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Philosophical afterthought and Hegel's account of the Fall in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*

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Abstract

The purpose of the essay is to offer a close reading of Hegel's account of the Fall along theologically orthodox lines. To this extent I am more in agreement with traditional readers of Hegel like Peter Hodgson, and more recently theologians like Graham Ward and Nicholas Adams who wish to bring Hegel closer to a 'generous orthodoxy' (Ward, p. 290) in order to open up the possibility of appropriating elements of the Hegelian project for the purposes of Christian theology and philosophy. In so far as I will argue for an orthodox reading of the Fall in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, I will nevertheless try to show how this more or less theologically traditional reading of a religious account in Hegel engenders a sophisticated and in many ways novel meta-philosophical argument for the foundations of philosophy grounded in the features of human thought which participates in divine thought.

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Introduction

Hegel made a habit of denigrating the practice of introductions and their value in the introductions to his written works whilst taking care to ensure that they were the best part of the entire book. I will not be reproducing this tendency here, though it should be pointed out that this essay focuses on the introduction or 'preliminary conception' of Hegel's *Encyclopaedia Logic*, itself the introduction to Hegel's system, the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. Moreover, this essay is in many ways about *beginnings*; it is about the beginnings of human beings and what the Christian religion has come to describe as their 'Fall', and it is about the beginnings of philosophy which Hegel interprets in light of this story of Fall. The purpose of the essay is to offer a close reading of Hegel's account of the Fall along theologically orthodox lines. To this extent I am more in agreement with traditional readers of Hegel like Peter Hodgson, and more recently theologians like Graham Ward and Nicholas Adams who wish to bring Hegel closer to a 'generous orthodoxy' (Ward, p. 290) in order to open up the possibility of appropriating elements of the Hegelian project for the purposes of Christian theology and philosophy. In so far as I will argue for an orthodox reading of the Fall in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, I will nevertheless try to show how this more or less theologically traditional reading of a religious account in Hegel engenders a sophisticated and in many ways novel meta-philosophical argument for the foundations of philosophy which is nonetheless congenial to the Christian tradition.

Instead of criticising accounts which castigate the Hegelian reading of the Fall as heterodox, I develop a positive account of my own in the course of which various disagreements and responses emerge. Though this essay is focused on the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, where the most famous exposition of the story of the Fall occurs and where this is explicitly linked to the general project of

philosophy as afterthought, I refer, on a number occasions to Hegel's other works. Thus, I refer to his early works in situating his preoccupation with the Fall; to the *Science of Logic* in order to supplement the 'lesser' *Encyclopaedia Logic*; and to the Lectures on the *Philosophy of Religion* and the *Philosophy of History* where Hegel also refers to the Fall narrative to occasionally supplement his account of it. Throughout the essay, I refer to 'religion' by which I mean the Christian religion, unless otherwise stated; and I refer to 'thought' by which I mean thought as the 'highest' faculty of the human mind, rather than, in Leibnizian terms, all mental activity. Lastly, in the spirit of Paul Franks, and I think, Hegel himself, I will develop my interpretation of the Hegelian account of the Fall on the basis of the available textual evidence and in accordance with the principle of charity, not simply as I think *we* ought to read Hegel on the Fall nor necessarily as *Hegel* reads the Fall, but how Hegel *ought* to read the Fall (cf. Franks, p. 8).

I

Making a beginning

In §24 of the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, G.W.F. Hegel offers his definition of philosophy, explains the problems that his work is intended to pursue and elucidate, and expounds his account of the story of the Fall of Adam and Eve. This concomitance is significant. This essay is concerned with the occurrence and significance of this combination of themes. In particular, it is concerned with the 'Mosaic myth of the Fall' and why it is arguably the only part of the Old Testament which Hegel finds to be of interest¹. Philosophy should not, according to Hegel, be content with merely being tolerated by religion and nor should it uphold the view that myths and religious accounts are obsolete (Hegel 1991, §24 A3, p. 61). The story of the Fall is one such religious account which is especially apposite for Hegelian philosophy in general and *Logic* in particular because like *Logic*, it is concerned with thought and knowledge², with their origin and their significance (*Ibid.*). Accordingly, this essay is also concerned with thought and knowledge and with both their origins and their ends in Hegel. In as much as it is about the Fall, it is concerned also with action, specifically human action, and then again, the specific actions of Adam and Eve which Hegel in his thought notably assimilates with cognition. The 'absolute idea' expresses the identity of both the theoretical and practical ideas, or more precisely, the ideas of what is true, namely cognition, and what is good, namely moral action. The formulation of this identity marks the endpoint of philosophy, but the need for it, the need to reconcile the theoretical with the practical marks its beginning. As Graham Ward has argued in his pivotal essay 'How Hegel became a philosopher: Logos and the economy of logic', the young Hegel (who before his move to Frankfurt in 1797 expressed virtually no interest in philosophical problems – particularly in logic and epistemology) 'could only become a professional philosopher' - as he became increasingly aware that he could not

1 That the Fall narrative may be the only part of the Old Testament that Hegel finds of interest should not be taken to mean that he misreads it or the Old Testament more generally; as we will see later, Hegel thinks that the rest of the Old Testament and in particular the Davidic psalms are consistent with and in response to the pain of fallenness (Hegel 2001, p. 340).

2 Hegel speaks here of 'cognition' (*Erkennen*) which he often uses when he wishes to speak of thought (*Denken*; but also sometimes 'the thought' or 'a thought' (*Gedanke*)) and knowledge (*Wissen*) together.

become a professional theologian - 'when he had found the place from which he could speak philosophically, and that place has much to do with developing a philosophical theology' (Ward, p. 271). It has much to do with the personal and practical problems in the social, political, and especially religious spheres which preoccupied him in his youth (and continued to do so for the rest of his life) whose unresolvability led him not only to philosophy but, as Raymond Plant writes, 'to a particular conception of the purpose and character of philosophical explanation (Plant, p. 15). Hegel once explained, in a letter to Schelling in 1800 where he expressed his intentions to go to Jena, how his philosophical ambitions and products had developed out of pre-philosophical concerns:

In my scientific development, which started with the more subordinate needs of men, I was driven to science [philosophy], and the ideal of my adolescence had to take the form of reflection and be transformed into a system. I now ask myself, while I am still engaged with it, what kind of return to intervention can be found in the lives of men (Hegel 1952, pp. 59-60)³.

The issue of this association of the pre-philosophical concerns in 'the lives of men' and the new philosophical problems that Hegel is now engaging with is what Ward has called a *para-philosophical* problem or question:

when we inquire into "who is in a position to speak for philosophy" and "what are the conditions for the position itself", we are both reflecting upon the nature of the philosophical project itself and doing philosophy—certainly in Hegel's case. One set of questions is not "above" or even "prior" to the philosophical investigation itself; the one inquiry stands "beside", "near" or "in the presence of" [para] the other: we cannot venture into exploring the possibilities for doing philosophy without in fact doing philosophy. This is especially so in Hegel's case because of the participation of human reasoning within divine reasoning (Ward, p. 271).

And it is especially so in Hegel's case because of a unique feature he attributes to thought called the *overgrasping* (*übergreifen*; 'overreaching', 'overarching') of thought which underlies both the

3 My translation; see Hegel, G.W.F., *Briefe von und an Hegel* ed. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Meiner, 1952).

systematicity and presuppositionlessness of his philosophy and is, as we will see, crucial for his reading of the story of the Fall. Apropos the Fall, we will mostly be concerned with the latter, viz., the presuppositionlessness of the Hegelian system⁴. As a courtesy of this tendency, the preliminary exposition of the problems which are being addressed is in Hegel's writings only ever carried out with great reluctance and even difficulty.

For as he explains,

[p]hilosophy lacks the advantage, which the other sciences enjoy, of being able to *presuppose* its ob-jects⁵ as given immediately by representation. And, with regard to its beginning and advance, it cannot *presuppose* the *method* of cognition as one that is already accepted. It is true that it does, initially, have its ob-jects in common with religion. Both of them have the *truth* in the highest sense of the word as their ob-ject, for both hold that God and God *alone* is the truth. Both of them also go on to deal with the realm of the finite, with *nature* and the *human spirit*, and with their relation to each other and to God as to their truth. Hence, philosophy can, of course, presuppose some *familiarity* with its ob-jects; in fact it *must* presuppose this, as well as an interest in these ob-jects. The reason is that in the order of time consciousness produces *representations* of ob-jects before it produces *concepts* of them; and that the *thinking* spirit only advances to thinking cognition and comprehension by going *through* representation and by converting itself to it (Hegel 1991, §1, p. 24).

Hegel's own emphases in the opening paragraph of the *Encyclopaedia Logic* above distil the essential themes and their various interrelations with which the *Logic* and this essay are concerned. Philosophy cannot presuppose the methods of the form of cognition and must therefore presuppose the familiarity with the objects of religion whose content is the same as that of the objects of philosophy. Indeed, it *must* do so - this is the only way in which philosophy can begin. This clarifies and qualifies the claim in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* that in so far as something is familiar then it is not well known (Hegel 1977a, §31, p. 18). The significance afforded to religion here - from a man

4 For an account which focuses on systematicity see Franks, P., *All or Nothing: Systematicity, Transcendental Arguments, and Skepticism in German Idealism* (London: Harvard University Press, 2005).

5 Hegel's emphasis on 'objects' (*Gegenstände*) is mysteriously missing in the Wallace translation.

who once called making presuppositions 'stupid'⁶ – is considerable. But because the beginning of philosophy is a philosophical beginning, it requires itself to demonstrate the necessity of its content and prove the being of its objects, thus establishing the epistemological inadequacy of our familiarity with the true (Hegel 1991, §1, p. 24). 'The difficulty of making a beginning arises immediately', because a beginning, by virtue of being something immediate, cannot be presuppositionless. The way to make a presuppositionless beginning is to posit the beginning as our presupposition. What we presuppose at the beginning of philosophy is precisely religion and its representations and for Hegel the key representation at this stage is that of the Fall of Man since without the conception of the Fall (which is to be understood as - among other things - a fall from pre-history) we would not have an immediate (*unmittelbare*) presupposition insusceptible to the infinite regress of prior beginnings. Thus philosophical thought is always already *afterthought*⁷ (*Nachdenken*). Paradoxically, and as we will see in the conclusion of this essay, it is always already mediated (Hegel 1991, §2, p. 26).

Nihil est in sensu, quod non fuerit in intellectu

Hegelian philosophy is grounded in the features of thought. The possibility of its beginning is attributable to the identity of its objects with those of religion. One way of understanding Hegel's claim about this identity is in terms of his philosophical anthropology or what he identifies as the *differentia specifica* of humanity which is paradoxically also its universal (cf. Žižek 2006, p. 34).

6 In the *Science of Logic* Hegel says that making presuppositions is 'stupid – I have no other word for it' (Hegel 2010, p. 21).

7 'Nachdenken' is sometimes rendered as 'thinking-over' and 'meta-thinking'; it is what Hegel is arguably already talking about, in his letter to Schelling, when he says 'das Ideal des Jünglingsalters mußte sich zur *Reflexionsform*, in ein System *verwandeln*'. Afterthought or meta-thinking does not designate thinking about thinking as such but it may include, as we have seen, thinking about certain kinds of thoughts. It is thought about content whose original form is not thought. It presupposes the aforementioned transposition of a content (containing thoughts, but not in the form of thought) to the form of thought. Therefore 'thinking-over' is appropriate in so far as it expresses thinking *over* some other form or content (*denken nach...*) and contains the implied 'over-thinking' of the overgrasping of thought. It is meta-thinking that 'initially contains the principle of philosophy' (Hegel 1991, §3, p. 30).

8 There is a strong analogy here with theology as *Nachdenken* (as has been emphasised for instance by Rowan Williams) understood as the thinking consideration of God's being in light of his self-giving to thought. See also Milbank, J., and Pickstock, C., *Truth in Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 17-52.

(1) *Humans* are distinguished from *animals* by their thinking

(2) Everything human *is* human *if and only if* it is brought about through thinking

The second premiss has two interpretations:

(2.i) All activities *brought about through thinking* are human activities

(2.ii) *All* human activities are brought about through thinking

(2.i) is a trivial restatement of the old belief that humans are distinguished from the lower animals by thinking; 'it may seem to be a cliché, but it must also seem remarkable that there is need to recall this old belief' (Hegel 1991, §2, p. 25). It suggests that human activities are cognitive or thought-ridden in nature. But Hegel is interested in (2.ii), the view that *all* human activities, thinking or otherwise, involve, or are brought about by, *thought*. He rejects the traditional view of the subject which postulates a seat or locus of a number of faculties amongst which thought is but *one* capacity. Thus in addition to thinking of thought as one form amongst other forms like desire, willing, etc., we also think thought as involved in the *content* of other forms *as* thought-content.

When thinking is interpreted in this way, it appears in quite a different light than when we simply say that, along with and beside other faculties such as intuiting, representing, willing, and the like, we have a faculty of thinking. If we regard thinking as what is genuinely universal in everything natural and everything spiritual, too, then it overgrasps⁹ all of them and is the foundation of them all (Hegel, §24A1, p.57).

The most immediate definition of *übergreifen* which suggests itself is that it is the positive aspect of sublation (*Aufheben*) (as opposed to determinate negation¹⁰). The metaphoric content of 'overgrasping' originates in Zeno who used the five fingers of his hand to represent the different

9 In allem menschlichen Anschauen ist Denken; ebenso ist das Denken das Allgemeine in allen Vorstellungen, Erinnerungen und überhaupt in jeder geistigen Tätigkeit, in allem Wollen, Wünschen usf. Dies alles sind nur weitere Spezifikationen des Denkens. Indem wir das Denken so auffassen, so erscheint dasselbe in einem anderen Verhältnis, als wenn wir bloß sagen: wir haben Denkvermögen unter und neben anderen Vermögen, als Anschauen, Vorstellen, Wollen u. dgl. Betrachten wir das Denken als das wahrhaft Allgemeine alles Natürlichen und auch alles Geistigen, so greift dasselbe über alles dieses über und ist die Grundlage von allem.

10 More recently, Alain Badiou has distinguished in an analogous manner between *destruction* and *subtraction*, the negative and positive aspects (respectively) of *negation*.

apprehensions of the five senses; he called the gesture of closing his fist 'comprehensive sensation' (in Hegel we would call it speculative comprehension), which he succeeded by the act of grasping his closed fist with his other hand in order to show the comprehensive, overgrasping, overreaching, or overarching of thought (Hegel 1991, p. xxvi). (This logic is immanent to Hegel's development of the positions or *Stellungen* of thought vis-à-vis objectivity in the Logical treatise where each ascending phase consists of both a negative and positive moment, eg. naïve realist metaphysics/empiricist skepticism, or dialectical/speculative thinking¹¹ (Hegel 1991, §26, §37, §79; cf. Žižek 2014, pp. 15-6).

The first thing that is meant when it is said that thought is universal is that our other mental forms are deeply thought-ridden. An animal does not see a cello *as* a cello, whereas Rostropovich may see it and *think*, for instance, of playing one of Bach's suites¹². It is the distinction between an unthinking disposition, which may be biologically innate or artificially conditioned, to respond to members of a class of stimuli (of all kinds of sense data), and a thinking disposition to respond to them *as* members of that class¹³ (Davidson, p. 137). This is connected with the (arguably) unique ability of human beings to form universal concepts (Inwood 1983, p. 27). Animals focus on individuals such as particular objects or sensations, and these forms are in themselves non-universal, however the involvement of the universal form of thought in them elevates them to human perceptions, desires, etc..

Thus man is always thinking, even when he simply intuitively; if he considers something or other he always

11 Hegel's original division in the first *Enxyclopedia* is (1) First position: naïve realist metaphysics; (2) Second position: (2.1) empiricist *skepticism*, (2.2) Kantian critical philosophy; and (3) Third position: immediate knowing. He then describes the three sides of the logical: (a) the understanding; (b) the dialectical or negatively rational side; and (c) the speculative or positively rational side. Žižek reads these two sequences together to form: (1) naïve realist metaphysics; (2) empiricist skepticism; (3) transcendental criticism; (4) direct intuitive knowing of the Absolute; (5) dialectical thinking; and (6) speculative thinking. This is inadequate in so far as it leaves untheorised the status of the understanding, particularly since Hegel's first two moments mirror Przywara's logical and dialectical moments, and the attempt to articulate a positively rational speculative thinking derives from similar problems involved in negative dialectical thought that Przywara himself traces in order to develop analogical thinking. However it is important in so far as it clearly demarcates the positive ((1) (4) (6)) and negative ((2) (3) (5)) moments.

12 Preferably the fifth in C minor.

13 See Davidson, D., 'What Thought Requires' in *Problems of Rationality* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), for a formal discussion of this topic.

considers it as something universal, he fixes on something singular [individual], and makes it stand out, thus withdrawing his attention from something else, and he takes it as something abstract and universal, even if it is universal in a merely formal way (Hegel 1991, §24A1, p. 58).

French phenomenological thought, particularly that of Sartre, would later adopt this view as well as the insights of Gestalt psychology to develop the theory of *nihilation*, or the unique ability of human consciousness to 'create nothingness' by carving out of a background of undifferentiated being (like a sculptor who carves out of a slab of marble), whose first expression is in thought¹⁴ (Sartre, pp. 3-6, 8-10). However Hegel's argument is that universal concepts are involved in all of our thinking, perceiving, desiring, etc., so that the universal is involved, in phenomenological terms, in the nihilation of the individual (cf. Inwood, p. 27). Now it is important that it is the case that all human mental states and activities are objects of thought whereas the converse is not; there can be a thought about perception or desire, including one to which is internal the thought that a perception involves an individual, but there cannot be a perception about a thought, including the perception that a thought involves a universal. (This is but one exemplification of thought's *overgrasping* of other forms, and how philosophy operates. It also entails that the universal itself can overgrasp the particular, a point which Hegel makes in his discussion on the relation between materiality and immateriality, and form and content (Hegel 2007, §389).)

Most fundamentally, this relation between thought and other states is grasped in terms of their distinction as forms. It is important to say that Hegel sides with Plato in upholding a distinction between thoughts and other states (*noesis vs doxa, eikasia*, etc.) unlike e.g. Leibniz who considers all mental or psychic activity as thought varying in degrees of distinctness and clarity¹⁵. The states of seeing and wanting to play the cello differ in *form* (the first has the form of perception, the second of desire), whereas seeing a cello and seeing a violin differ in *content*. However, the

14 This is a view which comes close to being susceptible to Delp's (otherwise failed) criticism of Heidegger that when one advances such a theory of the subject one risks turning Nothingness into the analogans of man's being (see Wolfe, p. 175).

15 This is why Otto Weininger, to the extent that he wishes to remain a Platonist must invent the idea of a *henid* - of an unclear and underdeveloped thought – as something for women to think in.

distinction between forms does not supervene on the distinction between mental states. Thought designates a universal or 'absolute form' (Hegel 1991, §19, p. 46; §149, p. 225; §164, p. 242) because it is involved in the content of all *other* forms. (Indeed, our feelings and representations are *determined* and *permeated* by thinking (Hegel 1991, §2, p. 25; cf. Hegel 1977a, pp. 58-104).) It is a universal or absolute form and not a universal content not simply because I am not perceiving or desiring thought but also because thought corresponds to its content in a way that other forms do not (Hegel 1991, §3; Inwood, p. 28).

Accordingly, thought distinguishes humans from animals and so every act of human perception or desiring is unlike that of an animal's in so far as it is imbued with thought. This is crucial for the 19th century debate (which is no less important today) on religious *feeling*. For the need to recall the old belief of the uniqueness of human thought results from the prevalence of the epistemological prejudice which separates *feeling* and *thinking* from each other in such a way that they are supposedly opposed to each other to the measure even of hostility, with feeling – and in particular religious feeling – being thought of as something which could be 'contaminated, perverted or even totally destroyed by thinking'. It results from the idea that 'religion and religiosity essentially do not have their root and their place in thinking' (Hegel 1991, §2, p. 25). Hegel's preface to H.W.F. Hinrich's *Religion in its Inner Relation to Science* is still considered by some the central and most lucid of his contributions to the religious debate of his time¹⁶ (and it is certainly his most quoted). However, the main concern of this famous text is not so much the denigration of feeling but the exaltation and emphasis of thought. That Christianity would be reduced to a canine affair should the Schleiermachean thesis of absolute dependence be correct is a sentiment which conveys more the theological significance of having knowledge of God than the inadequacy of feeling (which is in any case epistemological and not theological). In the Hinrich preface, the 'distinctive character' of human beings; that which 'raises man above the animal', namely *thought*, is identified with 'the

16 See Luft, E., *Hegel, Heinrichs, and Schleiermacher on Feeling and Reason in Religion: The texts of their 1821-22 Debate* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1987).

knowledge of God, of truth' (Luft, p. 352). This is one of the many places in which Hegel identifies philosophy with theology, but it is of crucial importance because it explicitly relates philosophy and theology to thought *qua* the *imago dei* which he will also go on to do in his account of the Fall.

