

ABSTRACT

The Incarnate God from Hegel to Marx

Stefan Sullivan
St. Antony's College
D.Phil. Politics
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The thesis argues that from Hegel's early critique of Kant to Marx's early critique of Hegel, the Judaeo-Christian incarnate God underlies a German metaphysical impulse to embody transcendental ideals in historical and political forms. Four motifs, alienation/humanisation, mediation, idealised Prussia and philosophical anti-Judaism, integrate the study's "incarnation thematic" into a secular framework.

In terms of common Enlightenment values and a moralistic view of God, a Judaeo-Kantian convergence is developed as the "anticipatory" climate for Hegel's speculative thought. From the Pauline law/love dichotomy of the Frankfurt period, through the System, and three thematic components (the elevation of representations to concepts, becoming, and mediation), it is shown how the self-othering of God in Christ is reformulated by Hegel as the Absolute's coming to knowledge of itself in a particular historical form, the Prussian State. After challenging "liberal conventionalist" and hellenic interpretations of Hegel's political thought, the incarnation thematic is applied: 1) speculatively, as the ethical mediating realm between the individual and freedom; structurally, in that the supersession of law by love recurs in the morality/ethical life and civil society/State tensions of the *Philosophy of Right*. A transitional chapter revises the Prussian State to accord with Hegel's idealisation, and explores Young Hegelian speculative christology in terms of: 1) individual versus collective embodiments of the divine Idea and their political correlates (Strauss); future-orientated praxis (Cieszkowski); 3) the negation of Judaeo-capitalism (Hess). While hostile to institutional religion, Marx inherits the incarnation thematic via:

1) Feuerbachian christological love as communal being; 2) a proletarian rather than statist embodiment of freedom; 3) the communist transcendence of Judaeo-Kantian bourgeois liberalism. Conclusions explore other variants of the incarnation thematic in political thought and argue that since the Second World War, liberal and secular prejudices have obscured the speculative theological and Christo-Germanic dimension of the Hegel-Marx lineage.

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**Stefan Sullivan
St. Antony's College
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ABBREVIATIONS

This list only refers to journals. Standard abbreviations for primary sources are generally noted at the first citation in the text.

HTR	Harvard Theological Review
HS	Hegel-Studien
HZ	Historische Zeitschrift
IJP	International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion
JAAR	Journal of the American Academy of Religion
JHI	Journal of the History of Ideas
JMH	Journal of Modern History
JPh	Journal of Philosophy
JR	Journal of Religion
KS	Kant-Studien
PhR	Journal for the Philosophy of Religion
PPQ	Pacific Philosophical Quarterly
PT	Political Theory
RHPR	Revue d'histoire et de Philosophie Religieuse
ZRG	Zeitschrift für Religion und Geistesgeschichte
ZST	Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie

Chapter 1

The Incarnate God as a Philosophical Problem in the Hegel - Marx Lineage

Throughout the history of Western philosophy, compromises were made and liberties taken to syncretise the Hellenic prime mover with the Judaeo-Christian incarnate God. There emerged a God of reason, and a God of faith. Hellenic metaphysics could presuppose an absolute being who legitimates the political order or the moral law, but it could not rationally justify the revelation of that being in one individual at one fixed moment in space and time. The birth, death and resurrection of Christ could be replicated in passion plays or nativity scenes, in chorale preludes and stained glass narratives. Yet, from a philosophical standpoint, it was more difficult to go beyond the incarnation's metaphorical significance, towards some larger truth about the interpenetration of the infinite and finite, logic and history, or God and man.

The Hegelian attempt to arrive at that larger truth in a modern way encompasses the Christian relationship between God and man as the religious, and therefore foundational, variant of a set of universal dichotomies such as spirit and matter, head and heart, rationality and the real, the beyond and the here and now, etc. While there are many theories to explain how the religious variant emerged, most simply it involved a cosmological consolidation by which the Hebrew people came to worship a

unitary and personal being. Christianity then went a step further, in that God, or the Absolute was said to have taken the form of man. Not in a mythological, but in a historical sense, spirit had become matter, the abstract concrete, and the divine word flesh. For the pagan intellectuals well-versed in the metaphysics of the day, this new religion was based on a hyper-paradox: How could God, who was omniscient, omnipotent, and changeless, become human and still be God? Since God was perfect, any change was a change for the worse, and therefore incompatible with his nature.

From a Hegelian perspective this incompatibility presents less of a problem. Given that the descent into and emergence from negativity defines both the self-othering moment of the Absolute in Jesus Christ and the mechanics of all dialectical motion, given that every object presupposes its own negation or contradiction, it is not surprising that many interpreters have argued for an underlying Christian metaphysics in Hegel's system. What is perhaps more surprising is the manner in which the individual Jesus Christ is reformulated into an idea that manifests itself in Hegel's State, young Hegelian speculative philosophy, and early Marxian social and political thought.

I. Sonship and the Second Principle: The Philosopher's Incarnate God

When one speaks of the philosopher's God, one normally has in mind some type of immutable first principle or prime mover. This state of affairs had much to do with the influence of Hellenic, and particularly Aristotelian metaphysics, on Western philosophy. Reconciling the prime mover with the God of faith often involved complex

solutions such as Aquinas' *relatio rationis* wherein God remained changeless, while humanity changed in and through Jesus Christ. Anselm attempted to direct the problem explicitly toward the nature of divinity itself by claiming that a Being beyond which no greater being can be thought is a being which exists; but, ultimately, he had to fall back on faith to validate that existence. However, Anselm was on the right track toward philosophically justifying the incarnate God insofar as the self-manifestation of the first principle must be seen as an intrinsic part of its nature. It is not our purpose here to attempt such a justification, but rather only to draw attention to a fixture of Western philosophy and to which Hegel directly responds that created an irreconcilable gap between the God of reason and the God of faith, simply because the historically-engaged activity of the latter could not be synthesised with the metaphysical immutability of the former.

