81, 195
corporations 161, 218–19
creation 84, 87–9
Crites, S. 85, 214
crucifixion 5–6, 11–12, 17–18, 33–4, 45, 68–70, 145, 182

'death of God' 23, 33–4, 64–5
Deleuze, G. 146
Descartes, R. 49, 197
dialectic 137–9
Dinesen, I. 158
'discordant note' 65–7, 77
Docetism *see* Gnosticism
Dorfles, G. 189
Dostoevsky, F. 182

Eckhart, Meister 195
Eichmann, A. 159, 165, 169
Elrod, J. W. 126
Enlightenment 33, 35, 66, 115–20, 150–1, 211–12

Fackenheim, E. 77, 103, 108–9, 122, 192, 206
fall 83, 85–6, 91, 132–4
family 163, 170–1, 219
Fanon, F. 173
feminist theology 97–101
Ferguson, A. 220
Feuerbach, L. 78–82, 171
Fichte, J. G. 42–55, 58–9, 67, 87, 105, 107, 111–14, 116, 121, 165–6, 195–7, 199
Findlay, J. N. 21
Fiorenza, E. S. 97

forgiveness 32, 37–41, 68–70
Foucault, M. 140–48, 171, 222
Fourier, C. 111, 113
French Revolution 26, 112, 114–16, 118–20, 127, 170, 173–4, 181, 212
Fries, J. 121, 179, 212

Garaudy, R. 193
Geist see Spirit
Germino, D. 210
Gnosticism 11, 112, 124, 210–11
Gollwitzer, H. 68–70, 97
Göschel, K. F. 202–3
Gramsci, A. 219
Greece, ancient 21, 26–8, 31, 47, 65, 80, 98–9, 106–7, 118–19, 155, 163–4, 172, 181, 193, 219
Green, T. H. 166
Guattari, F. 146

Habermas, J. 175
Haller, K. L. von 121, 212
Hampson, D. 101
Havel, V. 184–8
Hayek, F. 166–8
Heiberg, J. L. 129
Heidegger, M. 135, 154, 183, 185
Heller, E. 193
Hick, J. 95, 206
Hinrichs, H. W. F. 198, 201
history *see* Spirit
Hobbes, T. 162, 181, 212
Hölderlin, F. 27
Hyppolite, J. 21, 34, 37

'idealism' 43–4, 104–5, 136–7
immortality 78–82, 192, 200, 203
incarnation 12–13, 16–34, 45–6, 56, 59, 63–5, 68–70, 79, 82, 84–5, 93, 95, 100–1, 193, 203, 208
infinity 43–6, 49–54, 62–3, 198
Irenaeus 85, 112, 195
Islam 66

Jacobi, F. H. 42–55, 58–9, 67, 73, 87, 116, 197
Jefferson, T. 175
Joachim of Fiore 112
Judaism 6–8, 21, 27, 106, 180–1, 193, 206
Jugendschriften, Hegel's 21, 77, 106–8
Jüngel, E. 64, 194, 196, 200
Justin Martyr 60

Katka, F. 26
Kant, I. 42–55, 58–9, 67, 80, 87, 95, 106–8, 116–17, 147, 154, 176, 179, 182–3, 196–9
Kaufmann, W. 193, 209
Kierkegaard, S. A. 125–35, 137–40, 152, 177
'kitsch' 1–6, 11–13, 26, 90–2, 109–11, 113, 122–3, 126, 133, 145, 155, 159, 179, 185, 188, 189
Kojève, A. 111, 140, 176, 193, 210
Kundera, M. 1–4, 6, 26, 109–10, 126, 149, 189, 191
Küng, H. 64–5, 75–6, 83–4, 202, 204
Kusy, M. 184

Lauer, Q. 24, 76
Leibniz, G. W. von 49, 56–7, 199
Léonard, A. 202
Lessing, G. E. 130
Loewenberg, J. 21–2, 25
Löwith, K. 193
Lukács, G. 136, 215
Luther, M. 39–40, 69, 118–20
Lyotard, J.-F. 146

Mably, G. Bonnot de 113
McFague, S. 207
Machiavelli, N. 156, 217
Mannheim, K. 136
Marheineke, K. 14
Martensen, H. L. 129, 214
Marxism 26, 11–13, 135–42, 163, 165, 170–6, 215, 222–3
Melanchthon, P. 39–40
Metz, J.-B. 149–55, 177
Moltmann, J. 64, 200
monarchy, 177–8, 223
monasticism 20, 118, 128–9, 195
Montesquieu, C.-L. S. de 172
Morley, J. 207
Müller, J. 87–8
Müntzer, T. 39–41
mysticism 91, 100