In as much as this is all true, faith is not opposed to knowledge but is a form of knowledge (Hegel 1984, pp. 386-389). The malaise of modernity is not that there is no faith because, as Gavin Hyman suggests, the modern reconstitution of the subject vis-à-vis reality in the *nominative* mode¹⁷ (which then has the world as its object in its scientific inquiries) creates the conditions for the possibility of atheism as a *default*, but that it adopts a standpoint of disunion apropos faith and knowledge. Faith is the most basic form of the immediate certainty that God *is* and that he is 'this universality having being in and for itself, outside me and independent of me, not merely having being for me' (Hegel 1984, p. 386; Hodgson, p. 107). Indeed, as Hegel showed in both *Faith and Knowledge* and the *Differenzschrift*, the division maintained by Kant and Fichte but also Jacobi (Hegel 1977b, p. 189) between theoretical and practical reason in general and faith and knowledge in particular, precluded them from conceiving a substantial freedom¹⁸ (Rose, p. 101). This is because the relationship between faith and knowledge was no longer conceived in speculative terms. For on the speculative thesis of the overgrasping of thought, knowledge of God can only be *known* or cognised if it is always already possessed by faith, or rather if faith in God as the process of divine thought overgrasping human forms which enables the participation of human thought in divine thought, always already contains this thought-content as the *imago deo*. Accordingly, this essentially pre-theoretical apprehension is also 'pre-historical' (hence the identification of the Edenic state with immediate knowledge). We may say that it is epistemologically grounded in external authority, including that of others, but it is chiefly grounded in the dual witness of the spirit, viz., the witness

17 This contrasts with medieval theological epistemology:

[t]here, human beings understood themselves as existing in an *accusative* mode. They, and the wider reality of which they were a part, were created by God and were therefore, in a sense, *objects* of God's creative activity. The only true 'subject', therefore was God, the creator and 'author' of all known reality (Hyman, p.).

18 See Hegel, G.W.F., *Faith and Knowledge* tr. W. Cerf, H.S. Harris (New York NY: State University of New York Press, 1977); and Hegel, G.W.F., *The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy* tr. H.S. Harris, W. Cerf (New York NY: State University of New York, 1977).

of the Holy Spirit as well as the witness of one's own spirit (Hegel 1984, p. 389). Crucially, Hegel says that the content of faith uniquely 'conforms to the nature of my spirit' (*Ibid.*, pp. 243-345). This is the presence of thought as the overgrasping content in the preceding forms of feeling and representation, the two formal (respectively subjective and objective) modalities of faith. This is all possible, as we shall see, because the overgrasping of thought establishes for Hegel a theory of knowledge by identity, albeit along more rationalist rather than mystical lines. Hence it is not so much feeling that makes Christianity a religion of dogs, but the dogs – in so far as Schleiermacher makes humans dogs.

God cannot be known by an immediate sensible *intuition* (and for this reason only 'faith' (*Glauben*) will suffice¹⁹, despite Hegel's general avoidance of the term, courtesy of his aversion towards Jacobi) because he is not an object of *sense* experience. However, the three categories (Hegel calls them objects) *freedom*, *spirit*, and *God* are given in experience because they 'present themselves as infinite with regard to their content' which is included in pre-thinking forms of their apprehension (Hegel 1991, §8, p. 32). As Gillian Rose has pointed out, the idea humans have of God corresponds for Hegel to their idea of their own freedom (Rose, p. 98). Feelings concerning right, ethical life, and religion *are* feelings – and therefore are experienced – but their content has its root and its seat in thinking alone (Hegel 1991, §8, p. 32). The old saying '*Nihil est in intellectu, quod non fuerit in sensu*²⁰', falsely attributed to Aristotle but used (rightly) to distil the essence of his philosophy is therefore affirmed by Hegelian speculative philosophy in conjunction with its dialectical inversion '*Nihil est in sensu, quod non fuerit in intellectu*'.

The polemic against Schleiermacher emphasises this most crucial feature of thought. It is directed against the entirety of the Lutheran tradition (at least as Hegel saw it in his own time) with its

¹⁹ The usual term in Hegel's epistemology is 'intuition'.

²⁰ 'There is nothing in the intellect that has not been in sense experience.'

austere and essentially 'Socratic' epistemology, and opposition to philosophical speculation. (In the *Encyclopaedia Logic* he references Lutheranism before going on to say in a distinctly and deliberately un-Lutheran fashion, that *Nachdenken* is practically religious in so far as its contributions to self-comprehension seek and eventuate union with God (Hegel 1991, §7, pp. 30-31).) The Lutheran culture of epistemological humility, a culture in which all members are called to confess their ignorance of God contributes to the erosion of humanity's self-comprehension and ultimately something like the cultural and philosophical regression to animality (Luft, p. 352). Hegel identifies three of its presuppositions which he claims are mere prejudices; (1) humans have no knowledge of the truth, (2) humans cannot attain knowledge of the truth, and (3) religion is solely a matter of feeling (Luft, pp. 344-346). Commentators have observed that Hegel associates (1) and (2) with Kantian philosophers of religion, and (3) with Schleiermacher (Possen, p. 249). (Each side in fact is to be associated with one 'principle'; logically (1) is simply the corollary of (2).) So whilst the Kantian principle is that humans can never have knowledge of the truth, and the Schleiermachean principle is that they can only feel it, both views hold for both sides in so far as for the critical philosophers of religion our relation to the truth is denuded (accessed only as a regulative ideal), and for the Schleiermacheans it already is denuded by its confinement to feeling. Hegel's analysis is then inconsistent because it identifies the two positions at different stages of their development. The Kantian position has denied knowledge of the truth but has yet to, as part of Hegel's chain of thought, assert its as a regulative ideal in denuded epistemic form, whereas the Schleiermachean position has long ago abandoned knowledge of the truth and has already asserted the denuded relation to truth as one of feeling. But in his conclusion, it is clear that Hegel has this in mind because he goes on to attack both for their theological anthropology, for their denigration of the image of God and the divinity of reason. The reason that the reaction to this polemic has overwhelmingly concerned itself with Schleiermacher, rather than Kant has to do with two things. Firstly, the former, as already indicated, appears in the text as the more complete position. But secondly and more importantly, Schleiermacher has a more robust *theological* reply to Hegel,

whereas Kant has a merely *philosophical* one. Though as Ward has recently pointed out (with regard to some of Hegel's earliest texts),

the “Life of Jesus” is not simply a Kantian exposition of the New Testament, and the scholars are slow to recognize this. A rather different anthropology informs the whole text, because, for Kant, human beings have knowledge only of the phenomenal world—they are cut off from the noumenal world—and so “God” can only be a regulative idea, not a constitutive one, even when it comes to proving His existence in Kant’s argument on the basis of practical reasoning. In fact, perhaps a different understanding of reasoning itself is evident in Hegel’s text. Take, for example, the very opening of that essay:

Pure reason, transcending all limits, is divinity itself – whereby and in accordance with which the very plan of the world is ordered [überhaupt geordnet] (John 1). Through reason man learns of his destiny [Bestimmung], the unconditional purpose of his life ... the cultivation [Ausbildung] of the spark of divinity allotted to them [zu teil geworden ist] – their proof of descendance, in a higher sense, from the Godhead itself. [der ihnen das Zeugnis gibt, dass sie in einem erhabnern Sinne von der Gottheit selbst abstammen].

Kant could never have made this series of claims that read like Hegel’s free translation of the opening of John’s Gospel concerning the Logos (Ward, p. 274).

Or indeed, as Louis Althusser (an idiosyncratic but hugely insightful reader of Hegel) argues, one of the features in Hegel's early work that anticipates his mature works is that 'content, religious content included, is even at this early stage felt to be something other than a mere given' (Althusser, p. 30; cf. Hegel 1991, §8, p. 32). In other words, the negation of the given is not conflated with the negation of the content itself, where the given is taken to to be content in the form of its apprehension (Althusser, p. 31). This is how closely philosophy and theology exist in Hegel's thought. It is the reason *Nachdenken* is practically religious. The negation of the givenness (the form) of the truth (the content) does not negate the truth itself – this is perhaps *the* principle of *Aufhebung*. But *Nachdenken* 'initially contains the principle of philosophy' (Hegel 1991, §3, p. 30), and religion, as I've already discussed, is how philosophy can begin. The story of the Fall, moreover expounds the particular form of religion and how it conditions the beginning of philosophy, so that to the extent that philosophy begins by presupposing the form of religion it will be characterised by

the shape of this presupposition. Accordingly, Schleiermacher's theological reply to Hegel would precisely be to stress the distorting epistemological implications of the Fall and the moral impertinence of holding on to the Hegelian view. Kant could have asserted the epistemological inaccessibility of the *noumenal*, but Schleiermacher's objection preempts any philosophical reply and forces Hegel to deal with it on theological grounds as well²¹. However Schleiermacher's position is ultimately for Hegel unchristian because it denies, not only the efficacy of divine grace and goodness but the very nature of creation which is why it is an attack on the dignity of humanity, though a postlapsarian humanity, and therefore an attack on a redeemed humankind (cf. Possemann, p. 252). The disagreement, which is traditionally posed - as a theological disagreement - in methodological terms, i.e. between *speculative* and *Socratic* theology is also a disagreement over the Fall. This conjunction however, is not merely additive but expresses the unique co-relation between the story of the Fall and thought, or what Hegel will go on to call the general relationship of thought to spiritual life (Hegel 1991, §24A3, p.61).

'What is Truth?'

Hegel's sensitivity to what he sees as an attack on the dignity and uniqueness of humanity is an important background to his philosophy in general and his use and understanding of the story of the Fall in particular. It reflects all of the religious, social, and political problems which preoccupied him and to which his philosophy is a response. His friend and colleague Friedrich Hölderlin expressed the overall sentiment most eloquently in *Hyperion*:

These are hard sayings and yet I say them because they are the truth. I can think of no people as torn apart as the Germans. Craftsmen are to be seen, but no human beings; thinkers, but no human beings; priests, but no human beings; masters and men, but no human beings; young people and old, but no human beings

21 Indeed, as Hegel writes about Christianity, 'no religion is so well adapted as this one to the needs of mankind, because it has satisfactorily answered those problems which practical reason raised but could not possibly solve by its own efforts, e.g., the problem of how even the best of men can hope for forgiveness of his sins, since even he is not free from them' (Hegel 1948, p.72). This should be read in response to the Lutheran principle *simul justus et peccator* which is invoked by his detractors.

(Hölderlin, p. 153).

Hegel is almost certainly a more fitting final member of a list containing Goethe, Schiller, Hamann, and Hölderlin, rather than the usual list of proposed predecessors which contains Kant, Reinhold, Fichte, and Schelling. In any case, Hegel certainly shares with the former group of thinkers the concern for the restoration of personal and communitarian harmony which has come to define them. At the centre of this programme lies for Hegel the preservation (though this may also be thought of as a restoration) of the theological anthropology of human spirit or thought. At this point in time, the first explicit background of the denigration of German culture and society, of the sense of fallenness, is the idealisation or at least paradigmatisation of Ancient Greek culture and society (especially that of Athens) as exhibiting a harmony and unity of religious belief and national life worth pursuing. Accordingly, for Hyperion, the Germans are the antithesis of the Ancient Greeks (Hölderlin, pp. 152-3; cf. Gaskill, p. 28). This philhellenic tendency is part of the process, in Romanticism (particularly of the *Stürmer* and *Dränger*), of identifying in an idealised and quasi-historical form an Edenic state for humankind to aspire towards. Accordingly, Hegel refers to Ancient Greece as a 'paradise of human spirit' (Hegel 1948, p. 325). The second background for Hegel, as well as others like Wackenroder, Novalis, and Schlegel is the enthusiasm over the various medieval features of the Catholic Middle Ages. However in the end, Hegel appeals to a story from the Old Testament, and we should emphasise that Hegel's method of treatment of the representation of the Fall is in many ways a congenial inheritance of Herder's method of treatment of the representation of the tower of Babel²². In both cases there is an attempt to identify an original plenitude, in the latter case in the pre-Babel 'Golden Age' and in the former in the prelapsarian Edenic state. Thus in accordance with content of their respective representations, the former's project is concerned primarily with language and the latter's project is primarily concerned with thought or cognition. However the end of the Golden Age is itself treated as a 'Fall', though theologically we may understand this as a subordinate Fall for which *the* Fall of Adam and Even is a necessary condition. Since the Fall is here understood in terms of the emergency of alienation

²² See Morton, M., *Herder and the Poetics of Thought* (London: Pennsylvania Press, 1989).

through diversity of languages, the sort of considerations for the fallenness of different peoples both diachronically and synchronically become pertinent to the project of recovering a prelapsarian plenitude. However, for this reason Herder's analysis also does not penetrate through to what is truly fundamental, to the *original* prelapsarian plenitude; to the Fall of the universal genus of humanity. The story of Fall of Adam and Eve is thus for Hegel *the* 'eternal mythos of man' (Hegel 2001, p. 340).

Additionally, Hegel was perhaps more reasonable than the promulgators of German Romanticism in two ways. Firstly, he treated past culture more realistically and still noted their limitations, and secondly he was considerably more pessimistic about the prospects of the present age to retrieve or consummate the glories of an earlier age. Hölderlin writes, in response to Augustine's claim, that though 'the virtues of the Ancients were but glittering vices', that 'a childlike, beautiful spirit' nonetheless 'still lived in them' (Hölderlin, pp. 153-154). Schiller similarly remarked that 'the Greeks combined the first youth of the imagination with the maturity of reason in a glorious manifestation' (Schiller, p. 321) Hegel himself writes apropos the ancients, that we 'must take up our lodging with them so that we can breathe their air, absorb their ideas, their manners, one might even say their errors and prejudices' (Hegel 1948, p. 324). This is because, as we will see, a great theme of Hegel's account of the Fall which is generally overlooked is memory, and the ability to remember the original unity and plenitude before the Fall. This unity, as Althusser writes, is lost and consciousness knows it only in its loss and does not yet experience it as present in its very loss (Althusser, p. 30). This is where Hegel becomes distinguishable from his immediate predecessors and contemporaries.

Whereas most Romantics believed that German art would soon produce a new Homer, Hegel was sceptical about (contemporary) art's ability to capture the complexity of our world-view, and

thought that it had no future as a primary expressive form of truth²³ (Inwood, p.43). In concordance with the activity of *Nachdenken*, of dialectically transposing content from one form to another, he sublated the aestheticism of his Romantic peers (perhaps especially Schelling's) quite early on and declared that 'truth is beauty intellectually represented' (Hegel 1948, p. 196). His dissatisfaction with the Romantics ultimately goes back to an dissatisfaction with Kant and the Enlightenment²⁴, but also, with Protestantism. The impulse behind the Kantian *Grenzbegriff* ('limiting concept') is a theological principle and one of its perils, as Richard Kroner points out in his introduction to the *Early Theological Writings*, is the following.

But there is also a peril in the Protestant principle. By cutting the link between the two spheres, it runs the risk of denying the possibility of reforming the world and shaping things temporal. It may sublimate and spiritualize faith to such a degree as to make it ineffective in our daily life. The task of binding together the two spheres remains. If religion does not fulfil this task, reason will do it (Hegel 1948, p. 37).

This is basically how Hegel believes that the Enlightenment was eventuated and there is much reason to construe his understanding of Kantian practical reason as one grounded in an entirely secular logic. What his basic orientation reduces to, in the final analysis, is the rejection of all these other orientations which posit philosophy as a function or feature of the finitude of humankind. And the reason that the story of the Fall receives attention over against almost everything else in the Old Testament is that it proves, as we will see, the infinity and divinity of thought and philosophy and the seriousness with which Christianity must strive for its truth. As Hegel writes, what we encounter here is

the same opposition as that which existed in the decadence of Roman public and political life under Augustus, and subsequently when Epicureanism and indifference set themselves up against Philosophy. Under this influence, when Christ said, 'I came into the world that I should bear witness unto the Truth', Pilate answered, 'What is Truth?'. That was said in a superior way, and signifies that this idea of truth is an expedient which is obsolete: we have got further, we know that there is no longer any question about

²³ The idealisation of Ancient Greece by the Romantics was largely due to the influence of research into art at the time by the likes of Winckelman.

²⁴ As Althusser writes, the Enlightenment is the name of the 'void' of religion, politics, and philosophy which preoccupied Hegel throughout his entire life (Althusser, p. 37).

knowing the Truth, seeing that we have gone beyond²⁵ (Hegel 2001, p. 14; cf. Hegel 1991, §19, pp. 46-47).

The infinity of thought is connected with the theme of unity in humanity amongst other reasons because humankind, whom Hegel and others in his time consider, in their fallenness, to be internally divided, are divided because nothing in their existence involves their *whole* selves. Once again, Schiller expresses this well when he asks 'what becomes of of grace and graciousness, of those moral deeds in which the *whole* man moves together than with clenched rigidity?' (quoted in Plant, p. 20). What is needed to move man in his entirety is infinite content. This is therefore addressed by Hegel in his 'Anthropology' in view of the overgrasping of thought in religious feeling (*Gefühl*). *Gefühl*, rather than *Empfindung*²⁶, addresses the whole soul (Hegel 2007, §402, pp. 85-86). That feeling involves content higher than its form is illustrated by the fact that we say that we have a '*Gefühl* of the right' i.e. a sense of right (but not, incidentally, an '*Empfindung* of the right') and the fact that when a feeling (*Empfindung*) is the product of a reaction to an external stimulus, it becomes localised, rather than when it is overgrasped as a whole by thought-content. (Anthropology is crucial here because Hegel took Kant's anthropology to express most lucidly the internal disunion of contemporary humankind²⁷ (Hegel 1907, p. 226).) Thus, those like Schleiermacher who reduce religion to feeling at least implicitly already recognise the overgrasping of thought (which is why 'immediate knowledge' is one of the standpoints of thought with regard to objectivity in the *Logic* (Hegel 1991, §61)) since it is this very fact that this higher content is involved in feeling that misleads those like Jacobi and Schleiermacher to suppose that religion and truth is *only* about feeling (Hegel 2007, §380, p. 16). Furthermore in so far as the Fall designates the Fall of the *imago dei* which *is* the aspect of infinite thought in humanity, it is this *differentia* of the human concept

25 Note that before Pilate speaks at John 18.38, Jesus says 'Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice' (NRSV); in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, Hegel mentions this episode and compares it to Solomon saying 'All is vanity' (Eccles. 1.2).

26 It should be noted that Hegel uses *Empfindung* in the 1821 manuscript of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, but switches over to *Gefühl* in the later version. Schleiermacher's *Der Christliche Glaube* which made *Gefühl* into a major theological category was released in 1821 (cf. Hodgson, pp. 108-109). Hegel's account of the distinction between the two German terms for feeling had already been published in the third part of the *Encyclopaedia* ((Hegel 2007, §402, pp. 85-86)) so it is unlikely that the switch is a correction, but rather that the 1821 manuscript use of *Empfindung* was a deliberate attempt, from Hegel, to distance himself from Schleiermacher (whom he had already criticised in the first part of the *Encyclopaedia* (Hegel 1991, §61, pp. 108-109).

27 See also Acton, H.B., 'Hegel's conception of the study of human nature' in *Hegel* ed. M. Inwood (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), especially pp. 139-143.

that is uninvolved in human existence, that precludes the movement of the *whole* of the soul. It is to this overgrasping of thought as the *imago dei* and its infinite content that we not turn to in the story of the Fall.

Everyone belongs to the Truth

Though Hegel originally intended to become an ordained theologian, most of his early theological texts exhibit profound incompatibility with the German theological profession as it was at his time. As he became more aware of this incompatibility, more aware that professional theology entailed an association with a church and state that he did not approve of, he became increasingly preoccupied with issues of immediacy and mediation, of overcoming the familiar or merely given. Indeed, in *Faith and Knowledge* he had described the advancement of humanity in terms a kind of identity of philosophy as the thought of the infinite and speculative religion as ultimately a project of cultural education (Hegel 1977b, pp. 189-191). These reflections led him to his preoccupation with the Fall of Man and are taken up into his analysis of it. Hegel expounds his account of the Fall thrice; once in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, once in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, and one in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*. Whereas the second is directly concerned with theological material, and the third predominantly with the issue of human history, the *first* account of the Fall in Hegel's writings appears in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* which is a philosophical work. His account consequently has a particular philosophical context intimations of which appeared at the beginning of this essay. He therefore begins his preamble to the analysis of the story with a series of philosophical premisses:

- (1) We become cognisant of what is true through various modes of cognition.
- (2) These modes of cognition obtain as forms.
- (3) We can become cognisant of what is true through experience but experience is only a form.
- (4) When we become cognisant through experience, everything depends on the mind with

which we approach actuality.

- (5) We can become cognisant of what is true through reflection.
- (6) When we become cognisant through reflection we are determining [the truth] through relationships of thought.
- (7) What is true in and for itself is not present in its proper form in either of these cognitive modes [experience or reflection].
- (8) The most perfect mode of cognition takes place in the form of pure thought.

These do not yet come together to form an argument, but Hegel's intentions are immediately clear. If he were to construct a master-argument in the *Logic*, which at the same time would be a para-philosophical argument for the foundations of philosophy, (8) would be the opening premiss. He has already spent some time arguing for its plausibility as well as explaining what it would entail both epistemologically and ontologically. Its reiteration in programmatic form at this point in the book (still the middle of the preliminary conception) is evidence enough that it is a set-up, namely for the account of the Fall narrative. He goes on to say, now providing some grounds for the justification of (8), that

- (9) Philosophy in general asserts that thought is the absolute form and that the truth appears as it is in and for itself in thought.