A step toward reconciling that gap, again following Hegelian lines, is to consider how the qualities attributed to the God of faith can be philosophical and rationally understood. In simplest terms this involves a middle term, or Sonship, and correlates qualities such as agency, light, negation, and logos that theoretically mediate the abstract power of the Father to humanity. Thus, to speak of the incarnate God in philosophical terms implies a reflection, firstly, on the meaning of a middle term between God the Father and man; secondly, on the meaning of the historicity of the Absolute, implied by its self-emptying into time and the assumption of human, historical form.

References to mediation abound in the New Testament as in, for example, the Gospel of John, 1:18 : "No one has ever seen God, but God's only Son, he who is

nearest the Father's heart, he has made him known." And, in the First Epistle to Timothy: "For there is one God, and also one Mediator between God and man, Christ Jesus, himself man, who sacrificed himself to win freedom for all mankind." Philo's designation of logos as a mediator and messenger of the Lord, though partially drawn from the Old Testament, stops short of identifying it with the Jewish Messiah.¹ Clement and Origen developed the Philonic logos in a Christian direction. They sought to reconcile the transcendent Oneness of the Hellenic God, who was beyond knowledge and being, with a Christian God who makes himself known through the incarnation. This is effected, as in Philo, through the use of Logos as the mediating principle between the human and divine. In the logos christology of Clement, Man, made in the image of the divine, needs to recover the God-ness in him through the mediating agency of the Logos, the revealed "mystery-God in man." Origen's formulation is more orientated toward the aesthetic idea of mimesis, whereby Christ appears as a perfect imitation of a divine being previously too remote and vast to sensuously grasp.²

The idea of the incarnate God as a mediator, in spite of all its variations, can be reduced to a concept designed to bring the metaphysical divine being of Hellenism and the Father-God of Judaic monotheism into direct contact with the human ontological condition. The problematic nature of a perfect being that assumed human form yet

¹ As in the *Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres sit* (Who is the heir of Divine Matters), pp. 205-6 (XLII): "To his Word, His chief messenger, highest in age and honour, the Father of all has given the special prerogative, to stand on the border and separate the creature from the Creator. This same word both pleads with the immortal as suppliant for afflicted mortality and acts as ambassador of the ruler to the subject. He glories in this prerogative and proudly describes it in these words 'and I stood between the Lord and you' (Deut. 5:51), that is neither uncreated as God, nor created as you, but midway between the two extremes, a surety to both sides."

² Origen, *De Principiis*, I.2.8, III, 6.1.

remained perfect generated numerous controversies and intellectual problem-solving, resulting in concepts such as Arianism (the denial of the Son's eternal divinity), Appolinarianism (denial of Christ's humanity), Nestorianism (denial that the divine/human unity can be expressed in a single person) Eutychianism (denial of Christ's two nature,. i.e. the opposite of Nestorianism). As is well known, the reconciliation of the humanity of the Son and the divinity of the Father was formulated at the Council of Nicaeo in AD 325, and confirmed at the Council of Constantinople in AD 381, by which the Son was said to be co-existent and consubstantial with the Father, begotten not made. The importance of the phrase "begotten not made" was to emphasise that the Son was not created, and therefore not a dependent of God's causality, but rather of the same substance as the Father. This standard teaching is summarised by Hebblewithe:

The Christian doctrine of the Incarnation expresses the conviction of Christians that this God has made himself known fully, specifically and personally, by taking our human nature into himself, by coming amongst us as a particular man, without in any way ceasing to be the eternal and infinite God.³

In short, God retains his metaphysical dignity while revealing himself in and through the agency and the mediation of the Son. In writings ranging from the early Church fathers to German mystics such as Jacob Boehme, the concept of mediation states that the Son of God acts as an agent or Second Principle to the God as a first principle. As such, Sonship represents the second principle or moment in a triadic schema moving from an abstract Father, a dark, all-knowing All through to humanity as God's creation, the third moment. Boehme's idea of a Second principle is further corroborated in other definitions of Sonship such as "Love proceeding from the heart of the Father" or the "virtue and

³ B. Hebblewithe, "Jesus, God Incarnate," *The Truth of God Incarnate*, M. Green, p. 101.

brightness of the Father."⁴ As love, logos or light, the Second principle activates the first, and does so paradigmatically in and through the individual and historic entity of Jesus Christ.

Thus, a second component of the philosopher's incarnate God is historicity whereby the Son acts as an immanent and temporal agent of the transcendent, eternal Father. One can only speculate as to why at particularly that place and time the Judaeo-Hellenic world called forth a mediating and immanent God. The simplest explanation is that the abstract Father or High God, though the preferred choice of the Hellenic philosopher and the Jewish people, was simply too distant for the common man.⁵ God needed to be revealed in a particular, human form. As noted by Eliade:

For the Christian, Jesus Christ is not a mystical personage; on the contrary he is a historical personage; his greatness itself is founded on that historicity. For the Christ not only made himself man, "man in general" but accepted the historical condition of the people in whose midst he chose to be born, and he had recourse to no miracles to escape from that historicity.⁶

In spite of Hegel's low-interest in the personhood of Christ, it cannot be said that his reformulation of the mediating Being is simply executed in terms of a intellectualist Valentinian gnosticism or Philonic logos. For Hegel, as for Christianity, the historicity of Jesus Christ is essential to demonstrate the necessity of God's self-manifesting nature.

⁴ J. Boehme, *Essential Writings*, pp. 112, 143.

⁵ As Nilsson has argued, the profusion of mystery cults around the time of Jesus Christ providing more immediate access to the divine, anticipated the cultural-religious need for a divine mediator. See "The High God and the Mediator," *HTR* 56 (April 1963): 101-120. Nilsson's article is particularly instructive in illuminating the cyclical relationship between High God and Mediators within the Christian tradition. This follows the following pattern: While Jesus Christ appears, first and foremost, as a mediator he is then elevated to a High God, i.e. law-giver and king, in the dark ages, replaced by Virgin Mary as a mediator in the middle ages, and reinstated as a High God in the Protestant Reformation.

⁶ M. Eliade, *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*, p. 30.