Nash, H. T. 168–9
Navickas, J. L. 22, 195
Nietzsche, F. 37, 135, 142, 146–8, 163, 172, 183

Oakeshott, M. 121–2, 166, 212
Origen 60

Pannenberg, W. 87, 204–5
pantheism 63–4, 77–8, 83–9

Pascal 33, 157
Paul 9–11, 38–9
Philo 60
'pietism' 66–7, 72–4, 82, 117, 120, 160, 200
Platonism 53, 59–60, 64, 81, 105, 124, 157–8, 162, 165, 193, 199, 217, 219
political parties 109–10, 122, 143, 161, 175
Popper, K. 209
power 143–4, 171–5
Proclus 59–60
'proofs' of God's existence 49–54, 197–8
Prussia 121, 179, 218, 221

Quakers 179

Rahner, K. 64, 154–5
'reflective philosophy of subjectivity' 42–55, 66, 87, 95–6, 102, 105, 116, 120
Reformation 39–41, 80, 117–20, 196, 211–12
resurrection 5–6
revolutions 163, 173–5, 222; *see also* American Revolution, French Revolution
Richter, F. 78–9
Ritschl, A. 91, 96–7, 101–2
Robespierre, M. 174, 217
Roman Catholicism 20, 31, 117–18, 120, 150, 200, 212
Roman Empire 35, 65, 80, 108, 155, 181, 186, 193, 218, 223
Roman Republic 163, 180–1, 218, 223
Rose, G. 135, 140
Rousseau, J.-J. 106, 113–14, 121, 181, 221

Saint-Simon, H. de 111, 113
Sartre, J.-P. 141, 173, 215
'Scepticism' 28–31, 46, 64, 194
Schelling, F. W. J. von 54–5, 138, 198–9
Schiller, J. C. F. von 27, 47, 107, 176, 209
Schlegel, F. 27, 117
Schleiermacher, F. 42, 73–4, 91, 94–7, 102, 201, 205–6
Shklar, J. 21, 193
sin *see* fall
Sittlichkeit 47, 153, 179
slavery 27–8, 46, 81, 174
Smith, A. 163, 220
Smith, J. E. 62
social contract 181
Socrates 125, 132, 179, 193, 210
Sölle, D. 14, 39–41, 64, 68–70, 97, 101, 195
Solomon, R. C. 21, 193
Sophists 193
Sorel, G. 173
sovereignty 144, 177–8
'speculation' 196
Spinoza, B. de 41, 48, 54–9, 62–3, 67, 89, 138, 154, 165, 198–9
Spirit 44, 52–3, 55–8, 62–3, 67, 84, 104, 139–40, 176
state, Hegel's concept of the 119–22, 160–1, 165, 170–1, 177–9, 212, 221
Steuart, J. 107, 209
Stirner, M. 203
'Stoicism' 28–31, 46, 64, 155–6, 194
Strauss, D.-F. 63–4, 82, 203
system, philosophical 51–4, 137–9

Talmon, J. L. 197, 210
Taoism 58
Taylor, C. 27, 196
Tholuck, F. A. G. 202
Thoreau, H. D. 179
Tocqueville, A. de 219, 220
totalitarianism 111–12, 127, 138, 139, 150–2, 158–9, 166–9, 172, 184–6
Trinity 24–5, 45, 58–67, 89, 101, 199
Troeltsch, E. 91, 95

'Unhappy Consciousness' 20–34, 46, 70, 72–6, 78–9, 82, 84, 86, 106, 111, 114, 116, 122, 132–4, 156–7, 159, 176, 188, 192–4, 214, 224

Verstand 42–4, 57, 62, 73, 88, 102, 116, 161, 178, 182, 223
violence 173–5, 221–2
Voegelin, E. 110–13, 122–5, 129, 135, 137, 176, 209–11, 213

Wahl, J. 21, 106
war 168–9, 178–80, 223
Wartburg Festival 179, 212
Westphal, M. 211, 214
Winckelmann, J. J. 26
Wollstonecraft, M. 98
Wordsworth, W. 115

Yerkes, J. 77, 208