Hegel has already told us, perhaps somewhat mysteriously, that 'philosophy can be determined in general terms as a *thinking* consideration of objects' (Hegel 1991, §2, p. 24), and that if this is true, then the distinguishing feature of human beings is thought (*Ibid.*, pp. 24-25; Hegel 2001, p. 22). We now know that this is because philosophy *qua* the thinking consideration of objects entails the absolute form in which the mode of cognising truth as it is in and for itself appears. There is a background premiss here that philosophy is a *par excellence* human activity alongside religion whose stipulation is the condition for the possibility of philosophy. But now, Hegel adds the

following:

(10) If the forms of cognition other than thought are *finite*, then (8) is true.

This is only the case if it is in addition maintained that

(11) The determinations of truth content are infinite.

(12) The absolute form corresponds to the infinite content of truth.

This is neither new nor controversial. But the driving force behind the argument so far – as it has been from the very beginning – is anthropological along theological lines, since Hegel claims that thinking is not *literally* a human activity (and for this reason the overgrasping of thought has an ontological rather than epistemological justification) but rather *is* the human being²⁸ and that human knowledge is accordingly a knowledge by identity or more precisely knowledge by participation in an identity with the infinite.

It is much more difficult to believe that the thought-forms which permeate all of our ideas – whether these are purely theoretical or contain a content belonging to feeling, impulse, will – are means for us, that we have them in our possession rather than they have us in their possession; what is there more in *us* as opposed to them, how are *we*, how am *I*, supposed to set myself up as what is *more* universal than they when they are the universal as such? (Hegel 2010, p. 15; cf. Inwood 1983, p. 35).

Jacobi had of course asked before Hegel in *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza*, 'is man in possession of reason, or reason in possession of man?' and concluded that in order for the former to be the case, reason ought to be grounded in an unrevisable faith of the reality of one's freedom and the reality of a personal God (Jacobi, p. 375; Bowman pp. 28-29). As we have seen, Hegel is also interested in grounding freedom and knowledge of God, and spirit (mind, or thought), the middle category of *freedom – spirit – God* which are given in experience because they 'present themselves as infinite with regard to their content' (Hegel 1991, §8, p. 32) mediates their foundation. We've also

28 One could reinstate here Eckhart's *eigenschaft* as 'possession'.

seen that for Hegel thought is identified with 'the knowledge of God, of truth' (Luft, p. 352), and now we can add that he also believes that in pure thought man is thoroughly free (Hegel 2001, p. 87; cf. Hegel 1948, p. 196). In both of these cases he sees himself as reviving an Aristotelian move over against a post-Kantian move to restrict philosophical activity²⁹ (Hegel 2010, p. 14; Bowman, pp. 29-30). The idea that we are possessed by thought and the truth also references John 18.37 ('Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice') which Hegel was very fond of. But most importantly here, the entirety of Hegel's account of the Fall is initially invoked as support for his theory of thought and the account of the beginnings of philosophy over against Jacobi and other possible detractors. This has logical primacy over any use of the story to determine a particular theological position in so far as the latter is associated with the story in its immediate representational form. However, as we shall see, the account of thought as philosophical afterthought that Hegel derives from his reading of the Fall is deeply theological.

29 He is thinking of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* 982b.

II

The Mosaic Myth

Hegel sees 'the Mosaic myth of the Fall' as an account of the origin and consequences of a split or cleavage (*Entzweiung*) in spirit. When comparing the various modes of cognition or more precisely the 'positions of thought with respect to objectivity', as the *Logic* does,

it can easily appear that the first one, that of immediate knowledge, is the most adequate, the finest, and the highest. It includes everything that is called innocence in the moral sphere, as well as religious feeling, simple trust, love, fidelity, and natural faith (Hegel §24A3, p. 61).

The alternative forms of reflective and philosophical cognition, by contrast, are epistemologically external to this immediacy. To the extent that they transgress immediate unity they might lead us to think that grasping the truth through thought is a product of excessive human pride (*Stolz*). We can see how Jacobi would have thought this, but for Hegel it is *we* who are possessed by the truth and the thoughts that contain it and are consequently to some extent *passively* receptive to it. Therefore seeking the truth, when this is done correctly, can never be a conceited affair but is our human vocation. Nevertheless, Hegel goes on to point out that, more profoundly, this transgression of immediacy, what he calls the standpoint of universal disunion (*Standpunkt der allgemeinen Trennung*), 'can certainly be looked on as the origin of all wickedness and evil, as the original transgression'. It should be noted, that the word Hegel uses for the cleavage that the story of the Fall is an account for is '*Entzweiung*' which translates to a division in two, but perhaps also a doubling. It has no negative connotations and its identification with 'the original transgression' is at this stage merely implicit and needs to be qualified. For whilst *Entzweiung* is the condition for the possibility of evil, it is not itself evil. It is the transformation of spirit's doubling, its *Entzweiung* into an alienated division, into *Entfremdung* that is evil (cf. Hodgson, p. 149). The story of the Fall tells us how to understand this cleavage, by which is meant the former, viz., spirit's doubling which is of its essence. It expresses the general relationship of thought to spiritual life (Hegel 1991, §24A3, p.61). What is important is to know what kind of answer to expect from the question 'what is the general

relationship of thought to spiritual life?'. We would be misguided to expect an answer like 'positive' or 'negative'. The crude opposition between 'natural' immediate unity on the one hand, and schism on the other, prompts such anticipation. But such oppositional thinking is part and parcel of the workings of the understanding, the very mode of *finite* cognition Hegel is most concerned to overcome. Moreover, the content of the story, we are told, forms the foundation of an essential doctrine of faith, 'the doctrine of the natural sinfulness of man, and his need of help to overcome it' (*Ibid.*). Hence the answer to the question above is more likely to involve some claim about e.g. the role of thought in spiritual life, as either constitutive or destructive. (Note that such answers would partly align with the sort of answers we rejected above ('positive'/'negative'), but the doctrinal status of either answer would remain an open question.) In addition, it is likely to involve some claims about both cognition and spiritual life as features of both a pre- and postlapsarian state of humanity. The 'natural sinfulness of man' refers to original sin; Hegel writes that the view that humankind is by nature evil is a well known doctrine of the Church and that this natural state of evil is what is called original sin. This should not be confused with a claim about a *pre-fallen* propensity for evil. For there is a distinction between three kinds of state of humanity at work in Hegel's account: (i) 'human nature' or what is essential (*wesentlich*) to humanity; (ii) fallen humanity; and (iii) 'natural humanity' or humanity-in-relation-to-nature. Peter Hodgson identifies (i) and (iii) but subsumes (ii) within the latter (Hodgson, p. 147). This is a mistake because the dialectical relationship between (human) spirit and nature is (a related but nonetheless) separate matter from spirit's Fall into self-alienation. In fact, the conflation of (ii) and (iii) transposes onto the relationship between spirit and nature spirit's Fall which leads to a reading of Hegel founded on the denigration of the latter.

At this point I wish to demarcate three stages of Hegel's exposition of the account of the Fall. The first stage, let's call it stage (A), occurs in the second paragraph of the third addition of §24. I discussed it in the first half of the preceding argument. Here, Hegel expounds what he sees as the view of his detractors, that to reject the form of immediate knowledge of religion amounts to

adopting the standpoint of disunion which is identified with the 'original transgression', or 'the origin of all wickedness and evil'. According to (A), to its standpoint, 'thinking and cognition must be given up in order to return and become reconciled again'. (A) is therefore an undialectical account; according to (A), reconciliation is a simple return, an identical repetition of the original state. It is plainly not Hegel's view and is set up as a foil. It concludes with the claim that the content of the story of the Fall tells us of 'this schism', and forms the foundation of an essential doctrine of faith, 'the doctrine of the natural sinfulness of man', i.e. original sin (Hegel actually affirms that this is original sin in the very last paragraph of the addition). At this first stage of the exposition, it is implied that the story of the Fall teaches us the aforementioned insight, i.e. the insights of (A). The 'schism' referred to at this point is *Entzweiung*, which as such, viz., as the very form of the abandonment of immediacy is associated with evil *from the standpoint of* (A). Thus the identification of *Entzweiung* with evil *without* the notion of its transformation to a specifically self-alienating *Entzweiung qua Entfremdung* is undialectical and not Hegel's view. Hegel's own voice enters in the third to last sentence of the paragraph when he concludes by arguing for the appropriateness of reading the story of the Fall for philosophical reasons. This is no doubt - in the context of this stage - in part to respond to such detractors. It concludes the first stage of the exposition and introduces the second stage (B), which occurs in the third paragraph of the third addition. (B) introduces a *new* idea, namely that spirit *sublates* its immediate state. Herein lies the first difference between (A) and (B): for according to (A) mediated forms of cognition are the direct product of 'wanting to grasp the truth through thinking' which is 'the human conceit that wants to recognise the true by its own strength'; after which it is then *immediately* said 'This standpoint' – namely the conceited standpoint of wanting to grasp the truth by one's own strength – is evil³⁰. However according to (B), it is the *essence* of spirit, in the sense of (i), to sublate its immediate state. Thus whereas according to (A) the movement from the immediate state to a

30 That (A) is not Hegel's own view is repeatedly evinced by the consistent use of the following form of expression 'it can easily *appear* that [...] immediate knowledge is the most adequate'; 'this standpoint of universal separation can certainly *be looked on* as the origin of all wickedness and evil'; and 'wanting to grasp the truth through thinking can easily *appear* as human conceit'.

mediated state is not in agreement with (i) and is consequently the product of a transgression; according to (B) it is perfectly in line with (i) with the natural human essence and is expressed as a sublation without the identification of a transgression. The sublation refers to the transitional movement from spirit's being-in-itself to being-*for*-itself. It is an anthropological matter since it concerns what sets human life apart from animal life. If we grasp this distinction between these two stages in Hegel's exposition, it quickly becomes clear that 'necessity' as a concept for Hegel vis-à-vis spirit cannot involve either a mistake or a transgression, but only the essential development in spiritual life of the logical idea which it is presenting.

[I]t is of the essence of spirit to sublimate this immediate state, since spiritual life distinguishes itself from natural life, and more precisely from the life of animals, by the fact that it does not abide in its being-in-itself, but is for itself (Hegel §24A3, p. 61).

Exactly *what* sets spiritual life apart from natural and animal life is crucial. Hegel writes that what is essentially human is that spirit sublates its immediate state, which is spiritual life *in its immediacy*, rather than spirit alienated from itself in the form of natural life. The schism then, the *Entzweiung*, is on (B) presented as something naturally continuous with, if in developmental terms higher than, the immediate state. Spiritual life will go on to distinguish itself from natural life, but this is simply because it always already is a supplemented natural life and this supplement is paradoxically essential to it. By the indication of this process that spiritual life will go on to distinguish itself from natural life is meant that logical thought in general inheres in both, as being-in-itself (Hegel 1991, §80, p. 125). 'We recognise the goodness of God in nature'³¹ (Hegel 1991, §80A, p. 127; Stone, p.

31 Žižek claims that Hegel celebrates 'the absolute power' of the *Verstand*. He writes that the subject is not only or principally the active agent who "posits" (creates, dominates, explits) objectivity (Heidegger), but a side of "abstraction," tearing apart the links of organic totality, illusion, finitude – what we refer to as "merely subjective." Subject only emerges as agap in substance, as an effect of its incompleteness/inconsistency. This is what Hegel *celebrates* as the absolute power of Understanding: "The action of separating the elements is the exercise of the force of Understanding, the most astonishing and greatest of all powers, or rather the absolute power." This celebration is in no way qualified; that is, Hegel's point is not that this power is nonetheless later "sublated" into a subordinate moment of the unifying totality of Reason. The problem with Understanding is rather that it does not unleash this power to the end, that it takes it as external to the thing itself – like, in the above-quoted passage from the *Phenomenology*, the standard notion that it is merely *our* Understanding ("mind") that separates in its imagination what in "reality" belongs together, so that the Understanding's "absolute power" is merely the power of our imagination which in no way concerns the reality of the thing analyzed (Žižek 2012, p. 188).
Firstly, Žižek conflates what he reads as Hegel's solution to Kant's problem of the four antinomies with the problem of the *Verstand*. The problem of the *Verstand* is that it does not 'unleash its power to the end', namely that it is

139), as well as in the subsistence of human life (Hegel 1991, *Ibid.*). In the *Philosophy of Mind*, the 'conclusion' of the *Encyclopaedic* system, 'nature, like mind, is rational, divine (Hegel 2007, §381A, p. 10). Both are presentations of the 'Idea'. Nature is both *prior* to and *posterior* to mind or spirit. The former is the case, as Hegel says, 'for us', namely from our immediate finite standpoint because we reflectively posit nature as our presupposition. However spirit is also the *truth* of nature, in the sense that it is the truth of nature posited explicitly as such, for-itself (Hegel 2007, §381, p. 9). Temporally, nature is prior to spirit which emerges within it. At the point of this initial emergence, logical thought in general inheres in both, as being-in-itself. However following spirit's development, which is the development of *this* truth, the truth of nature, 'nature has vanished and mind has emerged as the Idea that has reached its being-for-self' (*Ibid.*). This means that spirit is higher than nature, that is, it goes on to distinguish itself from natural life by positing the truth of the Idea, explicitly. According to Hegel, this relationship is represented by the story of Adam's naming of the animals, which as we will see, is an important counterpart to the story of the Fall in the next chapter of *Genesis*.

construed merely as a feature of subjectivity, rather than as indicative of 'the reality being analysed'. The power of the *Verstand* is *verwundersamsten* (which Yovel in his translation of the *Phenomenology's* preface more precisely renders as 'wondrous' than 'astonishing' (Yovel, p. 127)); the wonder it designates is the ancient philosophical wonder of the origin of negation which fascinated Parmenides and others. Hegel's view is that the *Verstand* is the origin of negation. Thus the wonder is that there exists movement and diversity in the world, and the *Verstand* is never for Hegel confined merely to 'our imagination'. In fact, 'imagination' understood as either *Einbildungskraft* or *Phantasie* is logically prior to the *Verstand* and *Phantasie*, the higher of the two, unifies things together rather than demarcating them (Hegel accepted Jean Paul's account in *Vorschule der Ästhetik* §6) making this Žižek passage very mysterious because on no construal of the *Verstand* does the Žižekian foil maintain. Moreover, it is absurd to claim that the celebration of the *Verstand* is unqualified in the *Phenomenology*; the *Verstand* is in the latter the absolute power of *death* and isn't even celebrated, apart from being referred to as powerful and 'wondrous' (in the sense described above, which does not indicate something we should celebrate) (Hegel 1977a, §32, p. 19). However, in sharp contrast to this, Hegel refers to it in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* as 'the goodness of God' (Hegel 1991, §80A, p.127). This is because in the latter, the origin of negation is treated in theological terms, viz., 'the goodness of God' is taken to mean that *finite* things *are*, that they subsist' (*Ibid.*). Hegel later goes on to completely contradict Žižek's claim that the problem of the *Verstand* is that it does not unleash its power to the end, and culminate in the ontologisation of its 'tears' as lacks in reality:

it is usually said also that the understanding must not go too far. This contains the valid point that the understanding cannot have the last word. On the contrary, it is finite, and, more precisely, it is such that when it is pushed to an extreme it overturns into its opposite. It is the way of youth to toss about in abstractions, whereas the man of experience does not get caught up in the abstract either-or, but holds onto the concrete (Hegel 1991, §80A, p. 128).

This theme of immaturity, as we shall see, crucial for Hegel's reading of the Fall narrative, but for now what is important is that the problem of the *Verstand* is that it is itself a finite unity (therefore an unsustainable paradox) of opposed values, of separateness and fixity (Hegel 1991, p. 323, 108n). Žižek's one-sided reading predictably overemphasises the latter whilst ignoring the former in a manner which parallels his more general one-sided reading of sublation. The dialectical overcoming of the *Verstand* involves mediating these two opposed values (cf, Yovel, p. 128).

This contrasts with the demonstrably weaker alternative readings of either construing the immediate state as immanently contradictory and therefore requiring further *antagonistic* modification in order to achieve resolution, *or* construing the immediate state as essential but as entailing no further process or development. The latter reading is what is presented to be the case by (A), whereas the former reading is an implausible construal of (B). It is implausible because as we have seen, spirit is in its immediate state not alienated from itself, and its 'schismatic' sublation of this state (which it dialectically ultimately preserves) *can* become alienating if it becomes *Entfremdung*, but at this point there is no reference to such a phenomenon. In other words, in (A), we find a 'Fall' identified wholly with a distortion of the human will and the conceited attempt to grasp the truth by our own strength; whereas in (B), there is no mention of the Fall at all. (B) is something like an ideal description of the development of spiritual life. Thus following on from the excerpt above:

In like manner, however, this stage of schism must itself be sublated in turn, and spirit must return through its own agency to union with itself. This resulting union is a spiritual one, and the guiding principle of that return lies in thinking itself (Hegel §24A3, pp. 61-62).

Equally, the account of 'Concept of Mind' in §381 of the *Encyclopaedia* above directly mirrors the second stage of the exposition of the story of the Fall in §24A3. What is presented is, in something like ideal terms, the logical movement from nature to spirit. Thus the crucial difference between (A) and (B) is that on the account of the former, spirit falls *because* it moves 'by its own strength' in the sense of forgoing the divine altogether, whereas on the account of the latter, it moves once again 'through its own agency' first out of union, and then back to union within itself *without* falling. On the account of (A), the story of the Fall describes the Fall itself as the foregoing of the divine through isolated self-movement or 'the natural sinfulness of man' *and* 'his need of help to overcome it'. On the account of (B) the *Entzweiung* resolves ('through [spirit's] own agency') itself because there is no indication of a 'Fall' to incur the need of help to overcome the state of disunion. In so far as the divine is not foregone, and spirit sublates its immediacy without falling, the involvement of the divine in that process entails that this sublation in its thinking mediation of its own immediacy is

overgrasped by divine thought and is therefore mediated *as* immediate. This is the product of the absolute which effects the mediation of the very opposition of immediacy and mediation, and therefore mediates the *Entzweiung* of human spirit. As we shall see in the conclusion of this essay, this very same structure is designated in the logical ultimacy of the systematicity of philosophy, in its 'completion (i.e. this is the 'close' (*Schluss*) of the *Encyclopaedic* system). (The same applies to the account in §381 of the *Encyclopaedia*.) The paragraph ends with one of Hegel's only truly great aphorisms: 'It is thinking that both inflicts the wound and heals it again'³² (Hegel 1991, §24A3, p. 62).

The third stage in the reading of the Fall narrative includes all of its representational elements; Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. It is difficult to understand what is meant, for example by O'Regan, when he writes that whilst 'the surface grammar of fall still maintains *downward* directionality, the depth grammar is antithetical, and fall paradoxically is, in principle, a fall *upward* (O'Regan, p. 167). Foregoing a discussion on the opacity of the completely metaphorical distinction between 'surface' and 'depth' grammars (especially with regard to Hegel), it is unclear whether this refers to the 'grammar' of one of the three stages, or of the three stages taken together. It cannot be the former; in this case it would have probably been maintained that the third stage ((C)) has an 'upward' 'depth grammar'³³, except that in order for this be the case there would have to be a delineation of the three stages and their interrelation where there is no such recognition. And consequently it cannot be maintained on a serious reading of the text that it is the latter because there is a demonstrable diversity in the 'grammars' of the three sections of the text, which correspond to the three stages of the reading whose interrelation must be understood dialectically, so that to claim that there is an overall grammar or logic to the reading is to either read Hegel's account non-dialectically or to claim that the 'upwardness' is somehow the *product* or *conclusion* of

³² The theme of pain and of the healing capabilities of thought will explicitly concern us later.

³³ Alternatively, stage (B) could be taken to have an upward depth grammar, but stage (B) also has an upward *surface* grammar and designates an ideal description of spirit's sublation *without* a Fall about which to have such a grammar, upward or otherwise.

the text – both of which would be methodologically unsuitable ways of reading Hegel. In what follows I will offer an account of the way these three sections of the text present three stages in Hegel's reading of the Fall narrative and what this reading means both theologically and philosophically.

(C) is the longest section of the text and begins on the fourth paragraph of the third addition of §24. It returns to the notion of a Fall and to the presence of evil which is missing completely in (B), but it retains (B)'s development of a sublatory transition. There is, in other words, a meta-dialectic here which is cumulatively developing the logic of the Fall narrative throughout the three stages. Hegel expounds the story in the following passage:

it says in our myth that Adam and Eve, the first human beings, or humankind as such, found themselves in a garden, in which there were both a tree of life and a tree of cognition of good and evil. We are told that God had forbidden this human pair to eat of the fruits of the latter tree; at this point there is no more talk of the tree of life (Hegel 1991, §24A3, p. 62).