In the categories of mediation and historicity there are grounds, at least from a Hegelian standpoint, to philosophically formulate the incarnate God. However, can this problematic be extended to include political philosophy? By way of introduction, the general thrust of such an extension can be outlined as follows. On the one hand, the concept of God as a transcendent, unknowable intellectual postulate corresponds to the self-contained and self-legislating I and to a political system geared towards liberal values and the pursuit of individual gain. Such a correspondence is evident, particularly in the eyes of its critics, in the Kantian and Judaic world-view. On the other hand, the concept of God as an immanent, revelatory and self-sacrificial being corresponds to the thou, or other, and to a political order guided by intersubjectivity or other communitarian ideals. This correspondence is evident in the romanticist, Hegelian and young Hegelian world-view. These two theologico-political forms present a tension between egoism and love, morality and ethical life, individualism and communism, self-interest and self-sacrifice which is, to a certain extent mirrored in the Hegelo-Marxian response to liberal, capitalist alienation. Although heavily generalised, this tension partly underlies the following discussion. At this preliminary stage, it is only necessary to draw attention to the manner in which political forms can correspond to or even derive from certain metaphysical or religious positions. In this case, it is worth repeating, the position of the incarnate God corresponds to a community presupposing the sacrifice of the individual or particular for the common good.

In the Judaeo-Hellenic world in which Christianity emerged, these forms were never so neatly expressed. Nonetheless, in certain instances, such as Paul's Letters to the Romans, and the Gospel of John, there are hints at models of intersubjectivity which

derive from a formulation of God as a self-denying divine Being. In the Pauline formulation, this originally took the form of a legal nuance, namely that Gentiles could live among the Hebrew people without formal obedience to the law of ordinances, it signifies in a larger sense the transformation of the inner nature enacted by Christ. One gave of oneself voluntarily what the law would otherwise command: " As for the Gentiles, though they have no law to guide them, there are times when they carry out the precepts of the law unbidden; finding in their own natures a rule to guide them, in default of any other rule; and this shows that the obligations of the law are written in their hearts." ⁷ While this allegiance to the internal law has a Kantian ring, it must be remembered that the law though internal has come from the outside mediated to us from Christ upon which man is dependent for his salvation and freedom. The Kantian formulation, as we shall see in the next chapter, corresponds much more to the Judaic idea, a fact recognised by Hegel with important consequences. The Pauline law/love dichotomy thus sets up a tension between Jew and Christian, between the individual bounded by a common obedience to the law, and the individual united to others in love of God, between the self-certain I and the I that has died to itself in and through Christ.

The ontological tension between Christian and Jew is mirrored in John in the parable of the vine, one of the more politically suggestive images in the Christian gospels. It sets up an absolutist framework in which the individual's salvation and freedom is tied to adherence to a specific community outside of which no such freedom is possible (John: 15:4-6): "As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me...If a man does not abide in me, he is

⁷ St. Paul, *Letter to Romans*, 2:14-15.

cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned." Cut off from the community, and the potential for freedom, the individual withers and dies. It is clear from this passage, and also confirmed by other commentators on Johannine christology, that the Other or unfree, those off the vine, refers to the Jews, to Israel which has not born fruit.⁸ While these tensions should not be overrated, and could possibly be explained away in terms of the evangelical priorities of the scripture writers, they are of primary significance for understanding the manner in which the speculative appropriation of the incarnate God from Hegel to Marx defines itself vis à vis a condition of alienation and unfreedom associated with the static, self-contained God of Enlightenment theism and the moral postulate of Kantian practical reasoning.

II. The Argument and its Qualifiers

The following thesis is the first comprehensive account of the incarnate God from Hegel to Marx.⁹ Considering Hegel's obscure relation to Christianity and Marx's more explicit hostility toward religion, an account, such as the one proposed, may not seem to present any obvious contribution to the vast literature on this episode. Yet, if a defence from a logical standpoint needed to be made at the outset, it would follow three short

⁸ See R.D. Strachan, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 289.

⁹ This observation is based on a literature review and the Gabel and Steinhauer bibliographies the latter of which (published in 1980) also includes most studies on Hegel's relation to Marx. The best general literature survey of Hegel is probably C. Helfferich, *Hegel*; and of Hegel's political thought, H. Ottmann, *Individuum und Gemeinschaft* and K-H. Ilting's introduction to the *Rechtsphilosophie*. These concentrate primarily on German source literature, although Ottmann provides a useful summary and critique of Anglo-American interpretations.

steps: 1) Hegel's system, in spite of its philosophical method, is inundated with theological references of a highly Christian character;¹⁰ 2) a major theme of the Young Hegelians, particularly Strauss and Feuerbach, from 1841 onwards, was speculative christology, i.e. the question on how to transform the God-Man from an individual to an idea; 3) Marx's early writings up until the *German Ideology* were considerably influenced by Hegel and Feuerbach. These three basic claims, though allowing considerable scope for interpretive differences, nevertheless encompass the premises upon which the incarnation thematic will be traced. As such, the study operates largely within the familiar parameters of Marx's Hegelian and Hegel's Christian inheritance, but achieves its novelty in the systematic connections drawn between these two fields.

While the expanse of this study poses considerable challenges, ironically, one of the least relevant is whether, in the end, Hegel's reformulation of the incarnate God and its inheritance by the early Marx accords with traditional Christian teaching on the subject. Firstly, the lack of one unified "traditional teaching" and the daunting complexities of biblical scholarship, full of archaeological and etymological nuances, would make it difficult to formulate any standard by which to judge the relative compatibility of Hegel's interpretation. For example, even if one might claim with some certainty that Hegel's interpretation of the incarnate God shares a common ground with the Gospel of John, in terms of the immanentisation of the divine logos, these similarities would be based on interpretations of the gospels which are themselves much in dispute.

¹⁰ As noted by J. McTaggart, *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, p. 117: "Hegel's views on this subject (Christianity) are not so much expressed in distinct propositions, as in the tendency and spirit of page after page." However, this statement predates the publication of the early theological writings and does not appear to take the lectures on the philosophy of religion into account.