What *this* means, according to Hegel, referring to the prohibition of eating the latter tree, is 'that humanity should not come to cognition, but remain in a state of innocence' (*Ibid.*). Grammatically, this expresses a conjunction, but *logically*, it expresses the indicative conditional 'if humanity comes to cognition, it will not remain in a state of innocence' (some form of this is perhaps present in Gen. 2.17); Hegel then writes that what is correct 'in it', namely in the claim above, is that the *Entzweiung*, in which we find all that is human, cannot be 'the end of the matter'; *however* it is *not correct*, that the state of immediacy and natural unity is the right state. This *should* strike us as odd, not simply because Hegel has claimed that the story expresses the view that the state of immediacy is not the right state for humanity, but that he takes the claim above to mean that the state of *Entzweiung* is not the right state for humanity. This latter state is not present in the exposition of the story so far; all that can be said is that for Hegel, humanity coming to cognition entails a state of *Entzweiung*, which in turn leads the loss of the state of innocence. So the affirmation of the view

that the state of *Entzweiung* is not the right state for humanity is logically equivalent to the claim that humanity should remain in a state of innocence. Consequently, the recognition of a partial truth in the claim above rejects the implication that coming to cognition entails the loss of innocence, but affirms instead that humanity ought to remain in a state of innocence but not in a state of immediacy and natural union (cf. Inwood, p. 95). The background premiss here is that the state of innocence is not identical with the state of immediacy and natural unity. And the recognition of partial truth of the claim above is actually the affirmation of its one-sidedness. Indeed, it is a prejudice that this identity holds; Hegel identifies innocence with 'childlike innocence' but only in the sense that childlike innocence 'reminds us of what must be brought forth'. This is a familiar example for Hegel; an acorn, for example, reminds us of the qualities of an oak tree. The difference between the two is that the acorn only has these qualities in-itself and not for-itself. This, as we saw in the previous stage of the account of the Fall, was the ontological transition that humans are meant to undergo. Hence Hegel's affirmation, that humanity ought to remain in a state of innocence should be understood precisely in terms of the divine injunction. God makes a demand that humans not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and this demand for Hegel is the demand for humanity to *keep* its innocence into its adulthood. This leads Hegel to the paradoxical claim, when quoting Matt. 18.3 that we should *become* like children, but that *that* should not mean that we should *remain* as children.

We have now finished the fourth paragraph of the third addition, and we start to feel the limits of the representational form. The fifth paragraph concerns itself with the implication that the occasion for 'stepping out of the unity [of innocence] was provided for humanity by external instigation (by the serpent)' (Hegel 1991, §24A3, p. 62). The qualification of the state of unity as the state of innocence is an addition of the Wallace translation and is not in the original. In the preceding paragraph Hegel writes that the story of the Fall is a representation 'of the original state of humanity as one of innocence *and* of union' ('Zustand der Unschuld und der Einigkeit'), and it is more

plausible that Hegel is referring to a genuine conjunction of two notions than that he is repeating himself; for as I argued above, there is good reason to believe that innocence and immediacy do not entirely overlap. The impulse towards the awakening of consciousness is internal, it is part of the concept of spirit and not externally instigated; the serpent is for Hegel purely figurative and represents the shape of the *Entzweiung*, that it led, in *fact*, to a Fall. The serpent is on the opposite pole of externality to Adam in the narrative, namely opposite God. (In order to keep this oppositional structure, Hegel omits any mention of Eve³⁴.) Moreover, the serpent's claim is juxtaposed with the divine prohibition; he claims that divinity actually consists in the knowledge of good and evil, and as Hegel points out, this is the cognition that is imparted to humans when they break with the unity of their immediate being. The Fall results in an alienation from the self and from nature, the immediate result of which is shame and the awareness of nakedness which signifies the realisation of one's mistake. As Hegel says, it is shame that testifies to the severance of human beings from their natural being. The so called 'antithesis of man and nature' is represented by the curse which God places on humankind. This is crucial and it juxtaposes the account of the *Entzweiung* in the third stage of the exposition from the previous stage. Whereas in stage (B), which described an ideal process of humankind's sublation of its immediate state, or what we could call a counter-history of humanity, it was precisely *thought* which 'healed the wound' of undergoing the transition into mediation and cognition; here, it is *labour* issuing from the divine curse which is 'both the result of the schism and also its overcoming' (Hegel 1991, §24A3, p. 62). This explicitly points to a difference between *how* the transition occurs. What is important is the point of divergence. For in both cases it is thought that, as it were, inflicts the wound, but thought as such cannot be the threshold of divergence because then the difference in outcome would be unintelligible. If thought inflicts the wound in both cases, and the threshold of divergence must account for the difference in outcome, then thought cannot be this threshold. I will return to the issue of this difference at the end of this analysis. For now, what matters is that there clearly is this

34 With that said, Hegel provides a philosophical derivation of sexual difference in *Encyclopaedia Logic's* section on *Life* in terms of the particularisation of the human as *genus in-itself* (Hegel 1991, §220, p. 293).

difference, and in this third stage of Hegel's exposition we are presented with an explication of the specific representational elements of the story of the Fall. The curse that God places on mankind represents the state of an unresolved state of schism; in stage (B) we were told that the *Entzweiung* involves the sublation of immediacy, a moment which must then itself be sublated (this is the Hegelian negation of negation) into a mediated union. Even earlier, in stage (A) we were told that the story of the Fall formed the foundation of the doctrine of the natural sinfulness of man and 'his need of help to overcome it' (Hegel 1991, §24A3, p. 61). In stage (B) there is no need for this assistance because in the counter-history presented in this stage humanity does not Fall. The curse then, that humans should labour (*Arbeit*), as not just the result but also the overcoming of the schism represents this help which is a divine assistance. Previously, in the fourth paragraph, Hegel had claimed that the harmonious union that we seek as fallen creatures is to be the result of the cultivation of our labour (*Arbeit*) and culture (*Bildung*). (In both of these cases, this labour is connected with God, in the former case with God in *Genesis* and in the latter case with Christ.) The Fall *qua* Fall of the *imago dei* requires restoration of the image, 'the original calling of man' (Hegel, §24A3, p. 63), and labour in humankind is a way of distinguishing humankind as such from the rest of creation, that is, of *asserting* the *differentia* of humankind. The separation from nature is the result of the enduring schism and the gap is closed by labour which precludes any passive relationship between human beings and their natural environment and instead requires an active involvement in it (cf. Inwood 1983, p. 96).

The *imago dei* is for Hegel expressed by the uniqueness of human thought and the need to restore it; to overcome the schism which has displaced it, implies something problematic about human thought. In so far as labour is dialectically both the result of the Fall and of evil, as well as its overcoming, it relates to a central part of Hegel's account which often obfuscates between some closely related but ultimately different features of the transition that he is analysing. The various levels of separation which feature in the account of the Fall are not all products of the Fall; some

feature before it, some are augmented by it, and some are part of its overcoming. This is what complicates the relationship of thought to spiritual life. For instance, the separation between humans and animals and more generally nature – the most basic separation - is anterior to the Fall because it is part and parcel of the *imago dei*. However, as implied by the *imago dei*, it is also part of its restoration process which is posterior to the Fall. If we recall the distinction between the three kinds of state of humanity at work in Hegel's account: (i) 'human nature' or what is essential (*wesentlich*) to humanity; (ii) fallen human; and (iii) 'natural humanity' or humanity-in-relation-to-nature; then we can see that (i) entails an essential asymmetry in (iii) which is disturbed by (ii). 'Natural humanity' can also be taken to designate the first stage of humanity in relation to nature, namely humanity in the state of being-in-itself, *like* nature. Sometimes commentators expound the issue presented by the story of the Fall for Hegel as having to do with whether *this* state of natural humanity is good or evil (cf. Hodgson, p. 147). In these instances the case is made in terms of the need for a transition from natural to spiritual life (*Ibid.*). This interpretation is problematic because as Hegel says, spiritual life distinguishes itself from natural life by sublating its immediacy, which is to say, that spiritual life is not natural life raised to a spiritual level. Therefore 'natural humanity' should refer strictly to this relation between the two rather than a natural state of humanity in opposition to spirituality. As Hodgson writes,

The problem is that in the state of nature humans are only implicitly rational and spiritual. Just this is the deficiency, 'for spirit ought not to be implicitly spirit—it is spirit because it is so explicitly'. The state of nature as such is not evil, but it can *become* such when humans choose to remain in that state, to exist according to nature rather than according to the spirit. Thus it is misleading to say that humans are evil 'by nature' (Hodgson, p. 148).

What *becoming* involves for human beings is important because there is often a tendency to assimilate the movement from humanity's state of being-in-itself to being-for-itself to other commonplace examples of this phenomenon. The movement is certainly strongly analogous to, say, an acorn which is implicitly a fully grown oak tree and develops explicitly into this tree. This type

of example highlights one aspect of the transition, namely that it is necessary, but not, for instance, that the acorn may fail to become a fully grown tree. Indeed, to the extent that an acorn develops into a healthy, fully grown tree, it is in essential agreement with its concept. Humanity, on the other hand, is depicted in its fallenness as fundamentally divided.

"God said: Behold Adam is become as one of us, to know good and evil" [Gen. 3:22]. Cognition is now called something divine and not, as earlier, what ought not to be. So in this story there lies also the refutation of the idle chatter about how philosophy belongs only to the finitude of spirit; philosophy is cognition, and the original calling of man, to be an image of God, can be realised only through cognition.-The story now goes on to say that God drove man out of the garden of Eden, so that he should not eat of the tree of life; this means that man is certainly finite and mortal on the side of his nature, but that he is infinite in cognition (Hegel, §24A3, pp. 62-63).

Cognition is the vocation and destiny of humankind; humanity has a *need* for truth (Hegel 1988, p. 437), and as we have seen, Hegel associates cognition in this theological context with knowledge of God. In the 1827 *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Hegel writes that labour involves humanity 'making itself what it is' (Hegel 1988, p. 445). But what is perhaps most striking about the excerpt above is the conclusion, which is the last sentence of the exposition of the Fall narrative, before the reflective last paragraph. Here humanity is divided between the infinity of its thought and the finitude of its 'natural aspect'. This division however is the product of the Fall only in so far as God drove Adam and Eve out of Eden so that they may not eat from the tree of life; this would have presumably secured physical immortality and therefore closed this gap (Inwood, p. 96). Why then, does God cast humanity out of Eden? Because the separation between the infinity of humankind's thought and the finitude of its 'natural aspect' implies a schism between humanity's infinite thought *qua* the *imago dei* and the finitude of its 'natural aspect' *qua* not merely its physical and embodied existence, but also the finitude of its *thought*. For as Hegel makes clear, the story of the Fall represents fallen humanity as one enduring the state of schism, which, though part of the concept of spirit as *Entzweiung*, is not properly sublated by spirit and therefore results in the Fall. However, the

'standpoint of separation, which belongs to the concept of spirit, is not one that man should remain at'; indeed, '[a]ll the finitude of thinking and willing falls within this standpoint of schism' (Hegel, §24A3, p. 63). In addition to §35 where Hegel discusses the antinomies of finite reason or the understanding, he adds to the opposition of freedom and necessity the opposition of good and evil and points out that evil 'is the negative that does not subsist on its own account, but only wants to be on its own account' (Hegel 1991, §35A, p. 73). The closeness of this matter to the antinomy of freedom and necessity has to do with the fact that the contradiction of the Adamic act involves the impossible conjunction of finitude and autonomy. In his fallenness, viz., by remaining in this state of schism,

man creates his purposes from himself, and it is from himself that he draws the material of his action. Inasmuch as he takes these purposes to their ultimate limits, knows only himself, and wills in his particularity without reference to the universal, he is evil, and this evil is his subjectivity (Hegel 1991, §24A3, p. 63).

As we have already seen, there is a direct correspondence between humanity's idea of its own freedom and its idea of God. As Rose writes, 'if the Absolute is misrepresented, we are misrepresenting ourselves, and are correspondingly unfree' (Rose, p. 98). Accordingly, fallen humanity represents its own unfreedom to itself in the form of religion.

According to Hegel, European societies have a bad conception of God and a bad state. For the conception of God is one which makes him unknowable, and this unknowable God is the re-presentation of extreme subjectivity, the lack of freedom, in social and political relations. 'Subjectivity' is the correlate of the legal definition of persons as bearers of private property rights. Misrepresentation of the absolute is the correlate of subjectivity. [...] This divorce in the idea of the absolute, as the state and as religion, itself indicates the real lack of freedom. The absolute can only be re-presented in terms of the prevailing dualisms, in terms of the domination between concept and intuition, between legal person (master) and thing (slave) (Rose, p.99; cf. Hegel 1991, §35).

Moreover, the speculative proposition that religion and state are identical implies the experience or existence of the Fall and a bad state, where state and religion are opposed rather than identical.

However, this is also why there is a distinction between spiritual life and natural life vis-à-vis evil; because to act as a natural being or according to one's natural aspect does not make spirit act in the same way as any purely natural creature because the latter act is in accordance with this principle only implicitly, that is to say, this action is the function of their immediate dispositions; whereas for spirit acting as a natural being involves willing this behaviour, in the case of Adam purely for the sake of 'self-creation', of freedom for the sake of freedom. In §25, which follows on from the account of the Fall and is the concluding section of the preliminary conception before the 'beginning' of philosophy in §26 – what we might call the first afterthought – affirms the view of the finitude of fallen thought as the main upshot of the reading of the Fall narrative. It is the persisting schism, which afflicts thought with this fixed antithesis, i.e. renders it 'of a finite nature', making it inadequate to think the truth. The thinking which moves within finite determinations and these alone is the understanding, the regulating logic of representation. Furthermore, this finitude of fallen thought entails mere subjectivity and therefore a state of antithesis towards objectivity. This is why philosophy must begin by elaborating the positions of thought in relation to objectivity (at §26). And because these thought-determinations are of a limited content, 'they persist both in their antithesis to each other, and (even more) in their antithesis to the Absolute' (Hegel 1991, §25, p. 64).

Hegel finally discusses original sin towards the end of the Fall exposition and writes that we must give up the 'superficial notion' that original sin has its ground only in the contingency of the first human pair (Hegel §24A3, p. 63). This is a major point of divergence in the interpretations of Hegel because some read this as amounting to a gnostic ontologisation of the Fall, which makes the passage through evil a 'moment' toward some good a necessity:

Christianity refuses, having recognized a universal tragic condition, to ontologize this, but makes the extraordinary move of seeing the universal itself as but a contingent narrative upshot. Hence the story of the Fall, and to ontologize this story in the gnostic manner of Hegel and Schelling is to miss what here

profoundly disturbs the entire project of 'ontology' itself. For without the Fall, or with the substitution of the notion of a necessary Fall, one starts with an irreducible scarcity and egotism, and the ethical becomes that which reacts to a bad situation which it is secretly in love with, and needs ceaselessly to reinstate, despite the fact that this compromises the very character of the ethical. Therefore one needs the myth of the Fall in order to think a genuine Good, which to be non-reactive can only be an original plenitude (Milbank 2003, p. 149).

A rigorous reading of Hegel's writings reveals this defect (and it *is*, both philosophically and theologically speaking, a defect) to be absent from his account of the Fall. It is understandable that Hegel's dialectical acrobatics of deriving from what is implicit in the content of religious forms, which he interprets very orthodoxly, a new and radical philosophy which is nonetheless compatible with the orthodox religious forms with whom it shares its objects (cf. Adams, pp. 4-10), should be difficult to express and even more susceptible to misconstrual. In the preface to the second edition of the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, Hegel had to clarify that

the expression that according to this philosophy everything is one and the same, that good and evil are equal too [...] is the most spurious type of unity; it cannot be what is talked of in speculative philosophy, and only a thinking that is still barbaric can employ these thoughts in reference to Ideas;

and

the distinction between good and evil is not in God as such either; for this distinction is found only in what is split in two (Hegel 1991, p. 9).

The identity or 'equality' which Hegel is denying involves the misapplication of speculative identity, the identity between subject and object in the speculative proposition, which, for reasons clarified above, couldn't possibly be said with respect to the distinction between good and evil. As we have already seen. Hegel refers to evil as 'the negative that does not subsist on its own account, but only wants to be on its own account' (Hegel 1991, §35A, p. 73); so how do we reconcile with this claim the view that original sin cannot have as its ground only the contingency of Adam and Eve? Admittedly, the concern that it is allowed in this account for the passage through evil to become a

necessary moment is more substantial in so far as there exists in general an anxiety amongst many (even sympathetic) readers of Hegel that dialectics retroactively justifies many operations which from the progressive standpoint appear unjustifiable to an extremity. We can see that it may be possible for this to occur vis-à-vis the Fall, in the interests (whatever those may be) of philosophical argument in the dialectical afterthought from the Fall as a religious representation (*Vorstellung*) to the philosophical thinking of its content (as *Begriff*). However, philosophical afterthought, the transposition of content to the form of thought involves the *sublation* of the initial form (cf. Hegel 1977a, §788, p. 479), and it is only those reading of Hegel which are (for obvious reasons awkwardly) referred to as 'negative' readings, which overemphasise the 'negative' aspect of *Aufhebung* at the expense of the overgrasping of thought which are susceptible to this objection. The move from the form of religious representation to the form of thought does entail a cancellation of the initial form, which encapsulates the 'negative' aspect of sublation, however it involves also the 'positive' aspect of sublation which refers to the overgrasping and consequent preservation of the initial form. But there exist also other replies. For one, Hegel understands modalities somewhat idiosyncratically; what he means by contingency is not only (and sometimes not at all), for a given event, that that event could have been otherwise, but also that it is not sustained, or that it is instantiated only contingently. Thus with regard to original sin, a 'superficial' notion of its contingency entails that original sin is not universally instantiated, namely that it is not a universal condition, as well as that it is the 'contingent' result of the 'first human pair'; for as we've seen, Hegel considers Adam and Eve to represent humanity as such, and though the Fall itself may be viewed in accidental terms, the accident is attributable to the universal genus, which is what is meant by the concept of spirit. In addition, Hegel writes that 'it is part of the concept of spirit, in fact, that man is by nature evil; and we must not imagine that this could be otherwise' (Hegel 1991, §24A3, p. 63). What is part of the concept of spirit, as we have seen, is the need to sublimate its immediacy, to enter the state of *Entzweiung*. To this extent, we must not imagine that it (the need for humanity to sublimate its immediacy) could have been otherwise. But what is perhaps most

important to understand about this issue is that the 'superficial notion' of the contingency of original sin refers to a representation, specifically an 'external representation' (*äußerliche Vorstellung*), rather than a notion which is more commonly taken to refer to a concept³⁵. In fact, or in actuality (*In der Tat*), it is part of the concept of spirit not merely that humanity must sublimate its immediacy, but also that it is evil *from* nature (*der Mensch von Natur böse ist*), viz., when this state of natural being-in-itself is chosen over against its intended development. *This*, Hegel tells us, also cannot be imagined to be otherwise.

The 'profound doctrine of the Church' concerning original sin is 'confronted' by or opposed to (*gegenüber*) and therefore stands in a particular relationship to the doctrine that man is by nature good (*Ibid.*). In the *Encyclopaedia Logic* this receives only limited treatment, but the discussion is supplemented and extended in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. For our purposes, we may temporarily venture into that text, particularly since it expounds an account of the story of the Fall which is in agreement with that of the *Encyclopaedia Logic*. Hegel points out here that we are dealing with two opposed definitions, but that these are nonetheless two different kinds of definitions. Their opposition is dialectical, and both are true but one-sided. The view that humanity is good comes first. Though Hegel sometimes associates it with Kant and therefore with the exaltation of the noble savage or natural being which goes back to Rousseau, this association relates merely to how the view of the natural goodness of humanity is articulated in his own time (Hegel, 1988, p. 438). On Hegel's own view, this position expresses the view that humanity is in its concept good, namely that it is created good. As he writes,

It is essential to say that humanity is good: human beings are implicitly spirit and rationality, created in and after the image of God [Gen. 1.26-27]. God is the good, and human beings as spirit are the mirror of God; they, too, are *implicitly* good. This is a correct statement. Precisely on this proposition, and on it alone, the

35 If one insisted on using the term 'notion', this would have to be used in the sense of 'conception' which covers some instances of *Vorstellung*.

possibility of their reconciliation rests (*Ibid.*).

The position is clearly true, however it is one-sided. For if *only* this proposition is true, then humanity has no need for salvation. Since humanity does need salvation, then it cannot be the case that this proposition exhausts the matter. Thus the one-sidedness of it rests on the claim that humanity's intrinsic goodness is implicit. 'Implicit goodness' or goodness in-itself, designates the original stage in the life-history of humanity. Thus '[h]umanity is 'implicitly' good: this seems to say it all, but the 'implicitly' designates precisely a one-sidedness which implies that everything has *not* been said' (*Ibid.*, p. 438-439). 'Nature is, for man, only the starting point that he ought to transform.' What has not been said, of course, is the Fall and its effects. For though humanity is good according to its concept, it is not 'good according to its actuality'³⁶ (*Ibid.*, p. 439). For this reason, the proposition of the natural goodness of humanity is treated first, for this is the logical order of the two propositions. The first proposition corresponds to (i), to what is *essential* to human nature. The second proposition, viz., that humanity is by nature evil, derives from the necessity of *Entzweiung*, from the necessity of spirit to sublate its immediacy since this is the formal condition for the possibility of evil. Thus the proposition that humanity is evil follows from the proposition that humanity is good. In a sense, the truth of the second proposition is entailed by the one-sidedness of the initial proposition; this one-sidedness designates a lack which has to be supplemented by a premiss which is contingently added to the first proposition, and this premiss we identify with the proposition that humanity fell. Accordingly, the derivation of the second proposition demonstrates the nonidentity of immediacy and innocence or the implicit (the essentially good). For the stepping forth out of immediacy (*Entzweiung*) 'is already contained in the natural state' (where this means 'natural union' or 'innocence') (*Ibid.*). The implicit constitutes the immediate, however because the implicit, as the essential goodness of humanity, is *spirit*, humanity is in this immediacy already involved in stepping forth from it. Hegel infers from this, perhaps paradoxically, that therefore the implicit being of humanity is evil. This is important because it does not reproduce a certain dualism

³⁶ The claim in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, that it is part of the concept of spirit, *in actuality*, that humanity is by nature evil (Hegel 1991, §24A3, p. 63), should be read alongside this distinction from the *Lectures*.

that may be anticipated by the oppositional categories in play here. For in so far as spirit is implicitly good, it is not the case, vis-à-vis the two propositions of the goodness and evil of humankind, that spirit is explicitly evil. Instead, *because* humanity is spirit, it is distinguished from its immediacy and therefore, in this movement towards being-for-itself is in opposition to evil. Hence dialectically, the proposition 'human spirit is implicitly good' is correct if and only if spirit sublates its immediacy as well as this implicit goodness and obtains an explicit goodness in actuality. In so far as humanity is evil in actuality, that is, it is permeated by original sin, then the proposition 'human spirit is implicitly evil' is correct.

Thus we have returned to the earlier issue of the threshold or point of divergence between two accounts, between the account of an actual fallen humanity and the counter-history of an unfallen human spirit which could have actualised, i.e. made explicit its goodness. The former is the general account of the former that we have been dealing with, most explicitly in what we've called stage (C) of the exposition in the *Encyclopedia Logic*. However the relation between the two propositions 'human spirit is implicitly good' and 'human spirit is implicitly evil' is asymmetric as is evidenced by the fact that *both* propositions are true, albeit a one-sided manner. For even though fallen humanity fails to make its goodness actual, it is nonetheless necessary that it *will* make it so, since the effects of the Fall are corrected by God who offers divine assistance and *reconciliation* to humanity. In this sense, both histories amount to the same eschatological state, but the actual history involves a circuitous route through the Fall. The threshold of divergence should be taken to be the *Entzweiung* itself; for this is what expresses the divergence and the asymmetry between the two propositions above. It is because spirit *as* implicitly good is also always already *Entzweiung* that it is the condition for the possibility of these two histories but also that these two histories must lead to the same thing, on account of the fact that the division into two admits to this asymmetry, to the orientation towards the absolute. This asymmetry is also conveyed by the distinction between immediacy and innocence. Because humanity is in actuality in a state of fallenness, it must

represent to itself what it fell from through religion, through the form of representation. And for Hegel this entails a series of epistemic limitations. (Indeed, as we shall see later, Hegel has a theory of the noetic effects of the Fall.) For the logical mode of representation is the understanding, which cannot properly understand dialectical relations. This is why Hegel tells us that when reading the representation of the Fall we should always 'observe its contradictions' (Hegel 1979, p. 153). Hence in the narrative 'we vacuously represent to ourselves, in taking the original condition of the human being to have been the state of innocence, the state of nature' (Hegel 1988, p. 440). Of course, humanity ought not to be innocent in *this* sense (*Ibid.*), but the understanding cannot discern the distinction between the innocence of humanity thusly misconstrued as immediacy, and the innocence of humanity as implicit goodness which though constitutive of its immediacy is always already stepping forth from this state. Thus Hegel confirms once more that 'in so far as human being is good, it *ought* not to be so in the sense that a natural thing is good'³⁷ (*Ibid.*). The normativity of this claim expresses precisely what is constitutive of the goodness of human spirit, namely its striving towards its being as the *imago dei*. Innocence (*Unschuld*) is not negated into guilt but sublated into responsibility (*Schuld*) which is precisely the *positive* state, the state humanity is intended to develop into (Hegel 1989, p. 440).

Terror of the Negative

Recall the doubled meaning of *aufheben*; to 'cancel' or 'clear away', as when a law is cancelled (*aufgehoben*), and to 'preserve' as something being 'well taken care of' (*wohl aufgehoben*). It also means, particularly in this legal context, to 'overrule'. Therefore the distinction between the positive and negative aspects of sublation is easily collapsible. It concerns the most fundamental insight of Hegelian philosophy³⁸; the crucial need (to which we shall return later) to paradoxically mediate the very opposition between immediacy and mediation. Hegel doesn't think that contronyms or words

37 Similarly, '[n]atural things and animals are all good, but this kind of goodness cannot be attributed to humanity' (Hegel 1989, pp. 440-441).

38 One is tempted to call it his philosophy's *Grundlage*, but this would be incorrect in some ways.

with two opposite meanings are accidental or that they lead to linguistic ambiguity (Hegel 1991, §96, p. 154). In fact contronyms³⁹ (or 'auto-antonyms') are dialectically self-othering in their structure, and contain speculative meaning. 'Sublation' is an unfortunate but inevitable translation (*aufheben* in fact translates to 'to sublate') in so far as it is not itself a contronym and originally referred to a precipitate suspended in urine. The closest one can come in the English language to capturing the contronymic form of *aufheben* is the morphologically impractical 'to take up', which is a translation of the Latin *tollere* from which *aufheben* derives. (Otherwise, the English language is a veritable wellspring of contronyms.) A significant feature of the contronym is that it is actually a part of a duplication (*Entzweiung*); for instance, 'cleave' means 'to split apart' but it also has a homograph: 'cleave' which means 'to cling'. So it is not simply the case, linguistically and philosophically speaking, that *aufheben* is a word with two opposite meanings; *aufheben* in the sense of cancellation and *aufheben* in the sense of preservation are two homographs whose speculative identity paradoxically allows their simultaneous use in a single uttering.

It is no surprise that the so called 'negative' reading of Hegel, founded as it is on the 'negative' principle of sublation is predominantly drawn to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. As Ward observes,

One prevalent approach, seen in the work of Alexander Kojève and Jean Hyppolite, is to locate a position for reading Hegel in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* - all his other published writings are subsequently viewed in terms of this seminal text. I could go into the consequences of such a reading in more detail, but the upshot is a Nietzschean death of God scenario *avant la letter*. That is, the transcendent is collapsed into the immanent movement of history such that “to realize Freedom and to live in the World as a human being, autonomous and free—all this is only possible on the condition that one accept the idea of death and, consequently,

39 '[T]he German language has many advantages over other modern languages, for many of its words also have the further peculiarity of carrying, not just different meanings, but opposite ones, and in this one cannot fail to recognize the language's speculative spirit. It can delight thought to come across such words, and to discover in naïve form, already in the lexicon as one word of opposite meanings, that union of opposites which is the result of speculation but to the understanding is nonsensical' (Hegel 2010, p. 12).

and

'But it must strike one as remarkable that a language has come to use one and the same word for two opposite meanings. For speculative thought it is gratifying to find words that have in themselves a speculative meaning' (Hegel 2010, p. 82). See also Hegel 1991, §96, p. 154.

atheism. And the whole evolution of the Christian World is nothing but a progress toward the atheistic awareness of the essential finiteness of human existence” (Ward, p. 272).

And isn't this precisely the case because, as Hyppolite argues, in the *Phenomenology* (unlike in the rest of Hegel's body of work) consciousness always forgets the standpoints which it sublates⁴⁰ (Hyppolite, pp. 24, 121n, 227-228)? There is effectively minimal or no recourse to the 'positive' workings of dialectical sublation, and this is why for him the moment of the Fall is a salvific moment (Hyppolite, p. 355)! It is necessary to point out that there is neither a temporal nor logical 'order' to these two aspects of sublation in the occurrence of dialectical mediation, viz., it is not the case in the movement from a to b, a is first preserved and then cancelled or the other way around (though the former is certainly much more intelligible in representational terms). As Jean-Luc Nancy points out in *The Speculative Remark, Vermittlung* 'explains' both the positivity and negativity of *Aufhebung* (Nancy, p. 53). 'Preservation' always already includes a negative undertone, because in order for something to be retained it must be removed from its immediacy, and yet, what is sublated does not turn into nothing, nothing is the immediate; 'something sublated is on the contrary something mediated; it still had in itself, therefore the determinateness from which it derives' (Hegel 2010, pp. 81-82).

Slavoj Žižek has demonstrated some sensitivity to aspects of this view, arguing for them in order to articulate the 'insurmountable difference' between the Hegelian and 'New Age' versions of the *coincidentia oppositorum*. However he, like Hyppolite, makes a similar error. Apropos the case of the French revolutionary Terror, he rejects the 'common perception' of Hegel according to which his opposition to the Terror is conceived in terms of the immediate assertion of freedom as an abstract-universal which, when asserted as such, namely as an abstract will, violently subtracts the determinate resulting in a universal terror directed at all particular content (Žižek 2012, p. 69; cf.

⁴⁰ I am not entirely convinced by Hyppolite's claim; it is much more likely that the content of a given standpoint which is preserved in a higher consciousness following its sublation in the form of mediated immediacy is not forgotten but is apprehended 'non-positionally' or in accordance with some other such phenomenological (rather than logical) state.

Milbank et al. 2016, pp. 292-293). To this, it is alleged that Hegel opposes the concrete freedom of the modern rational state. The fault in this common construal, however, is that it precisely does not take into account the 'immanent temporal dimension of the dialectical process'. The agent is never directly confronted with the choice between the revolutionary terror or the organic rational state. The choice he is confronted with, as it were, on the eve of the revolution, is that between the *old* or present state of order and revolution 'inclusive of its terror'. What tips the balance of choice towards the latter is in this particular case, we are told, 'is the insight into how the organic harmony of the *ancien régime* is itself a fake, an illusion concealing the reality of brutal violence, division, and chaos (Žižek 2012, pp. 69-70). But the real Hegelian question is still not 'what tips the balance of choice towards revolution?' but 'why is there terror?'. For it does not follow from the fact that the choice between terror and no terror is not directly given to the agent that the question of why terror followed is unintelligible which is implied by Žižek. The only two possible interpretations of his position derive from two different ways of understanding the claim above that the *ancien régime* concealed violence in pre-revolutionary France. If this was a state of terror objectively equivalent to the revolutionary state of the French Terror, then it might plausibly be the case that a violent revolution in France, in so far as the balance of choice had been tipped towards that of revolution, was unavoidable. However if it is alternatively maintained that the revolutionary terror was more extreme than the violence of the pre-revolutionary situation which is then taken as ordered, the corollary of the Žižekian analysis is that the terror was necessary *tout court* (cf. Žižek 2012, p. 339). For it follows dialectically, on a truly speculative reading of sublation (which incorporates both its positivity and negativity) that the ordered form of the pre-revolutionary state should have been preserved by the revolutionaries (cf. Burke, p. 39-45).

Hyperreal Evil

The case of French Jacobinism has, for our purposes, many structural similarities to the story of the Fall. In both cases we are faced with a baffling and terrifying 'choice' which we must grasp

dialectically but with great difficulty. But notice that if we transpose the logic of the Jacobinist case to the story of the Fall, the result for the Žižekian reading is that there never was an original plenitude just like the pre-revolutionary order or stability of the *ancien régime* was a lie. We can begin to understand the intricacies of the Fall narrative through a brief detour of ancient Gnosticism's treatment of the Fall. In the Gnostic cosmic drama (which paradoxically always retains crucial reference to both time and history) there exist two schismatic moments: the first rupture in the spiritual realm, and the second rupture in creation, the break with creation as such, viz., with both matter and time in order to restore the spiritual realm to its former unity. Doesn't this, as Catherine Pickstock suggests, offer the first paradigmatic revolutionary scenario to the West (Pickstock, p. 175)?

[T]he whole of the past is a *catastrophe* which must be aniconically refused. Later materialist traditions of revolution seems less revolutionary by comparison, and contradictorily [sic] to transpose aniconic refusal into future material, and inevitably figured, history, as we have already seen (*Ibid.*).

In our homology, the originary Fall is transposed to the generation of the chaos of the *ancien régime* (the rupture, as it were, in the monarchical constitution), and the second schism forms the salvific revolutionary act. This is because, as Pickstock affirms, if Fall and restoration each occur only once, it follows for the Gnostic outlook that there is an identical repetition of fault. More fundamentally, if Gnosticism understands the Fall in the spiritual realm as effecting a rupture also in the divine realm, then there can be no ontological symmetry vis-à-vis the providential logic of the restoration of the spiritual realm. Consequently, if eternal immutability, which sustains this symmetry, is breached, then a fundamental indeterminacy is produced with respect to whether the restoration incurs a paradisial regression *or* progression and involves an asymmetry of temporal directedness which *traps* salvation history (which is always a cosmic salvation meta-history) in material space-time. (Hegel is in this context, opposed to Karl Löwith, and even more so to Reinhold Niebuhr who see history as something humanity needs saving from in *this* sense (cf. Löwith, pp. 145-160).)

The most difficult thing to understand about the story of the Fall is the Adamic choice. Adam's choice is the most baffling decision ever made, and the Fall as such designates this act of total unintelligibility. As Milbank points out, it is not explained, even for Augustine, by free will because the latter in its naturally created state designates only willing of the good, under the compulsion of the vision of the good (Milbank 2003, p. 8). The 'choice' between good and evil, strictly speaking, does not exist because *evil*, in accordance with privation theory, does not exist. If creation is as such good, then the will in its created condition is committed to a ceaseless activity for which there exists no level of description that involves a moral distinction between good and evil. The moment a number of orthodox Christian premisses are assembled in this way, the fact that there was a Fall at all begins to strain credulity. So any account of the Fall must obviously have something like an account of this occurrence but paradoxically *also* an account or sense of its apparent impossibility. This sense is often lost in Hegel, because in the movements between the discussion of the story as a representation and the discussion of philosophical ideas which the story engenders or represents, the exigency of the logical overcoming of the immediate becomes conflated with the pictorial elements of the representation which allegedly engender such a notion. David Brown has pointed out the irony that discussions surrounding Hegelian philosophy and theology are often conducted in terms that are treated as conceptual but are actually representational⁴¹ (Brown, p. 54). Thus, Hegel's point with respect to the story of the Fall as a representation is that it can't represent *process*; so it is not matter of whether or not humans are their in natural created state in Eden (they obviously are) but that they have a *destiny*. He thinks that the innocence of immediate knowledge is not the innocence of children nor that of moral purity more generally, it is the 'innocence' of consciousness uninvolved in the pursuit of its destiny – its overcoming is essentially trivial; what counts – and this is where humanity goes wrong – is the shape of this overcoming (Hegel 1991, §24A2, p. 62).

Spirit is not something merely immediate; on the contrary, it essentially contains the moment of mediation

41 Some of the most problematic (and certainly most ubiquitous) examples of this are the notions of transcendence and immanence.

within itself. Childlike innocence does certainly have something attractive and touching about it, but only in so far as it reminds us of what must be brought forth by the spirit. The harmonious union that we see in children as something natural is to be the result of the labour and culture of the spirit. Christ says, "Except ye become as little children," etc. [Matt. 18:3]; but that does not say that we must remain children (Hegel 1991, §24A2, p. 62).

Childlike innocence is perhaps the thing furthest removed from the Adamic invention of finite autonomy; children do not desire authority. However Adam wasn't created a child, and this is a very important feature of the Biblical creation story in representational terms. *Conversion*, which is the significant concept in Matthew 18.3 ('unless you change [convert, turn around; στραφῆτε] and become like children') expresses the dialectical movement from childhood to adulthood. There is a qualitative shift here which for Hegel becomes appropriate to express also the transition from a state of implicit goodness to a state of explicitly chosen goodness (cf. Hegel 2001, p. 340). Pickstock conceives this as an *epistrophe*, or a (non-identical) Pauline repetition; as a simultaneous advance in time with a turning back to the metaphysical origin⁴² (which melds Catholic and Gnostic elements) (Pickstock, p. 176). Whilst the noun *epistrophe* (ἐπιστροφή) does not actually occur anywhere in the Pauline texts, the cognate στραφῆτε *does* occur in Matthew 18.3. The 'turning' it designates is various throughout New Testament use and involves both turning back from the error of one's ways (James 5.2), from darkness to light and from the satanic to the divine (Acts 26.18), as well as turning in order to go forward, towards the Lord (Acts 9.35; 11.21; 15.19; 26.20; 2 Corinthians 3.16) (Peace, p. 348). It is customary for some scholars to identify the theme of the overcoming of 'immediate innocence' for Hegel as deriving from some kind of casual arrogance, usually associated with the latter's rationalism. Jon Stewart, for instance, in his book on Hegel's relationship to Kierkegaard expounds what he sees as the kernel of Adam and Eve's story in the following way:

For Hegel, to live in a state of immediacy or immediate harmony with nature is unworthy of human beings. It is therefore absurd to think of this state as the true one for which humans are destined. Animals live in this immediate harmony, but human beings must transcend it, which occurs via alienation from nature. For

42 Notice the crucial temporal symmetry I mentioned before.

Hegel, the Garden of Eden was no paradise but rather a prison appropriate for animals who are bound by natural necessity (Stewart, p. 412).

It is not that immediate harmony with nature is unworthy of human beings; it is part of the human condition, which also requires mediation. To claim that Hegel denigrates the former commits one to the claim that this denigration is entailed by the very claim that there ought to be mediation. This happens if one assumes that humans ought to subsist in an unchanging repose without development towards their intended end. The second claim, that animals live in this immediate harmony is also false; animality is indeed characterised by its immediacy and particularity, but by '*this* immediacy', Stewart is referring to the immediacy of human life, even though for Hegel, humans and animals differ all the way down as a consequence of the overgrasping of thought. Humans and animals were not created at the same time, and they were not created equal; and this underlies orthodox understandings of mediation and of the necessity of overcoming immediacy especially in relation to the Fall in Christian theology. Origen famously proclaimed in *On First Principles* that it is better to be in a state of virtue or in a state wickedness than to be in neither of these (Origen, p. 234). *That* would be the animalistic position. The state of virtue is a state of positively willing virtue, of sustaining through ceaseless reproduction the human spiritual state. It would be an easy mistake to infer from the goodness of creation that a 'default' or 'neutral' repose would also be aligned with the Good. But this is simply not true, in the same way that it is not true that peace can be inferred from a lack of conflict. The idea of an irrational act, of which the Adamic choice can be said to be the first, is equally paradoxical. It is not a non-rational act, it is as Donald Davidson as put it, 'a failure within the house of reason'⁴³ (Davidson, p. 169).

Thus the Edenic state is not for Hegel associated with animality. The notion of 'innocence' too, is equivocal *prima facie* because it refers to two things which cannot adequately be *represented* (in the

43 This is how Hegel thinks of 'negative paradoxes' (to borrow from Chesterton); he sees the same logical structure in both madness, which (*Verrücktheit*), which involves a failure or contradiction within reason, involving a part of the psyche which has not been properly mediated, and criminal consciousness. For the latter see Williams, R.R., *Hegel's Ethics of Recognition* (Londno: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 164-173. For the former see

strict sense) apart from one another; there is (a) the original innocence of the first pair who are created innocent, and (b) innocence *qua* the spiritual state of the first pair in general until the Fall which as we have seen is more appropriately designated as immediacy. However, when it is said that the state of immediacy is a state of innocence, what is referred to is (a), namely that in their immediate origination, the first pair were created innocent. Therefore, when it is said that humanity cannot remain in an immediate and therefore innocent state, what is referred to is once again (a), so it is really a mistake to sustain this conflation of immediacy and innocence. When Hegel writes that it the essence of spirit to sublate this immediate state, it is sometimes inferred that this simply means abandoning innocence (cf. Stewart, p. 413), even though what it actually means is transitioning from mere immediate innocence to a mediated innocent maturity. One could say that it means transitioning, logically, from (a) to (b), and one certainly should say that it means transitioning from childhood to adulthood, by positively willing the virtuous. The Fall is the failure of achieving this mediation. That is why the Adamic choice is not only dramatic but also sophomoric; it is the product of childishness, this time of another kind, which precisely excoriates rightful authority. There is childhood that ought to be protected so that its innocence may be retained and there is also childishness beyond its years or adolescent immaturity. Adam 'trifled away' his happiness (Hegel 2001, p. 340). The Fall is a rupture because humanity is forced into its adulthood without this mediation. The result is pain.

III

Die Wunde schliesst der Speer nur, der sie schlug

A crucial philosophical interlude for these issues abounds in Hegel's treatment of contradiction vis-à-vis the themes of pain and healing. There is an important comment in the discussion of the Fall in the *Encyclopedia Logic* about thought's infliction of a wound on itself which it itself must heal (Hegel 1990, §24A3, p. 63). I am interested in developing it – and all of its theological overtones – specifically in relation to the thesis of the universality of thought, of thought as absolute form which has been ubiquitous in this essay. For there is a tendency to overlook the centrality of *thought* – particularly thought as it is conceived by Hegel – in this discussion⁴⁴, and focus instead on the mere logic of what is being said. In addition, a similar (and earlier) claim from the *Phenomenology* where Hegel describes the infliction and healing of the wound phenomenologically, viz., in terms of spirit's movement (Hegel 1977a, §669) is often substituted in discussions of the Fall for the actual claim that Hegel makes when discussing the Fall which involves the claim that thought as such inflicts and heals the wound. The logic of the claim is intriguing because it is a dialectical alteration of an older motif (the Delphic oracle told Telephus who had been wounded by Achilles that only the latter could heal his wound) which was revived some decades after his death by Wagner in *Parsifal*. Parsifal's claim that in the third act that 'Nur eine Waffe taugt; die Wunde schliesst der Speer nur, der sie schlug'⁴⁵ ('only one weapon will do; the wound is closed only by the spear that struck it') assumes a different form in Hegel. The wound, as has already been indicated, is self-inflicted. But apart from this insight, commentators seem to disagree on how to understand this wound. Consider for instance the opposition in the following two claims.

(1) 'Spirit is itself the wound it tries to heal, that is, the wound is self-inflicted. 'Spirit' at its most elementary is the 'wound' of nature.' (Žižek 2014, p. 140.)

(2) 'Nature is spirit's self-inflicted wound.' (Carlson, p. 72.)