One would have to take into account the considerable evidence, particularly since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, that the Hellenic reference in the prologue of the Gospel (the word made flesh) is only a rhetorical device of the evangelist preaching to a sceptical audience, after which the narrative reverts back to its authentic roots in the Palestinian-Jewish tradition.¹¹ Thus, insofar as the primary objective of tracing the incarnation thematic in Hegel is more what this interpretation tells us about Hegel than about the incarnation, an effort will be made to keep the question of the "authenticity" of Hegel's interpretation very much in the background. The objective is therefore to investigate the nature of Hegel's attempt to reconcile his religious conviction of the necessity of the incarnation with the demands of philosophical thinking. His concern is neither with individual sin and redemption nor the personhood of Jesus Christ but, rather how the human can be reconciled to the divine via some form of mediation derived from the incarnate God. If God is not abstract, self-contained, and unknown, but rather self-negating and self-manifesting, then, some effort to reconcile this conviction with philosophical thinking, ultimately leads to ideas about community, intersubjectivity, in short, of the ideas of the self-negation of the individual for the greater whole. This, one could say, is the most basic parallel between Hegel's conception of the incarnate God and his ideas about the individual in community. While, for the Christian, the fact that God revealed himself to man in and through Jesus can only be an object of faith if one accepts the uniqueness of this historical event, it will be argued that Hegel interprets the incarnation speculatively in order to revitalise the metaphysical implications of that

¹¹ see T.E. Pollard, *Johannine Christology and the Early Church*, pp. 6-15.

doctrine and thereby effect a reconciliation between man and God.¹² Following this formulation, it can be said that Hegel's prime concern is to come to terms with that reconciliation in a manner that suits his philosophical designs.

A second and more substantial difficulty is that modern approaches to Hegel and Marx have paid relatively little attention to the *speculative* religious dimensions of their thought, let alone to isolated aspects of that dimension. While there have been numerous studies of Hegel's relation to Christianity and Marx's relation to Hegel, there have been few studies on the connection between these two relationships. This would not be an issue if the thesis treated Hegel and Marx's relation to the incarnate God - as others have treated their views on art, or legal punishment, or the French revolution- in terms that presume that these views may not be central to their philosophy as a whole, but nonetheless, illuminate either a part of it or our understanding of a larger general subject. However, the impulse for this study came from a different direction, namely from considering what was central to their philosophy, and deciding upon a concept whose obscurity in the *rezeptionsgeschichte* of Hegel and Marx, for better or worse, is disproportionate to the importance assigned to it in this study. Because the argument advanced here makes the incarnation into a central underlying motif, rather than a rhetorical device, or a useful metaphor, it is more difficult to claim small victories over interpretive nuances. One must persuade entirely or not at all. The risk of failure can hopefully be avoided by, firstly, configurating this theological motif much as Hegel

¹² As also argued recently by Shanks in terms of Hegel's "non-reductive philosophical christology," defined as, "the attempt to demonstrate the character of the Incarnation as a rationally necessary precondition for the full reconciliation of God with humanity;" see Shanks, *Hegel's Political Theology*, p. 17.

himself did, in quasi-secular language familiar to all who have studied this period in German philosophy; secondly, by following a conventional structure beginning with Hegel's early critique of Kant, through the Young Hegelians to Marx, and showing how the incarnation is imbedded in their philosophies, rather than extrapolating tenuous religious implications from their systems or elevating isolated passages on religion beyond their marginal significance; thirdly, by using familiar arguments from the source literature to support points that result in a less familiar argument. For example, most commentators would agree that Hegel's State is a mediating concept between civil society and Absolute Spirit; in the context of this thesis such a consensus is integrated into a more controversial notion that the state is the culmination of Hegel's speculative appropriation of the incarnate God.

A third difficulty arises from the ambiguity of the role of Christianity in Hegel's system. Firstly, as Weischedel has pointed out, Hegel offers no consistent definition of God.¹³ God is defined as truth, the concept, Absolute Spirit, Ideas, infinite life, etc. This creates the problem that, while one can say with some certainty that Hegel's Absolute Spirit satisfies many of the criteria which Christianity might assign to the term God, one cannot claim that this Absolute Spirit derives solely from the Christian God or is in some sense a mere reformulation of it. Nor can one assume outright that the immanentist qualities of Hegel's thought are directly derived from the incarnation, and not simply a mystical pantheism or panentheism. Secondly, although Hegel claims as one of his central tasks the translation of religious representations into philosophical concepts, he leaves this project open to two very different interpretations. Either religious representations form

¹³ W. Weischedel, *Der Gott der Philosophen*, p. 287.

the basis for his central philosophical concepts, or the task of philosophy is to conceptualise religion just as much as any other domain of thought, such as politics, aesthetics, nature, etc.

The following presentation roots itself firmly in the first of these interpretations because it takes its cue from the textual evidence that Hegel regarded his whole system as theology in so far as its principal object was God or the Absolute. More specifically, the object in Hegel's system is not God per se but God acting in and through man. On the most fundamental level, this relationship is revealed through the incarnation. The thesis attempts to chart a cautious path between the endorsements of theologians who see Hegel as a moderniser of Christian theology, and critics who see in Hegel's incarnation-inspired divinisation of the State either a Christian heresy or a harmful totalitarian impulse. In either case, one cannot do justice to the central role of Christianity in Hegel's system by relegating his theology to youthful speculations which was later abandoned in favour of mature philosophy (one orthodox view), or to a lasting Lutheran faith which on occasion leaked over into his rhetoric, the rose in the cross of the present, the divine on earth, etc.

Finally, one must consider Marx's clearly negative attitude toward religion which seems to prejudge any attempt to forge a relationship between his system and the incarnation doctrine. Yet, while Marx also rejected such normative concepts as justice and morality, these are clearly contained in his system. Whether or not Marx was self-deluded in his rejection of normative concepts, one could at least say that he inherited certain Christian metaphysical concepts from Hegel, which he incorporated critically into

what he considered a non-normative science of man. Furthermore, although this is a separate theme, those who take Marx's atheism at its face value still have difficulty explaining why Marxism with its stringent ethical demands and eschatological inspiration has such a strong religious character. For most scholars, who accept that Marx's views toward religion are far more complex than is suggested by the familiar sound-bite, 'the opium of the masses', the view that it might derive from a Christo-Hegelian metaphysical inheritance comes as no surprise. Nonetheless, the nature of Marx's atheism must be addressed, for it represents the most obvious obstacle that could prejudice a thesis of this kind.