⁴⁴ Shanks and Desmond's (otherwise significant) debate on this matter largely suffers from this inattention (see Shanks, pp. 40-3).

⁴⁵ Which has recently also been addressed by Žižek (2013, pp. 136, 140-1).

Which is it? Is spirit the wound of nature or is nature the wound of spirit? Of course, both Žižek and Carlson are attempting to say the same thing, and (1) and (2) are in a sense identical claims (they are also, as it happens, *identity* claims about the relation between spirit and nature). But short of arbitrarily fixing either term as subject, both are failing to do this. This is because they are failing to notice the universality of thought as the condition for the possibility of healing, or the fact that spirit overgrasps nature.

There is a distinction that is important when trying to understand this claim about the healing of thought. What is well understood about the Fall is that human thought wounds itself. This is not, strictly speaking, because it makes the wrong choice (as I've already pointed out); as Milbank argues, the notion that there was an Adamic choice between good and evil was itself invented by Adam himself at the Fall, through the imagining of a false simulacrum of autonomy within the fullness of reality (Milbank 2003, p. 8). Evil is not privation, it is hyperreal⁴⁶. This invention is not the invention of finite thought as such; as we shall see, finite thought or the understanding is part of divine thought and is as such anterior to Adam. The invention is rather the contradictory conjunction of finite thought and autonomy. Hegel calls this 'the awakening of consciousness' (Hegel 1991, §24A3, p.62). However *what* consciousness awakens to is not a pre-decided matter because the condition for the possibility of its awakening is its *doubling*, i.e. spirit's *Entzweiung*, which, as it were, is precisely a two-way street. But this two-way street is not, again, between good and evil as such, and there is a disanalogy here if it is meant that the two paths represent two separate *ways*. Because for Hegel, as more generally for Christianity, the two paths represent one the one hand the way of the Lord, and on the other a circuitous – one could say even serpentine – route, presented initially by the serpent in the Garden not as an alternative to divinity but as a *short-cut* to divinity. Hegel is concerned, and I think he is right to be, that the story could be taken to

46 To transmogrify Baudrillard; see Baudrillard, J., *Simulacra and Sumulation*, tr. S.F. Glaser (Ann Arbor MI: University of Michigan Press, 1994), p. 159.

mean that the disobedience of Adam was brought forth by the external instigation of the serpent. He rightly ignores the reference to the animality of the serpent, because animals are precisely subordinated to humans by virtue of the latter's *speech* (Genesis 2.19-20). So the story implies a Fall in a higher spiritual realm, but the Adamic Fall, as the Fall of the *imago dei* must be humanity's own. It cannot be an identical repetition of a Satanic Fall. Adam's false simulacrum is not an *imago satani*, as the Lutheran theologian Flacius Illyricus maintained. Fallenness is precisely the failure to sublate the *imago dei* properly. To simulate, as Baudrillard puts it, is to feign what one doesn't have, however the difference between a simulated illness and a faked illness is that the former produces true symptoms (Baudrillard, p. 3)! Consequently the Fall designates a simulacrum in the proper sense, as 'having no relation to any reality whatsoever' by being 'its own pure simulacrum' (Baudrillard, p. 6), rather than serving to either pervert the fullness of reality or mask its absence. Because the will is intrinsically directed in its own *Entzweiung*, the attempt to transform the *imago dei* in opposition to this intrinsic orientation results in pain and the image's weakening. Pain is felt because the *Entzweiung* is for spirit transformed into *Entfremdung*, into an alienation from what *belongs* to it (Hegel 2007, §382, p. 16; Peters, 112). However, when it is said that thought heals its own wound it is meant that it is restored by the *Logos* or divine thought in which human thought participates (Hegel 2001, pp. 340-341). (This is reflected in Hegel's philosophy in the transition from the Philosophy of Nature to the Philosophy of Mind (cf. Ward, p. 271).)

Human mind and thought are for Hegel the absolutely-concrete (Hegel 1990, §164); and they are stronger than any merely natural entity. This is because the cause of *pain* according to the third *Encyclopedia* is *contradiction* (Hegel 2007, §382). In so far as this is the case, animals either (1) do not feel pain or (2) feel an altogether different kind of pain from human beings. The case for the former claim can be made in the following way. Because an animal lacks awareness of that which is other than its immediate sensation, it is completely determined by it which for Hegel renders it as its determinacy, viz., for any pain *p* occurring at *t₁* the animal experiencing *p* is at *t₁* nothing other than

p (this is part of what Stewart means by natural necessity (Stewart, p. 412). This does not mean that for Hegel the animal lacks non-positional awareness of itself as distinct from its object, but that *pain* isn't identified as an external object and instead non-positional consciousness consists of the apprehension of one's being as *being in pain*. That this animal consciousness is temporal rather than transcendental is possible because the animal has, phenomenologically speaking, no reflective self-consciousness which takes the self as a determinate object and as a synthetic unity of its past states. Consequently, the animal has no persisting identity underlying its sensations (Hegel 2007, p. 299), it simply is its current sensation, from which may be derived an implication, albeit a weak one, that it doesn't have pain, at least not in any commonly construed sense. So (1) and (2) turn out to be the same thing in a familiar Hegelian way. We can begin to see why as a result of the universality of thought the statements 'spirit is nature's wound' and 'nature is spirit's wound' are identical. The concept of animality overgrasps that of individual animals who survive death in the prolongation of their species. But there persists in this account a universal inadequacy, for it is not animality *as such* which survives, but a species which outlives the animal but still faces extinction. The overgrasping of the individual animal by universal animality designates but the overcoming of another individual inadequacy. As Inwood observes, spirit endures in a manner not dissimilar from the way an animals endure *in* their species (Inwood, p. 444). But notice the difference. Spirit, even *if* we choose to conceive of it solely in terms of individual humans (entire cultures can be individuals but this pushes the homology) defies individuation for as we have seen, human beings *qua* thinkers are indistinguishable from other human beings *qua* thinkers. Accordingly, whilst animality is a universal posited by pure thought, spirit *is* thought, thinkers are indistinguishable because they are nothing more than the system of pure thoughts (Hegel 1970, §386).

The subjectivity of an animal has merely being-in-itself (*An-sich-sein*) rather than being-for-itself (*Für-sich-sein*) from the standpoint of which the pain of the former constitutes no pain at all (Hegel 2007, §374). The mere being-in-itself of animals is what Hegel refers to as their 'universal

inadequacy' which is what makes them liable to pain, disease, and ultimately death (*Ibid.*; Inwood, p. 442). It is a crucial distinction invoked by Hegel in the context of the Fall (Hegel 2001, p. 340). In so far as Hegel treats the story of the Fall as something like a mythological representation, he is not concerned, as Augustine was, with the issue of whether Genesis 2.17 ('of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die') refers to bodily death, or to the death of the soul that occurs when one sins (Augustine, p. 34). However he does think that to the extent that the Fall is a forced, unmediated transition it produces a contradiction in the concept of Adam which causes the first pain. (And both bodily and spiritual death involve a contradiction in one's concept in this way.) Though pain always involves a contradiction (I say this because a contradiction might be a necessary but individually insufficient condition for pain), the relieving of a pain or recovery from an illness, which designates the overcoming of the *individual* inadequacy of an animal does not amount to the overcoming of contradiction in a robust sense since it does not designate the overcoming of its *universal* inadequacy. The story of the Fall teaches us that human beings were not created in a state of universal inadequacy but stumbled into it. Fallenness designates this universal inadequacy; 'universality' refers to *original* sin, whereas 'individual' inadequacy refers to individual acts of sin whose forgiveness does not require the direct involvement of the divine. Hegel quotes Psalm 51 as the example of 'the feeling of pain at such a condition, and of longing to transcend it, [which] we find in David' (Hegel 2001, p. 340)⁴⁷.

Thought and *eo ipso* the human mind is capable of sustaining and surviving a contradiction by

47 1Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

2Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

3For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

4Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment.

5Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me.

6You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

7Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

8Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.

9Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

10Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

enduring its pain. A contradiction would destroy a natural thing⁴⁸ but it cannot destroy the mind, and it is in this sense that the mind is stronger than any natural thing⁴⁹. Hegel wrongly infers from this that classical logic must somehow be defective because it denies this (Hegel 2007, §382). However classical logic denies neither that a contradictory proposition may be asserted nor that it may be believed, but merely that it can be true. In any case, Hegel draws a distinction between something being true (*wahr*; which contrasts with *unwahr*: untrue) and it being correct (*richtig*; which contrasts with *falsch*: false), and the former does not refer to the value of sentence etc., and may be regarded as a metaphysical rather than a semantic notion (Hegel 1990, §172). The sentence 'Bach's fifth cello suite is in the key of C minor' is merely true in the sense of being *correct* (though judgements about infinite objects can be true in the former sense of being *true*, hence the classic statement that 'das Wahrheit ist das Ganze' (Hegel 1977a, §20)), and though correctness and truth are often considered synonymous, the former designates a merely a formal agreement of our representation with its content (Hegel 1991, §172, pp. 249-250). Hegel has no place in the twentieth century debate on the issue of truth-bearers; with regard to this former notion of truth as *Wahrheit* truth may be applied not to one kind of thing, such as a beliefs (Russell) or sentences (Tarski) (though perhaps Hegel would have said something of the sort about correctness), but to a whole plurality of objects abstract as well as concrete. Truth in this sense may involve, for instance, the truth of a 'true friend'. Note that Hegel does not draw this distinction in order to arrive at a dialectic account of truth. What is important is the mind's ability to sustain contradiction, not the entirely separate issue of whether there are true contradictions. The reason Hegel's move resembles (however superficially) such ambitions is that he *is* interested in a kind of truth that involves contradiction, in the sense of involving sublation, the truth of a thing in the sense of its *telos*⁵⁰.

48 Hegel's example of this is peculiar. He says that if gold acquired another specific gravity, then it would perish as such, i.e. as gold.

49 It does not follow from the claim that the mind is stronger than natural things that minds or things with minds cannot die (like animals), though the claim that this unique strength is to be found in (or entails) the overcoming of universal inadequacy does seem to suggest that the question of why humans or at least pure thinkers keep dying deserves an answer. But this is a superficial concern. One cannot derive from the thesis of the infinity of thought a thesis about the immortality of individuals because every thinking ego is as such indistinguishable from any other thinking ego.

50 It is therefore doubtful that Hegel should have any concerns about explosion; Hegelian contradictions are many things, but whether logical contradiction is among them is uncertain (even if it is extremely unlikely). This does not in any way trivialise the Hegelian project. For a logical contradiction of P is necessary if one wishes to get to $\neg P$ iff

The distinction between *Richtigkeit* and *Wahrheit* is one of the radical ways in which Hegel justifies a number of his claims *theologically*, and anticipates theological objections to those claims. The most important objection in connection with the Fall is that Hegel's philosophical project fails to take into account the noetic effects of the Fall. This has been succinctly expressed in Alvin Plantinga's now classic exposition:

This is a cognitive limitation that first of all prevents its victim from proper knowledge of God and his beauty, glory, and love; it also prevents him from seeing what is worth loving and what worth hating, what should be sought and what eschewed. It therefore compromises both knowledge of fact and knowledge of value (Plantinga, p. 207).

However, for Hegel, because thought is mediated by its own content, the so called noetic effects of the Fall, as they are often expounded would have to be accompanied by ontological effects which are both theologically and philosophically unacceptable. For the corruption of human thought with respect to its ability to access a given knowledge would also entail the corruption of that knowledge, viz., the corruption of divinity itself. In other words, the Gnostic idea that a corruption or Fall was involved in the divine πλήρωμα itself as a result of the Fall of Adam and Eve, *completely* destroys the Hegelian project because it renders both impossible and incomprehensible the Hegelian account of thought and its role for both philosophy and religion that I have been developing in this essay. However it is not that Hegel ignores the theological impulse behind the thesis of the noetic effects of the Fall. It is simply that Hegel primarily takes the thesis to express the effects of the Fall vis-à-vis the epistemic domain of *Richtigkeit*. This is because *Richtigkeit*, as the formal agreement between our representations and their content is indifferent to the kind of content the relatum happens to be. *Wahrheit*, on the other hand, designates 'the agreement of the object with itself, i.e., with its concept' (Hegel 1991, §172A, p. 250). To use Hegel's own example, the

the identity of P is a certain kind of logical identity. But this is obviously not the case for Hegel, who, in dealing with a different account of identity, ultimately makes use of a different kind of contradiction.

judgement or proposition 'this body is ill' can be 'correct' with regard to a particular body, but a *content* of this sort cannot be 'true' because an ill body is not in agreement with its concept of life. Similarly, the Adamic disobedience, like 'theft' and other transgressions is not in concordance with the concept of human action. Thus the Hegelian thesis of the noetic effects of the Fall is twofold; (i) sin produces epistemological distortion vis-à-vis the epistemic domain of *Richtigkeit*; and (ii) sin produces epistemological distortion vis-à-vis human *self-knowledge* because of the Adamic Fall which produces a contradiction in the concept of the human – its universal inadequacy. This is why to the extent that it is completely sustained in being by God after the Fall, that, as Milbank writes, the loss of divine glory at the Fall is immediately corrected (Milbank 2003, p. 42), humanity does not immediately grasp this restoration of the spiritual realm. This is because (ii) designates the disagreement between form and content (Hegel 1991, §172A, p. 250), and the content of humanity's self-knowledge is 'forgotten' after the Fall and suppressed to lower forms which subsequently require anamnestic sublation to a state of formal agreement. *Nachdenken*, in other words, is the Hegelian *anamnesis*, and philosophy does not, as Socrates teaches, begin in wonder (θαυμάζειν), but in pain. Philosophy is what we do after the Fall. That is why the story of the Fall it is the 'eternal mythos of man'⁵¹ (Hegel 2001, p. 340).

Thought is a healing thought (have in mind the connection between the healing and the holy in the German). It heals pain because as a result of its universal nature it is *in* pain when pain occurs. The involvement of thought in pain is the condition for the possibility of its overcoming (or healing), in much the same way that the involvement of thought in representation is the condition for the possibility of its overcoming and transition to philosophy. As Hegel says, 'thinking as an activity is the active universal, and indeed the self-actuating universal, since the act, or what is brought forth, is precisely the universal', which means that thinking involves participation in the universal which takes possession the self (Hegel 1991, §20, p. 40). Thus thought is involved in the contradiction

⁵¹ Hegel's idiosyncratic definition of philosophy as that which 'in general asserts that thought is the absolute form and that the truth appears as it is in and for itself in thought' at the preamble before the exposition of the story of the Fall at §24A3 now makes sense.

from which pain proceeds, which it is an expression of. One cannot help but conclude, not implausibly, that this is at least part of the reason why thought can sustain contradiction. If thought is involved in contradiction, or more precisely is involved in a contradictory form then its ability to sustain contradiction means that thought *is* itself in some sense contradictory. Hegel makes this point in two ways. Firstly, thought 'is itself and its other' and this is what it means for (1) thought to overgrasp its other (Hegel 1991, §20, p. 50), and concordantly (2) for spirit to overgrasp nature. Secondly, the principle of non-contradiction (which Hegel calls a law of thought) can be justified only if contradiction is thinkable and *that* is why classical logic founded on this principle (and the principle of identity which as Przywara points out is - from the standpoint of classical logic - a mere expression of the former (Przywara, p. 199)) only restricts a contradiction's ability to be true (in the sense of 'correct'). Consequently, it may be inferred from the claim that thought is involved in pain that pain and contradiction are thinkable and that therefore thought is in pain which expresses the thought's self-inflicted wound. Pain, then, is also memory. It is the answer to Augustine's question of what the memory of having forgotten is (Augustine, X.xvi (24), p. 193). Human beings are privileged to feel pain according to Hegel, in the way that they are privileged to irrationality according to Hobbes (Hegel 1991, §60, p. 105).

Hegelian Anamnesis

The respective ontogenies of both religion and philosophy are a kind of inversion of the Fall; they begin with the consciousness that there is something higher than man (Hegel 2001, p. 111). This consciousness designates an anamnestic recovery of knowledge. As Paolo Virno has pointed out, Hegel links this recovery of knowledge with the origin of language and the emergence from out of pre-history (Virno, p. 185). At this point emerges the difference between religion and philosophy. From the initial standpoint of philosophy, language emerges out of the undifferentiated and impenetrable anteriority of 'a voiceless past' (Hegel 2001, p. 79), whereas for religion, reality is as such linguistically constituted by the speech-acts voiced by God at the beginning of creation. That

Genesis provides us with two accounts of creation is significant for Hegel; in the first account 1.1-2.4 humans are created at the end of the creational sequence (1.26), *after* the creation of animals. This establishes the hierarchy of creatures with humans as the highest creation, marked by the image of God. However, in the creational sequence of the second account (2.5-24), humans are created *first* and it is in this account that Adam names the animals in the garden of Eden. In the 1805/6 lectures on the *Philosophy of Spirit*, the final and most advanced of the Jena lectures, Hegel claims that Adam's naming of the animals does not simply designate Adam's assertion of his possession of nature, but its spiritual creation (Hegel 1983, pp. 89-90; Harris 1983, pp. 472-473). *Speech* is *Kraft*; it is the 'name-giving power'. This is the fundamental or primary creativity exercised by Spirit. Furthermore, it is its 'sovereign right' to take possession of nature and create it out of spirit, viz., out of itself. The world is for Hegel 'a realm of names' (*Ibid.*, p. 90). As H.S. Harris has pointed out, this is Hegel's way of drawing attention away 'from the immediate experience of natural things, to the existence of our world as meaningful (Harris 1983, p. 473).

Nature is spiritualised by Adam who takes possession of it as thought takes possession of him. These two processes, to the extent that they can be clearly differentiated, are concurrent. Thus Hegel writes,

[We might ask, for example,] What *is* this? We answer, It *is* a lion, a donkey, etc.—[namely] it *is*. Thus it is not merely something yellow, having feet, etc., something on its own, [existing] independently. Rather, it is a *name*, a sound made by my voice, something entirely different from what it is in being looked at—and this [as named] is its true *being*. [We might say:] This is only its name, the thing itself is something different; but then we fall back onto the sensory representation. Or [we might say:] It is *only* a name, in a higher sense, since to begin with, the name is itself only the very superficial *spiritual* being. By means of the name, however, the object has been born out of the I [and has emerged] as *being* (*seyend*). This is the primal creativity exercised by Spirit. Adam gave a name to all things. This is the sovereign right [of Spirit], its primal taking-possession of all nature—or the creation of nature out of Spirit [itself]⁵² (Hegel 1983, p. 89).

⁵² This seriously undermines the claim that Hegel is a nominalist of any kind.

(Consider] Logos, reason, the essence of the thing and of speech, of object (*Sache*) and talk (*Sage*), the category—[in respect to all of these,] man speaks to the thing as his. And this is the being of the object. Spirit relates itself to itself: it, says to the donkey, You are an inner [subjective] entity, and that Inner is I; your being is a sound which I have arbitrarily invented. The sound, "donkey," is altogether different from the sensate entity. Insofar as we see it, and also feel or hear it, we are that entity itself, immediately one with it and fulfilled. Coming back as a name, however, it is something spiritual, altogether different (Hegel 1983, p. 90).

By *Sache*, Hegel is talking about both the essence of a thing and its cause. He does not use *Kausalität* when discussing causality (because it derives from the Latin *causa*), unless it is when discussing the works of others, and prefers instead German's native *Ursächlichkeit* (from *ur-* (primordial, original, 'out of'; and *Sache*)⁵³. Similarly, in the *Science of Logic*, causality develops out of actuality and is derived out of the relation of substantiality, out of the 'being of the thing'; the 'original thing or matter' (*Ur-sache*) (Hegel 2010, pp. 490-492) and is part of the conclusion of the Objective Logic, which then transitions to the Subjective Logic, namely to the spiritual (*Ibid.*, pp. 489, 507). For him, a cause and its effects are identical; they are the same thing (*Sache*), though the latter is actualised in a new form as 'posited' (this is the connection between *Wirklichkeit* and *Wirkung*) (*Ibid.*, p. 494). (The claim made by some commentators on medieval philosophy, that Hegel rejects the classical principle *omne agens agit simile sibi* is thus simply false⁵⁴.) The notion of 'possession' which has hitherto been construed only informally can now be understood conceptually. The relations of substantiality and causation are sublated into the higher logical relation of

53 *Ursache*, its verb form *verursachen* ('to cause'), and its correlatives *Wirkung*, *gewirkte* (which can refer to both what is caused, and as in the case of *Wirksamkeit*, what produces), are part of Hegel's speculative lexicon. The most delightfully paradoxical of his words vis-à-vis causality must be *Endursache*.

54 See for instance Mondin, B., *The Principle of Analogy in Protestant and Catholic Theology* (The Hague: Springer Science and Business Media, B.V., 1968); thus, in classical philosophy the perfection of the effect that is not found in its cause is unaccounted for, i.e. it comes from nothing. Only in a Hegelian system, where being comes from non-being, is it possible to conceive evolution in such a way that the effect can be more perfect than its cause. With such a Hegelian concept of evolution the principle *omne agens agit simile sibi* is certainly incompatible. But, even without the principle of similarity between cause and effect, Hegel's phenomenology is able to preserve something very similar to Aquinas' doctrine of analogy. The three stages of Aquinas' doctrine of analogy, i.e. the *via affirmationis*, the *via negationis* and the *via eminentiae*, bear a strong similarity to the three stages of Hegel's doctrine of evolution, i.e. thesis, antithesis and synthesis (pp. 88-89n).

Of course, for Hegel, the concept of causality is logically inapplicable in the first section of the *Science of Logic*, and only emerges in chapter three of section three. Those who know this are less surprised by the ensuing similarity described above.

reciprocity. Thus on the dialectical identity of human spirit and nature there exists a reciprocal account (part of which is expounded above), and the story of the Fall in part describes humans' botched attempt to reciprocally engage with nature. However, for Hegel the dialectician, describing one thing in terms of another and conversely the other in terms of the one is ultimately inadequate and requires some third thing to explicate them appropriately. This is the concept which overgrasps both of them, i.e. God, who is the highest cause. Hegel's account of Adam's naming of the animals, of nature's spiritual creation is a prequel to his account of the Fall. The things it reveals and points to are directly significant for the latter. The most immediately important of these are the role of memory and language for the understanding of the story of the Fall (which has already been indicated), and the ontological status of humans as intermediaries between God and other creatures. Let us look at these in turn.

Memory is important because it is the condition for the possibility of the psychological transition from representation to thought. Adam's naming of the animals is important not only for the animals, who are named, but reciprocally also Adam for whom in this instance of spiritualisation emerges language, and thought arises only when Spirit successfully externalises itself through linguistic signs. Consequently, the Adamic spiritual creation is analogous to God's creation who also creates through linguistic externalisation (Hegel 2007, §459, p. 195). Memory *qua* retentive memory involves the possession of a sign and its transformation from an individual to a universal. This phenomenon both enables and anticipates the overgrasping of thought⁵⁵. Memory (*Gedächtnis*, but also *Erinnerung*) and thought (*Gedanke*) are closely related and not just etymologically (cf. Acton, 150). As Inwood as observed, in so far as the past participle of *denken* is *gedanken* ('having-been thought'), then *Gedächtnis* very much has the flavour of 'having-been-thoughtness' (Inwood 1992,

⁵⁵ Virno is obsessed with the phenomenon of *déjà vu*, writing that designates now a defect in memory, but the 'untrammelled extension of memory's jurisdiction, of its dominion. Rather than limiting itself to preserving traces of times past, memory also applies itself to actuality, to the evanescent now' (Virno, p. 7). Isn't this 'extension' of memory's jurisdiction homologous to the overgrasping of thought, to thought's involvement in forms which are not its own? Of course, because all of memory's content is accidentally constituted, *déjà vu* is random and generally meaningless.

p. 188), namely, of something which was once thought but must now be recalled. Accordingly, memory *qua* productive memory is also involved in the making of signs. It can do this because the relationship between a sign and what it signifies is contingent and therefore anything memorised and become signification. That memory is paradoxically both a process of *internalisation*, a retention in the self, a making of the other one's own, and *externalisation*; an objective outpouring of oneself, is what Augustine means when he calls memory an 'infinite profundity' (Augustine X.viii (15), p. 187). One of the results of the the Fall is that the relationship between sign and signified collapses (cf. Pickstock, pp. 171-188). Thus the 'Fall' from infinite to finite thought corresponds here to an effective shift from 'truth' (*Wahrheit*) to 'correctness' (*Richtigkeit*), the latter of which introduces the possibility of error. For Hegel, this is not merely a matter of extrapolating from the alienation from the Word of God, to which we are then reconciled through the Incarnation. The Fall incurs the loss of humanity's spiritual creativity. It is in *this* way that the alienation occurs and is hence an alienation from ourselves and *our* possessions. We are as a result enabled to 'keep' our thought, that is, we keep participating in it. Thought is for Hegel closely related to grace, not only because it is divine, but because it is part of the postlapsarian process of reconciling with God by 'recollecting', i.e., once again internalising knowledge of him. Adam's naming of the animals, language and memory, effects the transition from representation to thought, marking the origin of thought. However this origin is doubled; the second origin of thought, as Hegel reminds us is the Fall itself (Hegel 1991 §24A3; Hegel 2001, pp. 360-361). The Fall however, as second origin, determines the relationship between thought and spiritual life (Hegel 1991 §24A3, p. 61). As Bernard Stiegler has shown, the enigma of this origin has traditionally in philosophy been thought in terms of the Fall (including perhaps pre-Christian notions of a 'fall') (Stiegler, p. 96). To speak of the origin always means to endure Meno's *aporia* (Stiegler, p. 100) to which, as we have seen, Hegel has an updated anamnestic response, rather like Augustine and Aquinas (Milbank et al. 2001, pp. 32, 47-48). However, Stiegler goes on to criticise the tendency of metaphysical thinkers to posit *two* origins and thus dogmatise the mythological (we can say 'representational') understanding of

the origin - which for Stiegler is somehow always already given - and transform it into metaphysics. This only the case because Stiegler cannot think an infinite prelapsarian plenitude within which to think the origin of thought; for him *both* origins are fallen, and with this we must identify Hegel's complaint that philosophy has so often been treated as a product of human finitude. The purpose of the story of the Fall is precisely to refute this notion (Hegel 1991 §24A3, p. 63). It is in *this* sense that Hegel inverts conventional readings of the Fall (indeed, it is with this insight that he concludes his account)⁵⁶. Accordingly, these two origins of thought correspond to the two roles of grace; the first role of sustaining creation corresponds to the first origin of thought in Adam's spiritual creation of nature, and the second role of correcting the Fall corresponds to the second origin of thought at the Fall. They therefore correspond (as was intimated in the close reading of the Fall narrative in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*) to two kinds of thought, the infinite thought of the *imago dei* which after the Fall is restored by philosophy through religion, and the finite thought of the understanding.

The second origin of thought entails a forgetting of the first origin. Thus philosophy is an attempt to recover and correct this pre-fallen state which involves also the relationship to nature and the epistemological position prior to the noetic effects of the Fall. This is why Hegel says that nature is the presupposition of spirit and prior to spirit *for us*, but not *absolutely* (Hegel 2007, §381, p.9). 'For us' designates the postlapsarian epistemological standpoint, the 'absolute', the philosophical recovery of the first origin, of the truth of our relation to nature as its *absolut Erstes*. However the postlapsarian regression which makes for us nature prior to ourselves, is the product of the Fall epistemologically and is connected ontically with the divine curse of labour which enjoins us to take nature as an inert which to engage with and transform. Labour, as has been said, is both a product and an overcoming. If we recall the analysis of the two propositions 'human spirit is implicitly good' and 'human spirit is implicitly evil' and the confusions that they engendered if not construed in appropriate dialectical terms, we can see the role that nature plays in the recovery of

56 Hegel would in addition disagree with Stiegler who sees Plato as guilty of the same thing; Plato, according to Hegel tried to prove that truth was the absolute form (Hegel 1991 §24A3, p. 61).

the first origin of thought. For in order to recover at all the prelapsarian idea of the goodness of humanity which *because* of the Fall is still only an idea of its implicit goodness, we must begin with the presupposition of nature and its goodness.

What human beings strive for in general is cognition of the world; we strive to appropriate it and to conquer it. To this end the reality of the world must be crushed as it were; i.e., it must be made ideal. At the same time, however, it must be remarked that it is not the subjective activity of self-consciousness that introduces absolute unity into the multiplicity in question; rather, this identity is the Absolute, genuineness itself [*das Wahrhafte*⁵⁷]. Thus it is the goodness of the Absolute, so to speak, that lets singular [beings] enjoy their own selves, and it is just this that drives them back into absolute unity (Hegel 1991, §42A1, p. 85).

Despite their fallenness, humans strive for cognition of the world. However, as a result of the Fall, the subjectivity of the understanding or *Verstand* becomes the dominant mode of cognition, a form of thought through which knowledge of God cannot enter and through which humanity persists in opposition to God (Hegel 1991, §25, p. 64). Original sin as the compromised state of the *imago dei* which entails a *finite* cognition of which the antithesis of good and evil is a primary result, corresponds to the understanding because with the Fall the human will chooses against being an *image* of God, against being possessed *by* thought, in favour of a finite thought which *it* alone can subjectively possess. However this subjective activity cannot achieve reconciliation or absolute unity. This can be done only by the absolute *qua* the truth. That is why humanity continues to strive for cognition of the world. And as we were told in the very first section of the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, 'the thinking spirit only advances to thinking cognition and comprehension by going through representation and by converting itself to it' (Hegel 1991, §1, p. 24). To once again be possessed by thought, to belong to the truth – these are things that engender absolute unity. Logical thought should not be interpreted 'merely in terms of a subjective activity', but 'as what is strictly universal and hence objective at the same time' (Hegel 1991, §80A, p. 127). Aware of implying an omission, Hegel writes that '[i]t should be added that this applies to the understanding as well' (*Ibid.*). Indeed,

57 A much more appropriate translation of *das Wahrhafte* than Wallace's 'genuineness itself' is simply 'the Truthful' so long as one keeps in mind the connotation of actuality.

the understanding in its universal and objective form corresponds to the providential goodness of God, to the divine thought that regulates finite creation (*Ibid.*). Thus Adam's invention of a finite autonomy is ironically not an invention of the understanding at all but merely the invention of the subjective application of the understanding in non-regionalised terms. As such the Fall, which is a Fall both *from* and *to* the understanding is a Fall into humanity's finite 'natural aspect'. Moreover, this is what explains Hegel's uncharacteristic praise for the understanding in §§80-81 of the *Encyclopaedia Logic* which has troubled commentators; it is no surprise that those like Žižek for whom the Fall designates not a fall but some kind of wondrous ascent maintain that Hegel praises the understanding in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*⁵⁸!

Afterthought

The distinction between representation and thought 'is altogether decisive for our grasp of the nature and the kinds of cognition' (Hegel 1991, §20, p. 49). Whilst feeling (*Gefühl*) is what Hegel refers to as the subjective aspect of faith *qua* 'certainty of God', representation (*Vorstellung*) is its objective aspect. Objectivity here implies universality in the form of communicability, and that is why throughout the treatment of the story of the Fall Hegel comments that representations of the same content can be found amongst different peoples who 'have reached deeper consciousness' (Hegel 1991, §24A3, p. 62). The content of religious representations is God, and this is what Hegel means when he says that philosophy and religion have the same content. 'For human beings God *is* primarily in the form of representation' (Hegel 1988, p. 144). This is because religion is the universal consciousness of the truth (*Ibid.*). Thus Rose simplifies things when she writes that religion for Hegel always misrepresents the absolute. She is right to the extent that she claims that the correlate of this misrepresentation is subjectivity, namely the understanding as the logical

⁵⁸ cf. Hegel 1991, p. 323n108; as Harris notes,

[t]his contrasts sharply with Hegel's usual characterisation of the Understanding as the death-dealing power-for which the locus classicus is probably the Preface to the *Phenomenology* (Miller, § 32). Hegel's dialectical conception of the understanding, as itself a unity of opposite values, of fixation and separation, is not generally understood. Often, indeed, it is not even remembered. But its importance for Hegel is shown by the way he recurs to this positive evaluation of Understanding in his commentary on § 81.

principle of representation in its subjective human mode (Rose, pp. 98-99); but she is wrong to infer from this that religion never knows the absolute because this content is always already present in the form of representation. Philosophy, also has this truth as its content, but it is the spirit of the world generally and not particularly, and in *this* sense, objectively and not subjectively. Its purpose is to transpose the content of representations into concepts, into the absolute form of thought; indeed philosophy does nothing *but* this (Hegel 1988, p. 145; Hegel 1991, §20, p. 50). However, Hegel tells us, philosophical *Nachdenken* is often criticised for negating the content along with the form of a given representation it is transposing (*Ibid.*). He has in mind here, perhaps more than most, his own philosophy, in part because of its frankness about the need to negate forms. Because representational knowledge still designates immediate knowledge, it derives from sensible intuitions, albeit two different kinds. The first is imagistic, of which the tree of knowledge is the paradigmatic example (Hegel 1988, p. 146). The second includes sensible historical content, such as Christ's passion, but is nonetheless epistemically distinct from a regular historical account; it is 'divine history' (Hegel 1988, p. 147). Whereas with imagistic representations of sensible intuition, the external imagistic content contains an inner truth which is metaphorical, historical representations of inner intuitions contain a less suppressed inner truth. Thus, the story of Jesus is *qua* divine history doubled or twofold (*Gedoppelte*). It possesses an outward history, the story of Jesus the man; but it also has the divine as its content, in the shape of the divine act which constitutes its inward history, or 'the substantial dimension of this history' (*Ibid.*) which becomes the object of thought as afterthought. Histories of this kind actually contain the universal laws and powers of ethical life which constituted the *acts*, the concrete and actual effects which are represented. The doubling of divine history refers us to form and content and their logical asymmetry which occurs because the latter *qua* thought-content (the universal powers) overgrasps the former. The problem with representations is that these universal powers do not exist for them as such. The inward is still suppressed in the forms of representation and feeling, it exists only as an 'obscure consciousness' (Hegel 1988, p. 147).

The second generic kind of representation is of a non-sensible configuration and includes what we might refer to as conceptions, such as the conception of God or the conception of the creation of the world (to use Hegel's own examples) (Hegel 1988, p. 148). Hegel refers to this kind of representational concepts as 'spiritual content'. They are crucial because it is at this level of epistemic form and predication that truth-preservation and argument become a possibility. They are what, on Hegel's view, make 'ordinary' or formal logic possible, since they are 'in the form of independence', or 'related simply to themselves'; this allows us to make simple distinctions between complexly related conceptions like God and the world, and use them in constructing judgements which form premisses in arguments.

Representation either sticks to the claim that right is right, God is God, or, (at a more cultivated level) it points out determinations, such as that God is the Creator of the world, that he is all-wise, almighty, etc (Hegel 1991, §20, p. 50).

The upshot of this feature of non-sensible representations however is that in formal logic, the 'form of independence', which is a descriptive designation of the form *simpliciter* of non-sensible conceptions, is what constitutes truth-preservation. Consequently, in a truth-preserving argument, the truth-value of the conclusion is the logical consequence of the argument's premisses because it is *formally* preserved (Hegel 1991, §162, p. 239). This formal preservation thus applies only to the *correctness* rather than *truth*. The problem in other words, with formal logic is one of applicability and Hegel points out that the logic of the *Begriff* is consequently often misunderstood as a merely *formal* science:

what counts for [ordinary logic] is the mere form of concept, judgment, and syllogism, but not at all whether something is true; truth is supposed to depend exclusively on the content. If the logical forms of the Concept were really dead, inactive, and indifferent receptacles of representations or thoughts, then, as far as truth is concerned, our information about them would be a completely superfluous and dispensable description. In fact, however, being forms of the Concept they are, on the contrary, the living spirit of what is actual; and

what is true of the actual is only true in virtue of these forms, through them and in them. Yet the truth of these forms on their very own account has never been considered and investigated until now, any more than the necessary connection between them has (Hegel 1991, §162, p. 239).

That the form of the concept, judgement, or syllogism is what counts over against truth means that in formal logic transformation laws are logical forms which derive conclusions based purely on the syntactical analysis of the premisses; that truth depends solely on the content and that consequently logical forms are indifferent receptacles of truth has to do with the fact that truth is a semantic property which is preserved by logical form but is not involved in it. We've come full circle with respect to the thesis of the overgrasping of thought, and it is no surprise that Hegel specifically writes about forms as 'indifferent receptacles of representations or thoughts' rather than writing explicitly what is directly meant, namely truth. For in the same way that the mind is not an indifferent receptacle of feelings, perceptions, etc., of which thought is but one more faculty, so logical forms are not indifferent receptacles but are overgrasped as such by the truth of thought-content. Hegel's criticism turns out to be more interesting than what first appears like the common objection that by preserving a semantic property through merely syntactic analysis formal logic is somehow disconnected from its content and therefore truth. Hegel's objection is rather that form itself possesses truth or alternatively is possessed by it, because truth overgrasps it as such⁵⁹⁶⁰. He complicates the relationship between form and content considerably. Sometimes it seems as if the distinction collapses altogether and the 'logical idea', the culmination of the Hegelian Logic doesn't even require a content which is other than itself⁶¹ (Hegel 1991, §43A, p. 86; Magee, pp. 28, 74,

59 Hegel wrote in the *Science of Logic* that 'the need for a reformation of logic has long been felt' (Hegel 2010, p. 31).

Such a reformation would occur soon after his death with Frege and though it may not have been entirely to Hegel's liking, it superseded many of the 'psychological, metaphysical, and other empirical' 'disfigurations' added to logic (referred in the lesser *Logic* but elucidated more broadly in the greater *Logic*).

60 Moreover, formal logic is in antithesis with the very mode of cognition which utilises it, i.e. the reflective understanding since for the latter it is content that is

considered as what is essential and independent, while the form, on the contrary, is inessential and dependent. Against this, however, it must be remarked that in fact both of them are equally essential, and that, whilst there is no more a formless content than there is a formless stuff, still the two of them (content, and stuff or matter) are distinguished from one another precisely because the matter, although it is not in itself without form, shows itself to be indifferent in its way of being with regard to form, while content as such is what it is only in virtue of the fact that it contains developed form within itself. But we find the form, too, as an existence that is indifferent with respect to the content and external to it, and this is the case because appearance in general is still burdened with externality (Hegel 1991, §133A, p. 202).

Thus formal logic and the reflective understanding are inversions of one another; their relationship exhibits the logical determination of essence, the one passes-over into, or overturns the other.

61 This 'negative relation' as it is usually called, both between thought and experience and thought and itself is

247). Similarly, the true works of art are the ones in which form and content are identical (Hegel 1991, §133A, 203). For as Wolff points out, if one draws a strong distinction between a formal and a material element in cognition and invariably connects the former with the conceptual, then everything one says about the material will be paradoxical in so far as it will be expressed by thoughts and concepts and hence will be connected with the formal element (Wolff, p. 152). But of course this is merely product of the overgrasping of thought, and a philosophy grounded in the features of thought such as this can develop an analysis of the form-content relation which escapes this problem.

According to Wolff, there is a tendency (and he ascribes this to idealists from Kant through to Hegel) for the material element to be eliminated from the system altogether. In actuality, something more complex is at work. For Hegel it is the case that differences *in* matter and content are all differences *of* form, as well as, more radically, differences in the matter and content of concrete things (Hegel 1991, §128, p. 197). This is because he rejects the pagan conception of matter as a formless originary. On this view, it follows that God ought not to be conceived as the creator of the world, but alternatively as world-former or demiurge (or as in some accounts, part creator and part former of a residual formless matter). Instead, *creatio ex materia* ought to be contrasted with the 'deeper intuition' (or 'deeper thing' as Chesterton says) of the Christian *creatio ex nihilo* which is superior for two reasons: firstly because God's being is itself implicated in the world (Hegel accepts the Thomistic view that creation entails more *beings* and not more being *as such*); and secondly because form is not something that is imposed on formless matter, that is, form is not something externally related to matter but form 'carries the principle of matter in itself' (*Ibid.*, §128A, p. 198).

Regarding the antithesis of form and content it is essential to remember that the content is not formless, but that it has the form within itself just as much as the form is something external to it. We have here the doubling of the form: on the one hand, as inwardly reflected, it is the content; on the other hand, as not reflected inwardly, it is the external existence, that is indifferent to the content. What is here present in-itself is the absolute relationship of content and form, i. e., the reciprocal overturning of one into the other, so that

sometimes read as key for Hegel's 'idealism' (cf. Pippin, pp. 37-42).

"content" is nothing but the overturning of form into content, and "form" nothing but overturning of content into form. This overturning is one of the most important determinations. But it is not posited until we reach absolute relationship (Hegel 1991, §133, p. 202).

Thus in one of his most profoundly theological statements, Hegel writes that a content without form is not merely formless, but *deformed* (Hegel 1991, §133A, p. 202).

Consequently, there is a strong connection between the repudiation of any notion of formless content or matter and the assertion of creation as *ex nihilo* and what can only be seen as its corollary, viz., the primordially of language in general and the Logos in particular through which everything is created. With that said, Hegel is in good standing in so far as this development of the form-content relation permanently problematises the *representational* realisms of modern philosophy (this is something the Christian doctrine of creation already achieves from Cappadocian pluralism onwards). As Milbank writes:

There are no things, no ultimate substances, only shifting relations and generations in time which only exist in their constitution of ideal, logical patterns. Knowledge itself is not 'something else' in relation to Being, a 'reflection' of Being, but only a particularly complex form of relation (Milbank 2006, p. 433; see also Milbank 2013, pp. 57-66).