If one accepts that Hegel was mainly drawn to reconcile his Christian convictions with speculatively philosophy - a reading which implies a rejection of proto-Marxian interpretations of Kojève and Lukács¹⁴ - then Marx's expressed atheism must be considered in the light of his German philosophical inheritance. Germany came to communism philosophically and, if Feuerbach had anything to do with this, then its route could not but pass through a critique of religion, and an anthropologisation of the incarnate God. So much is said by Marx himself, yet, the interpretations of these statements have been historically marred by, or confused with, Marx's hostility towards institutional religion, and the sociological focus of his conception of God, i.e. as an expression of human alienation caused by economic conditions. The possibility of interpreting Marx's early thought in the light of Hegel's relation to Christianity,

¹⁴ See a recent article by S. Smith, "Hegel on Slavery and Domination," *RM*, 46 (1992), p. 106 which holds the interpretations of Lukács and Kojève responsible for the fact that: "it is difficult to establish today the view that for Hegel religion in general, but Christianity in particular, is the locus of a profound moral truth."

ironically, seems to have been further impeded by loose and unscientific speculations concerning the religious dimensions in Marx's thought, usually expressed in terms of some notion of secular eschatology or messianism. Rather than draw dubious speculative parallels between Christianity and Marxism, it seems to be a more fruitful enterprise to investigate, as does the following thesis, whether aspects of the incarnation thematic in Hegel's political thought do not recur in the humanism of the early Marx. This approach can thus draw upon more textual evidence, particularly from Marx's critique of Hegel, than those studies which speculate upon, but cannot verify, parallels between Christianity and Marxism.

III. Literature Survey

A. The Christian Thematic in Hegel

The scope of this study requires that the literature survey be broken down into a number of categories not all of which can be accommodated in an introductory form. Nonetheless, attention can be drawn to two central topics, the role of the incarnate God in Hegel, and the continuity from Hegel to Marx in terms of the incarnation thematic.

The literature on Hegel's concept of the incarnation forms both a subset of studies on Hegel's general relation to Christianity,¹⁵ on Hegel's concept of God and his

¹⁵ Classic or introductory studies on Hegel's relation to Christianity include E. Fackenheim, *The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought*; K. Löwith, "*Hegels Aufhebung der Christlichen Religion*," H. Rondet, *Hégélianisme et Christianisme*; A. Chapelle, *Hegel et la religion*; C. Bruaire, *Logique et religion chrétienne dans la philosophie de Hegel*.

philosophy of religion,¹⁶ and a separate subject for theologians studies with a christological focus.¹⁷ Among those studies investigating the relationship between Christianity and political thought in Hegel,¹⁸ there has been no study focusing on the specific role of the incarnation. Furthermore, there is a decided lack of dialogue between theologians interested in Hegel's idea of the community, but from a rather ecclesiastical perspective, and conventional Hegel scholars for whom the religious dimension in Hegel's political thought is of less import. For political philosophers who have concentrated on Hegel, the neglect of the incarnation thematic might not seem like a particularly large lacuna in the scholarship focused, as it has been, on themes such as Hellenic, i.e. Aristotelian and Platonic influences, the distinction between civil society and state, the structural continuity from Hegel's early to late political writings, and the application of the logic to the *Philosophy of Right* (PR). Nonetheless, it will be argued that the incarnation thematic has a bearing on Hegel's political thought in important ways that complement or conflict with accepted interpretations. For the moment, the contribution

¹⁶ On Hegel's concept of God see I. Iljin, *Die Hegelsche Philosophie als Kontemplative Gotteslehre*; Q. Lauer, *Hegel's Concept of God* and "Hegel on Proofs for God's Existence," KS, 55 (1964) pp. 443-465; M. Holzleitner, *Gottesfrage - Logik Gottes? Zur Gottesfrage bei Hegel*; H. Küng, *Does God Exist?* pp. 129-169; On Hegel's philosophy of religion, see R.K. Williamson, *Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy of Religion*; W. Jaeschke, *Die Vernunft in der Religion*.

¹⁷ The main works on Hegel's christology are H. Küng, *The Incarnation of God*; E. Brito, *La Christologie de Hegel*; J. Yerkes, *Hegel's Christology*. Good overviews are given in Macquarrie's chapter on "Idealist Christology," (in *Jesus Christ in Modern Thought*, pp. 212-234) and P. Hodgson, "Hegel's Christology: Shifting Nuances in the Berlin Lectures," JAAR, 53 (1985): 23-40. A survey of recent literature is given in P. Lakeland, "A New Pietism: Hegel and Recent Christology," JR, 68 (1988): 57-71. On background to the German christological tradition, see the classic work by Albert Schweitzer, *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu Forschung* and A. McGrath's recent *The Making of Modern German Christology*.

¹⁸ The most important of which are G. Rohrmoser, *Subjektivität und Verdinglichung*; M. Theunissen, *Hegel's Lehre vom absoluten Geist als theologisch-politischer Traktat*; H. Scheit, *Geist und Gemeinde*; W.D. Marsch, *Die Gegenwart Christi in der Gesellschaft*; L. Dickey, *Religion, Economics and the Politics of Spirit*; R. Gascoigne, *Religion, Rationality and Community*; A. Shanks, *Hegel's Political Theology*.

of the incarnation thematic is best expressed in terms of an impression which is this. In response to proto-fascist and proto-Marxian interpretations, the Anglo-American and post-war German scholarly community have sought to integrate Hegel's political thought into the paradigms of the Western canon, tracing the influences of the French Revolution, Aristotle, Rousseau, Montesquieu, establishing connections that, deliberately or not, diminish the Germano-specific character of Hegel's thought. This trend, though partly formed by an ideologically liberal position, also appears to derive from certain methodological preferences, the primary of which is the notion that Hegel's political thought can be studied as an entity separate from his metaphysics and philosophy as a whole.¹⁹ While the variety of differences among scholars who have contributed to this trend defies a labelling as a particular school of thought, nonetheless various aspects of their approach have been criticised in recent years.²⁰

The interpretive history of Hegel's political thought can rarely be judged by absolute standards since invariably any commentary, if it wishes to make radical claims, is responding to a perceived orthodoxy in the literature. For example, as a subset of a broader programme to integrate the incarnation thematic into the Hegel-Marx lineage, the following thesis challenges the postwar Anglo-Saxon conventionalisation and

¹⁹ As the major proponents of this trend, we might cite the work of J. Ritter: *Hegel and the French Revolution*; M. Riedel, *Between Tradition and Revolution*; K.H. Ilting *Hegel: Frühe Politische Systeme* and the Introduction to his edition of the *Rechtsphilosophie*; Z. Pelczynski's introduction to *Hegel's Political Writings* and his edited volume *The State and Civil Society*; S. Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State* and J. Plamenatz, *Man and Society*, Vol. 2.

²⁰ For criticism of Pelczynski see G.A. Kelly, *Hegel's Retreat from Eleusis: Studies in Political Thought*, p. 8; for criticism of Ritter and Habermas, see Theunissen, *Hegel's Lehre*, pp. 9-11. Kelly's charge is directed against the claim that Hegel's political thought can be studied without knowledge of the metaphysics. Theunissen is discussed below. P. Steinberger's *Logic and Politics* is one of the more recent attempts to bring the logic and metaphysics back into Hegel's political thought.

liberalisation of Hegel. However, this latter project was, in turn, responding to wartime prejudices which associated Hegel political thought with a mystical or proto-fascist conservatism. In a thorough study of the interpretive history of Hegel's political thought, Ottmann's provides a discussion of this response under the title "Die angelsächsische Reintegration Hegels 'in the main stream of Western political theory.'" ²¹ As the major representatives of this project, he cites Findlay, Kaufmann, Pelczynski, Avineri and, to a lesser extent, Taylor. Although endorsing some aspects of the attempt to dissassociate Hegel from the stigma of a reactionary, Prussian apologist, he argues that the interpretive bias has swung towards a "liberal-apologetic" ²² which compromises certain truths about the Hegelian system. The liberalisation of Hegel has generally followed two quite distinct paths both of which are characterised by a position taken concerning his relation to the Prussian state. Either Hegel is distanced from Prussia by citing passages from the *Philosophy of Right* which could not accord with the Prussia of his time, or by placing emphasis on early writings where Hegel holds a more negative view of Prussia as a mechanical and sterile political entity. In this case, the objective is to interpret Hegel as a theorist of the modern state within the canonical parameters of the Aristotle- Hobbes- Rousseau tradition of Western political theory. It should be noted that this programme is not restricted to Anglo-Saxon interpreters, as it has been adopted by postwar German scholars such as Ritter and Riedel. Nonetheless, the most radical interpretations have taken place on the Anglo-Saxon front.

²¹ H. Ottmann, *Individuum und Gemeinschaft*, pp. 281-299.

²² Ibid., p. 290.

An alternative strategy, adopted particularly in Weil's *Hegel et L'Etat*, is to accept Hegel's association with Prussia yet emphasise its progressive and reformist aspects thereby rendering a more liberal interpretation. Such an approach argues that Hegel's political thought operates within the framework of the unfulfilled promise of the Hardenberg-Stein reform era. Although Weil's approach has been criticised for not taking into account the equally restorationist character of early 1820s Prussia,²³ his approach seems to be a more accurate starting point in that it does not evade Hegel's obvious link to Prussia. However, the following presentation eschews Weil's underlying objective of liberalising Hegel - by allying him to a reformist Prussia- in favour of an ideologically more ambivalent Prussian Hegel; one which synthesises his sympathies for the Reform era with a metaphysical programme which is, in certain respects, proto-totalitarian. It therefore questions the legitimacy of Hegel's membership in "the mainstream of Western political theory." It is difficult to assemble any coherent body of voices that endorse such a view, and it seems that there has been, as yet, no frontal assault on the liberal-conventionalist interpretation of Hegel endorsed particularly in the 1960s and 1970s. Recent studies have, however, criticised the liberal-conventionalist interpretation from a methodological angle by stating rather categorically that Hegel's political thought cannot be understood without recourse to the metaphysics and logic.²⁴ However, these studies have tended to operate in an overly abstract framework which cannot always accommodate the Germano-specific and religious underpinnings of the metaphysical perspective.

²³ Ibid., p. 267.

²⁴ See fn. 20 above.

Building upon these developments, as part of a broader project to illuminate the Christian thematic *beyond* the obvious metaphysical dimension of Hegel's political thought, it might be said that what has gone missing in the attempt to salvage or even fabricate a Western liberal dimension in Hegel are three Germano-specific aspects: 1) the cross-fertilisation of theology, i.e. Protestantism, and philosophy in the German tradition; 2) the historical, i.e. Prussian environment informing Hegel's attitudes towards the State; 3) the philosophical and christological manner in which attitudes to Judaism were integrated with a reaction to the Enlightenment. The first point, recognised and polemically criticised by Nietzsche,²⁵ is central to the following study, while the other two points might be considered as sub-plots.

It should be noted that the shortcoming of those studies which neglect the cross-fertilisation of Protestantism and philosophy in Hegel's thought is not that they refuse to recognise the importance of Christianity, nor that they deny that Hegel himself called his system a 'theodicy.' It is rather that they relegate this importance either to a mystical thread that weaves through but does not underlie Hegel's critical response to Kant and the Enlightenment, or to a separate compartment of Hegel's system as a whole. It seems that such studies would prefer to formulate this departure in anything but speculative religious terms. This is particularly the case in Taylor's work which bases Hegel's philosophy of freedom on the Herderian Romanticist notion of "expressivism," i.e., the unity of body and soul conveying a unique cultural spirit.²⁶

²⁵ As in the *Anti-Christ*, pp. 135-136: "Germans understand immediately when I say philosophy is spoiled by theologians' blood. The Protestant minister is the grandfather of German philosophy. Protestantism itself is the latter's *peccatum originale*."

²⁶ see C. Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society*, pp. 1-6.