The view that knowledge designates a complex form of relation of being, that human spirit *is* thought and that he is furthermore possessed by it, is as we have seen crucial for the Hegelian reading of the story of the Fall, and the thesis of the overgrasping of thought articulates the condition for the possibility of this relation. Without it we remain confined to the postlapsarian epistemic modality of mere correctness. For the Fall is not 'purely subjective' shift (Žižek 2014, p.126); indeed, it has properly noetic effects which in so far as they affect humanity's mental faculties affect the entirety of their being. Furthermore, without this theory of thought as universal and overgrasping one risks not only the Leibnizian-Cartesian position of regarding all mental activity as thought which varies in degrees of clarity and distinctness, which more than any general

epistemological scheme is conducive to the development of representational forms of realism, but also the Malebranchian position which one is inclined to read as little more than an inversion of the former⁶². Of course, in Malebranchian occasionalism, one finds the truly perverse view that all events in creation are directly and in some ways immediately caused by God (Malebranche, p. 658). This goes beyond what can be ascribed to the providential *creatio continua* and effects an indefinite duplication of *creatio originalis*, so that the novelty of every new event consists necessarily in its creation *ex nihilo*. But this overlooks how the new emerges, precisely, *ex nihilo* only from within the repetition of the *creatio continua*. The incarnation emerges against the background of the world in sin but is importantly irreducible to it (in fact one should go further and claim that a *creatio originalis* of a world in a sinful state is unintelligible). This structure is a requirement for the mediating activity of the incarnation which involves in its constitution the overgrasping of divine thought. (This is at least how Hegelian Logos Christology comes together (cf. Ward, pp. 270-92).) The *synapheia* of Christ's two natures asserted in the fifth century, was condemned because the conjunction of the natures designated a symmetrical union, or in more precise contemporary terms, the two natures were stated as an unordered pair $((a, b) = (b, a))$. Desmond admonishes Hegel on this point vis-à-vis the limits principle, the view that the plotting of a limit always involves both sides of the limit, and that the limit turns out not to be unsurpassable (Hegel 1990, §60). Now Desmond writes that Hegel is right to make this move (e.g. against Kant) on the presupposition that 'there is no fundamental heterogeneity between the finite and infinite', viz., that the two are an unordered pair, but also that the limits principle 'begs the question concerning homogeneity between what happens to be on the two sides of the limit', and that if this homogeneity is questioned then the limit is cast in a different light, even if it is granted that it is nonetheless surpassable (Desmond, p.118). Questioning this homogeneity however does not question the univocalisation of the infinite and the finite; to state the latter as an ordered pair, as an asymmetrical union, shows that the

62 It is no surprise, as Michael Horton observes, that there existed such a debate between the two and that it anticipated and in some cases inaugurated – so many modern controversies (Horton, p. 134). Perhaps most importantly, the Leibniz-Malebranche debate distils modernity's false dichotomy of anti-supernaturalism and hyper-supernaturalism which is not simply a false choice, but also a *forced choice* of the former.

movement from the first entry to the second, e.g. from the infinite to the finite may not be the same as the inverse movement ($((a, b) \neq (b, a))$) (Ibid., p. 119), but does nothing to contribute some more complex relation between the two. Hegel's innovation is the infinite's overgrasping of the finite, and not simply the union of the infinite and the finite:

since the Idea is process, because its identity is only the Absolute as 'the unity of the finite and the infinite, of thinking and being, etc.' is false [...] [instead] the infinite overgrasps the finite, thinking overgrasps being, subjectivity overgrasps objectivity (Hegel 1990, § 215).

Desmond points to Hegel's claim about the 'self-sublation of the infinite and finite, as a single process' as the 'true or genuine infinite' (Hegel 2010, p. 109; Desmond, p. 121). Self-sublation involves self-negation and self-preservation. So he insists that because it is a *self*-sublation, then the otherness involved in this infinite is an immanent otherness (Ibid.). But Desmond is mistaken to think that there is some real distinction between self-sublation and sublation *tout court*. 'Self sublation' is just the product of expository pedantry and precision in Hegel's articulation of a sublation at the level of logical ultimacy, i.e. the absolute. Theologically, we are talking about what God is in terms of what he does, and Desmond admits this disapprovingly, because it apparently involves such difficult questions as 'A God that creates itself would have to be itself to create itself; but if it were itself, why would it create itself?' (Ibid., p. 124). (This is a question that the Verstand asks. Fortunately, the Verstand's questions are supposed to be answered and not - as is sometimes thought - to be shown to be meaningless.) If God is himself then he does not create himself, he creates creation. But of course to say that God creates creation is pleonasmic, so what the matter really concerns is what creation really is.

Desmond, following Kierkegaard, correctly observes that the qualification 'ex nihilo' of divine creation designates the infinite qualitative difference between Creator and creature. But this is stated as something completely unthinkable for Hegel, when it is perfectly actual. For what the claim that the infinite overgrasps the finite means amounts to in proper theological terms is that creation is

overgrasped by God - and this is the primary and most proper overgrasping of (divine) thought. And this is how Hegel states the heterogeneity between the two sides of the limit. Recall that the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* resists the stipulation of an originary formless matter or determinate content. And recall that the overgrasping of thought denotes its involvement *qua* content in other forms. The claim about the infinite overgrasping the finite with regard to the ontology of creation concerns this transposition; because of creation from nothing there is no formless content, so consequently there is in the form of creation the divine content of the creator. Now Desmond's juxtaposition of the infinite difference between creature and creator on the one hand and creation as divine self-creation on the other paradoxically presupposes homogeneity vis-à-vis infinity and finitude since the whole point about heterogeneity is that from one side God is more like the creature than the creature is itself. This is Eckhart's paradox of the human-divine identity which denotes an asymmetrical relation (Eckhart, pp. 244-53). The same asymmetrical identity relation obtains between thought and the other forms which the latter overgrasps. This is what this paradoxical identity entails, the asymmetrical involvement of the identity of one of the relata in the other (a; ba). This is the sense in which 'what God creates, God is'. The ultimate expression of this paradoxical identity (as may have been anticipated) is the incarnation. Christologically, to say that Christ's divinity overgrasps his humanity involves saying that a theology which begins from 'below', viz., from finitude, does so in a way which already involves or 'posits' the 'above' or infinity (cf. Milbank 1991, p. 226).

Conclusion

This deepest identity of human being which is the divine and which we refer to as the *imago dei* (since an *image* of God is more actual than an actual human being) is what sustains humanity in being after the Fall. For in so far as evil 'is the negative that does not subsist on its own account, but only wants to be on its own account' (Hegel 1991, §35A, p. 73), human beings, in order to exist at all must cling to this divine identity. I have tried to show in this essay that the representation of the Fall contains for Hegel both the content of humanity's condition *as* fallen and gives us an account of

philosophy as the human postlapsarian activity *par excellence*, as the graced means by which humanity recovers what it loses at the Fall, namely, knowledge of God which, as we have seen, also turns out to be self-knowledge.

Now, since philosophy is a peculiar mode of thinking, a mode by which thinking becomes cognition, and conceptually comprehensive cognition at that-philosophical thinking will also be diverse from the thinking that is active in everything human and brings about the very humanity of what is human, even though it is also identical with this thinking, and in- itself there is only One thinking (Hegel 1991, §2, p. 25).

There is no way to make sense of this very crucial claim in the opening to the *Encyclopaedia Logic* unless we understand humanity as alienated from 'the very humanity of what is human', namely its *imago dei* and philosophy as the postlapsarian activity which recovers this thought. The recovery of this thought-content it made possible by the fact that it is never completely lost but only suppressed to the lower forms of feeling and representation. As Hegel says, content without form is not merely formless but *deformed*. However, the nature of human thought as its *imago dei* is such that it always overgrasps the other forms and formless content is impossible and unthinkable. The purpose of philosophy is to transpose through *Nachdenken* this crucial content *from* the representational form to that of thought proper. The story of the Fall teaches us of the need for this process; as Hegel says, it expounds the general relationship of cognition to spiritual life – of the Fall of humanity itself, and its need of help to overcome it.

In conclusion, we can identify two general themes apropos the relation between representation and thought. First, there is the matter of the transition from representation to thought proper. This is a shorthand description for philosophy or afterthought as such. This is the meta-philosophical (or para-philosophical, following Ward) argument of the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, and the story of the Fall at the end of the preliminary conception before the beginning of philosophy proper at §26 expounds the basic premisses of this argument in representational form. Accordingly, it is no wonder that the story of the Fall, the 'eternal mythos of man' is the only representation treated in the *Encyclopaedia*

Logic since it conveys what philosophy needs to be. The second general theme with respect to the relation between representation and thought is the theme of the transposition of the thought-content in the representation of the Fall to the form of thought for the purposes of Hegel's philosophical project. This largely overlaps with the first theme above because as has already been intimated, the particular philosophical content of the story of the Fall concerns the nature of philosophy of itself. A more specific analysis of the transpositional considerations vis-à-vis the Fall narrative is not key to the *Encyclopaedia Logic* because this work is concerned specifically with the first theme, but obtains to a some extent in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. Here Hegel comments on the fruit of the tree of knowledge as 'an outward image' which belongs to imagistic representation, but whose content actually expresses e.g. that humanity learns the distinction between good and evil, or that the story depicts the first human pair but that it ought to be taken to mean that this refers to humanity as a whole (Hegel 1988, pp. 443-444). These insights have, when important, been mentioned throughout the essay, and this general theme does not, particularly in relation to the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, require specific attention.

As Hegel says in the opening remark of the *Encyclopaedia Logic*,

[p]hilosophy lacks the advantage, which the other sciences enjoy, of being able to presuppose its objects as given immediately by representation. And, with regard to its beginning and advance, it cannot presuppose the method of cognition as one that is already accepted (Hegel 1991, §1, p. 24).

The *Logic* as the purest and highest science cannot begin by distinguishing its subject matter and method for these forms are part of its content. In this sense it is fundamentally different from any other science. Thus philosophy must begin with religious representation and attain its truth by going through representation. The story of the Fall is the universal representation which tells us about the beginning of philosophy and the human condition to which it is intimately connected. This narrative, according to Hegel, teaches us that the Fall results in *pain*, a pain which is a memory of the truth which is repressed in lower forms which do not belong to it. Consequently, philosophy

endures and begins with this pain and goes through representation in order to recover the truth. Hegel's *Logic*, his first philosophy, begins with being as such, or with immediacy (Hegel 1991, §§ 26, 86; Hegel 2010, p. 45). As Hegel acknowledges, beginning with immediacy, indeed choosing to begin at all is itself a kind of presupposition (Hegel 2010, pp. 47-48). But philosophy only 'chooses' to begin because of the pain of the Fall and Hegel begins his philosophy with immediacy rather than mediation in the manner of the story of the Fall which, as the representation of the beginning is perhaps most fundamentally a story about immediacy and mediation. The *philosophical* justification for the primacy of immediacy is the structural circularity of the philosophical system, such that, if the beginning is also the end, then this first step which is *qua* the beginning presupposed is in fact mediated by the last step or the system's culmination: the absolute. Thus the immediate beginning which is presupposed by presupposing the objects of religion and its representational forms, is in fact mediated by the last step, the knowledge of God. This insight about philosophy is already contained in the representations of the creation of humanity and their reconciliation to God. Accordingly, the absolute, as Carlson has emphasised, is *mediated immediacy*, it is the mediation of immediacy and mediation (Carlson, p. 27; Inwood 1992, p. 185). What is in this initial justification of the philosophical beginning thought in representational terms as circularity designates the overgrasping of thought - in its highest form, viz., divine thought, of this finite human beginning. For philosophy as the activity of fallen human thought must begin with the lowest form of logical thought, with the finite thought that is the product of the Fall, namely the understanding. This is why philosophy does not begin, as religious representations do, with the original plenitude; this plenitude can only be recovered by going *through* religious representations which posit it in non-thinking form, but which philosophically correspond to the understanding and must therefore be sublated into thought proper before their content can be grasped philosophically. To perpetuate the analogy of the circle further, human thought after the Fall must move one-dimensionally through the two dimensional circle and it must move in a particular *direction*. There is indeed, *contra* Desmond, heterogeneity vis-à-vis the finite and the infinite; the human and the divine. And for

precisely this reason, once the circle is complete, that is, once the infinite thought that is the *imago dei* of humanity is recovered, the circle can be perceived from a the standpoint of a higher dimension, i.e. *as* a circle. (This analogy is essentially a restatement of the metaphor for the overgrasping of thought; the speculative comprehension of the overgrasping absolute is akin to Zeno's hand grasping his other closed hand, where the fingers represent the different apprehensions of the senses.)

That the beginning of philosophy with immediacy which upon the completion of the system is revealed to be a mediated immediacy is for Hegel a proof (Hegel 2010, p. 744, Carlson, p. 27). This is why it is possible for philosophy to make a presuppositionless beginning by positing the beginning as its presupposition. The story of the Fall similarly proves that the nature of philosophy and human thought is infinite and that it participates in the divine. Indeed, the reason that the Fall narrative receives so much attention over against almost everything else in the Old Testament is that it proves this the infinity and divinity of thought and philosophy and therefore establishes the seriousness with which Christianity must strive for its truth. Philosophy begins with the pain of the Fall which drives it to recall spirit's prelapsarian cognition. In the beginning, spirit knows this only in its loss and does not yet experience it as present in its very loss (Althusser, p. 30), which is why philosophy begins with immediacy, rather than the original plenitude of Eden which is always already mediated. However, throughout its development, philosophy uncovers counter-factual knowledge of a counter-history of spiritual life without a Fall by deriving the ideal logical accounts of various dialectical transitions in thought. In this sense, philosophical afterthought as a practically religious exercise of spirit increasingly aligns us with the divine thought in which human thought is meant to participate and with the divine grace which corrects its fallen state. Indeed, as Ward has shown, Hegel may be read in support of an orthodox understanding of *theosis* rooted in humans beings as made in the image of God (Ward, p. 277), and as I hope to have shown, this crucially extends more generally to his reading of the Fall. Thus, in so far as philosophy is for Hegel nothing

more than afterthought - and it is (Hegel 1988, p. 145; Hegel 1991, §20, p. 50) - then the story of the Fall is indispensable both for its instigation and for the articulation of its ultimate purpose.

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Appendix

The exposition of the Fall narrative in §24A3, pp. 60-63 in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* (Hegel 1991):

Addition 3.

We become cognizant of what is true in various modes, and the modes of cognition must be considered only as forms. Thus, we can certainly become cognizant of what is true through experience, but this experience is only a form. With experiences everything depends on the mind with which we approach actuality. A great mind has great experiences, and in the motley play of appearance spots the crucial point. The Idea is present and actual, not something over the hills and far away. A great mind, the mind of a Goethe, for instance, has great experiences, when it looks into nature or history; it sees what is rational and expresses it. Furthermore, we can also become cognizant of what is true through reflection; we are then determining it through relationships of thought. But what is true in and for itself is not present in its proper form in either of these cognitive modes. The most perfect mode of cognition is that which takes place in the pure form of thinking. Here, man behaves in a way that is thoroughly free. That the form of thinking is the absolute one, and that the truth appears within it as it is in and for itself-this is what philosophy in general asserts. Proving this means, to start with, showing that those other forms of cognition are finite. The high scepticism of antiquity accomplished this by showing that every one of those forms contained a contradiction within itself. When this scepticism was applied to the forms of reason also, it first foisted something finite onto them in order to have something to lay hold of. All the forms of finite thinking will come before us in the course of their logical development, and, what is more, they will come forth in their necessary order of appearance: here (in the introduction) they have had to be taken up first in an unscientific way, as something given. In the logical treatise itself, not only the negative but also the positive side of these forms will be exhibited.

Beginning of (A):

When we are comparing the various forms of cognition with one another, it can easily appear that the first one, that of immediate knowledge, is the most adequate, the finest, and the highest. It includes everything that is called innocence in the moral sphere, as well as religious feeling, simple trust, love, fidelity, and natural faith. Both of the other forms, first reflective cognition and then philosophical cognition too, step out of that immediate natural unity. Insofar as they have this in common with one another, the mode of cognition that consists in wanting to grasp the truth through thinking can easily appear as the human conceit that wants to recognise the true by its own strength. This standpoint of universal separation can certainly be looked on as the origin of all wickedness and evil, as the original transgression; and on this view it seems that thinking and cognition must be given up in order to return [to unity] and become reconciled again. As for the abandonment of natural unity here, this marvellous inward schism of the spiritual has been something of which all peoples from time immemorial have been conscious. An inner schism like this does not occur in nature, and natural things do not do evil. We have an old account of the origin and consequences of this schism in the Mosaic myth of the Fall. The content of this myth forms the foundation of an essential doctrine of faith, the doctrine of the natural sinfulness of man, and his need of help to overcome it. It appears appropriate to consider the myth of the Fall at the very beginning of the Logic, because the Logic is concerned with cognition, and the myth too deals with cognition, with its origin and significance. Philosophy should not shy away from religion, and adopt the attitude that it must be content if religion simply tolerates it. And, on the other hand, we must equally reject the view that myths and religious accounts of this kind are something obsolete, for they have been venerated for millenia by the peoples of the world.

Beginning of (B)

Let us now consider the myth of the Fall more closely. As we remarked earlier, what is expressed here is the general relationship of cognition to the spiritual life. In its immediate shape spiritual life appears first as innocence and simple trust; but it is of the essence of spirit to sublimate this immediate

state, since spiritual life distinguishes itself from natural life, and more precisely from the life of animals, by the fact that it does not abide in its being-in-itself, but is for itself. In like manner, however, this stage of schism must itself be sublated in turn, and spirit must return through its own agency to union with itself. This resulting union is a spiritual one, and the guiding principle of that return lies in thinking itself. It is thinking that both inflicts the wound and heals it again.

Beginning of (C)

Now, it says in our myth that Adam and Eve, the first human beings, or humankind as such, found themselves in a garden, in which there were both a tree of life and a tree of cognition of good and evil. We are told that God had forbidden this human pair to eat of the fruits of the latter tree; at this point there is no more talk of the tree of life. So what this means is that humanity should not come to cognition, but remain in a state of innocence. We also find this representation of the original state of humanity as one of innocence and of union, among other peoples that have reached a deeper consciousness. What is correct in it is the implication that the schism in which we find everything human involved can certainly not be the last word; but, on the other hand, it is not correct to regard the immediate, natural unity as the right state either. Spirit is not something merely immediate; on the contrary, it essentially contains the moment of mediation within itself. Childlike innocence does certainly have something attractive and touching about it, but only insofar as it reminds us of what must be brought forth by the spirit. The harmonious union that we see in children as something natural is to be the result of the labour and culture of the spirit.-Christ says, "Except ye *become* as little children," etc. [Matt. 18:3]; but that does not say that we must remain children.

In our Mosaic myth, moreover, we find that the occasion for stepping out of the unity [of innocence] was provided for humanity by external instigation (by the serpent). But in fact, the entry into the antithesis, the awakening of consciousness, lies within human beings themselves, and this is the story that repeats itself in every human being. The serpent expounds divinity as consisting in the knowledge of good and evil, and it is this cognition that was in fact imparted to man when he broke

with the unity of his immediate being and ate of the forbidden fruit. The first reflection of awakening consciousness was that the human beings became aware that they were naked. This is a very naive and profound trait. For shame does testify to the severance of human beings from their natural and sensible being. Hence animals, which do not get as far as this severance, are without shame. So the spiritual and ethical origin of clothing is to be sought for in the human feeling of shame; the merely physical need, on the contrary, is something only secondary.

At this point there follows the so-called Curse that God laid upon human beings. What this highlights is connected with the antithesis of man and nature. Man must labour in the sweat of his brow, and woman must bring forth in sorrow. What is said about labour is, more precisely, that it is both the result of the schism and also its overcoming. Animals find what they need for the satisfaction of their wants immediately before them; human beings, by contrast, relate to the means for the satisfaction of their wants as something that they themselves bring forth and shape. Thus, even in what is here external, man is related to himself.

But the myth does not conclude with the expulsion from paradise. It says further, "God said: Behold Adam is become as one of us, to know good and evil" [Gen. 3:22] . Cognition is now called something divine and not, as earlier, what ought not to be. So in this story there lies also the refutation of the idle chatter about how philosophy belongs only to the finitude of spirit; philosophy is cognition, and the original calling of man, to be an image of God, can be realised only through cognition.-The story now goes on to say that God drove man out of the garden of Eden, so that he should not eat of the tree of life; this means that man is certainly finite and mortal on the side of his nature, but that he is infinite in cognition.

That mankind is by nature evil is a well-known doctrine of the Church, and this natural state of evil

is what is called Original Sin. But in this connection, we must give up the superficial notion that Original Sin has its ground only in a contingent action of the first human pair. It is part of the concept of spirit, in fact, that man is by nature evil; and we must not imagine that this could be otherwise. The relationship' [of man to nature] in which man is a natural essence, and behaves as such, is one that ought not to be. Spirit is to be free and is to be what it is through itself. Nature is, for man, only the starting point that he ought to transform. The profound doctrine of the Church concerning Original Sin is confronted by the modern Enlightenment doctrine that man is by nature good and should therefore remain true to nature. When man goes beyond his natural being he thereby distinguishes his self-conscious world from an external one. But this standpoint of separation, which belongs to the concept of spirit, is not one that man should remain at either. All the finitude of thinking and willing falls within this standpoint of schism. Here man creates his purposes from himself, and it is from himself that he draws the material of his action. Inasmuch as he takes these purposes to their ultimate limits, knows only himself, and wills in his particularity without reference to the universal, he is evil, and this evil is his subjectivity. At first glance we have a double evil here; but both evils are in fact the same. Insofar as he is spirit, man is not a natural being; insofar as he behaves as a natural essence and follows the purposes of desire, he wills to be a natural essence. Thus, man's natural evil is not like the natural being of animals. Man's belonging to nature is further determined by the fact that the natural man is a single [individual] as such, for nature lies everywhere in the bonds of isolation. So, insofar as man wills this state of nature, he wills Singularity. But this acting on the basis of drives and inclinations that is characteristic of natural singularity is then, of course, confronted by the law or universal determination too. This law may be an external power or may have the form of divine authority. Man is in servitude to the law so long as he continues his natural behaviour. Among his inclinations and feelings, man does also have benevolent and social inclinations that reach beyond his selfish singularity-sympathy, love, etc. But, insofar as these inclinations are immediate in character, their content, though implicitly universal, still has the form of subjectivity; self-seeking and contingency still have free play here.