While it soon becomes clear that "expressivism," has more to do with Taylor's original interpretation of Hegel than Herder's influence on the latter, in fact the reference to Romanticism is an attempt to find an inspiration for Hegel independent of Christianity: "Hegel's Spirit, or Geist, although he is often called 'God' and although Hegel claimed to be clarifying Christian theology, is not the God of traditional theism."²⁷ What Hegel claimed is evidently not what he did. For what he did, according to Taylor, was to reformulate the Romantic project in terms of reason rather than mystical or emotional categories, and therefore lend a higher value to "expressivism." Taylor's interpretation represents one of many efforts to clarify Hegel's central task in terms apart from Christianity. Based on the somewhat problematic argumentation that Hegel's God does not conform to our general understanding of the Christian one, the conclusion follows that the sources for Hegel's efforts to reconcile man to himself and spirit must lie elsewhere.

As there is little dispute over the centrality of theology and Christianity in the writings of the Young Hegel- so little that his youthful essays are labelled the *Early Theological Writings* - any discussion of their relevance must depend on how the theological speculation manifests itself in the later system. Here the philosophers and theologians are quite predictably divided, with theologians such as Hans Küng, Emilio Brito, and James Yerkes arguing for Christian underpinnings that logicians, liberals, and Marxists are less apt to find carried over into the mature system, let alone the philosophy of right. But there are important nuances.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 11.

In particular, the work of Michael Theunissen²⁸ merits special mention because it is characterised by a rigorous exposition on the theological underpinnings of Hegel's mature philosophy, and particularly, political philosophy. Both in the earlier work *Hegel's Lehre vom Absoluten Geist als theologisch-politischer Traktat* (hereafter, *Hegel's Lehre*), and later works he has explored the Hegel-Marx lineage by problematising the familiar concepts of Totality, the Other and the relationship between the universal and the particular, with an acute sensitivity to Hegel's speculative critique of Christianity. Particularly, in *Hegel's Lehre*, he takes issue with established interpretations on a number of fronts that do not adequately address the underlying Christian thematic. With a central objective of showing that the "revolutionary-emancipatory interest" in Hegel's philosophy derives from Christianity, he challenges the crude associations between Totality and totalitarianism (that range from Popper to Lukács)²⁹, atheistic interpretations (Kojève, Garaudy)³⁰ and those such as Habermas and Ritter, who see Hegel's emancipatory interest lying in Hellenic metaphysics, the French Revolution or other factors unrelated to Christianity.³¹ Although in later works, Theunissen has revised his thesis somewhat to accommodate other influential factors besides the Christian thematic,³² it remains one of the most forceful and definitive studies of its kind. The arguments in this thesis share a common *Ausgangspunkt* with

²⁸ M. Theunissen, *Hegels Lehre vom Absoluten Geist als theologisch-politischer Traktat* (hereafter, *Hegel's Lehre*) and *Sein und Schein*.

²⁹ *Hegel's Lehre*, pp. 3-5.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-8.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

³² In the later *Sein und Schein*, p. 11, he expresses some self-criticism of the failure of *Hegel's Lehre* to extract Hegel's political theology from the "Grundlegen seines Denkens," i.e. the logic. In the earlier work the focus is mainly on the *Phenomenology*.

Theunissen and other works of its kind, and also reiterate certain charges against the totalitarian and Hellenic interpretations. However, the scope and structure presented in the following thesis is considerably different. Not only because it isolates, and then systematises, the incarnation as the central motif in Hegel's Christian inheritance, but because its span from Hegel's Kant critique to the early Marx raises a number of other issues not central to Theunissen's work.

Karl Löwith's *Hegel to Nietzsche*, *Hegels Aufhebung des Christentums*, *Meaning and History* are classic, authoritative accounts on the role of Christianity in Hegel's system. However, their predominant historiosophical focus, i.e. the notion of redemptive history, have left a somewhat restrictive imprint on Hegel's attempt to grasp the metaphysical depth of Christianity. Other commentators have recognised a metaphorical and conceptual value of the incarnation in Hegel without more rigorously developing the role it actually plays. This perspective would involve a large number of commentators who have remarked on the incarnational or Christian symbolic in Hegel. To cite a few examples, Carl Friedrich: "Hegel's whole system may be interpreted in a sense in terms of the basic metaphor of the incarnation, that is to say, the union of God and man."³³ On Hegel's system as a whole, the Marxist Colletti notes: "This is the realisation of philosophy. It is the immanentization of transcendence, the 'secularisation of Christianity' the incarnation of the divine Logos."³⁴ Quentin Lauer: "Hegel's lifelong endeavor was a search for the absolute; not, however, an absolute outside of and beyond the world but an absolute present in the world. This, he found in the Christian revelation

³³ C. Friedrich, introduction to *The Philosophy of Hegel*, p. xxxvii.

³⁴ L. Coletti, "From Hegel to Marcuse," *From Rousseau to Lenin*, p. 115.

of an incarnate God."³⁵ Finally, a broader reference to Christian themes, of which the incarnation must be included as central, by Plant: "The very articulating of Hegel's philosophical point of view is shot through with Christian images to such an extent that his system would be difficult to describe without making reference to these symbols."³⁶ These few quotations show that the recognition of the importance of the incarnate God in Hegel is neither a new discovery, nor is it restricted to one ideological or disciplinary perspective. Nonetheless, the novelty of the following thesis is the manner in which it seeks to ground the incarnation thematic in the system as whole, isolating it from a vague and monolithic Christian secularisation problem, and breaking it into a number of conceptual motifs. In doing so, it will not only will show the systematic, rather than rhetorical or analogical, character of the incarnation thematic, but will also show how it illuminates central components of Hegel's political thought which have largely been defined in terms of non-theological interpretive frameworks.

B. Hegel Marx: The Religious Dimension of the Continuity Thesis

Since the publication of *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (published in German and French, 1932; and in English, 1959) there is little doubt about the continuity from Hegel to the early Marx. Marx recognises as one of Hegel's major achievements the notion that human development, and liberation from alienation, is a dialectical process realised through self-production. Humanisation is thus the movement

³⁵ Q. Lauer, *Essays in Hegelian Dialectic*, p. 109.

³⁶ R. Plant, *Hegel*, p. 133.

from alienation to freedom, not however in the realm of reason or in an idealised State, as Hegel might have it, but rather through the interaction of labour with nature. Nonetheless, in discussing Marx's "metaphysical inheritance" from Hegel, two phenomena must be demonstrated in order for the arguments in this thesis to have validity. Firstly, that Marx's relation to Hegel can be described as a substitution of variables in a metaphysical formula. Secondly, that the concepts which Marx does inherit from Hegel are derived from the incarnation. While the first argument concerns the relatively simple task of showing that Marx transposes Hegelian concepts onto a socio-economic framework, the second argument has had a less persuasive impact on the scholarly field. Nonetheless, there is a consensus established in authoritative works by Löwith, Habermas, Marcuse, Kolakowski,³⁷ as well in more specialised studies by Rotenstreich, Schacht, McGregor,³⁸ that humanistic themes which in this study are attributed to theological underpinnings in Hegel's system as a whole, are inherited by the early Marx. Furthermore, the necessary bridge of Feuerbach, Strauss, Hess and Cieszkowski, highlights the importance of speculative christology, that is, of reformulating the individual God-man into a flexible philosophical idea, in the Young Hegelian debates of the 1830s. Although Marx's own contribution to these debates was minimal, his debt to Feuerbach and others for whom christology was a central concern is well documented. Finally, it should be noted that there is a considerable body of literature, including works by McLellan, Macintyre, and Turner,³⁹ which considers the

³⁷ K. Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche*; H. Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*; J. Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*; L. Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, Vol. 1.

³⁸ N. Rotenstreich, *Alienation: The Concept and its Reception*; R. Schacht, *Alienation*; D. MacGregor, *The Communist Ideal in Hegel and Marx*.

³⁹ D. McLellan, *Marxism and Religion*; A. MacIntyre, *Marxism and Christianity*; D. Turner, *Marxism and Christianity*.

religious dimension in Marx without particular reference to Hegel's influence. These discussions tend to operate in terms of the moral and eschatological aspects of Marx's work, either within the context of Marxist commentary or in terms of the attitudes of later Marxists toward religion in the 20th century.

As mentioned above, in assessing the continuity from Hegel to Marx, the central concern is whether those attributes of Hegel's system which are considered of import to this thesis are carried over to Marx. An interesting exchange between Löwith and Marcuse in the 1940s provides a suitable introduction to this question. Löwith, who provides one of the most erudite defences of the centrality of Christianity for Hegel's system as a whole, particularly in his later essay, "Hegel's *Aufhebung* der Christlichen Religion," argues against Marcuse for establishing a metaphysical continuity from reason to revolution:

Hegel moves in the realm of the "absolute spirit," and thereby in that of Christianity, while Marx struggles in the region of bourgeois society, asserting that religion is a "perverted world." Hegel started from an interpretation of Christ, while Marx from that of two classic atheists.⁴⁰

While Löwith's analogy between Hegel's relations to Christ and Marx's doctoral dissertation on Democritus and Epicurus is somewhat misleading,⁴¹ by indicating the radical nature of Hegel's preoccupation with Christianity he makes it clear that it could not have been inherited by an atheist such as Marx. Although there is much to agree with in Löwith's interpretation of Hegel, he makes a classic "error," in assuming Marx's

⁴⁰ K. Löwith, "Zwei Rezensionen von Herbert Marcuse, *Vernunft und Revolution*" (published in 1941, 1942), in *Sämtliche Schriften*.

⁴¹ A more apt comparison to Marx's rather formal choice of a dissertation subject would be Hegel's Habilitationsschrift on planetary orbits. However, neither study is particularly illuminating on the philosophical themes that would preoccupy both thinkers.

atheism to warrant a radical break with Hegel's Christian-imbued system. Marcuse, in response to Löwith's review, advanced the following argument in defence of the continuity from Hegel to Marx:

The transition from Hegel to Marx is, in all respects, a transition to an essentially different order of truth, not to be interpreted in terms of philosophy.⁴²

Marcuse goes on to define this different order in terms of the following distinction: whereas for Hegel socio-economic categories are philosophical concepts, for Marx philosophical concepts are socio-economic categories. Marcuse affirms here what has since been reiterated and more rigorously investigated in Marxian epistemology of the Frankfurt school, namely that Marx inserts socio-economic variables, particularly the concept of labour, into Hegelian epistemological categories. If one accepts such an interpretation, Marx's atheism has less relevance to the Hegel inheritance than Löwith and other commentators have normally assumed. The question is then only one of emphasising first the incarnation thematic in Hegel's thought, and then showing how that thematic is preserved in Marx's Hegelian inheritance.

In the vast literature on the Hegel to Marx lineage, there are few precedents for such a project. One such example comes from Olssen in an article entitled , "Marx and the Resurrection ":

Hegel's political theory...is a meticulous transcription into a rationalised vocabulary of the christological narratives of the New Testament: and because this is the side of Hegel's thought that constitutes the famous method open and avowedly taken over by Marx, it follows, as well, that the same christological narratives provide the structural backbone, as it were, to both the Communist Manifesto and Capital (and, for that matter, to Marx's other writings).⁴³

⁴² Marcuse, in "Zwei Rezensionen," p.66.

⁴³ E. Olssen, "Marx and the Resurrection," *JHI*, 29 (1968), p. 132.

While it is not worth dwelling on the awkwardness of the above formulation, the underlying message, namely that there is a continuity from Hegel's speculative christology to Marx, can nonetheless be preserved in the following form: Hegel's philosophical reformulation of the incarnation, mediated by the early theology and mature philosophy, and applied as *concepts*, not vocabulary, to the political theory, potentially has a bearing on the *early* Marx. Furthermore, this bearing has less to do with the dialectic, "the famous method," than with the conceptual inheritance of the incarnation thematic which we turn to next.

IV. The Thematic Breakdown

The term "incarnation thematic" is used in the context of this thesis to describe a set of recurring motifs in the Hegel to Marx lineage that relate to, or are explicitly engendered by, Hegel's speculative philosophical reformulation of the Judaeo-Christian incarnate God. Some of these motifs, such as the relation between representation and concepts, becoming, mediation, are unique to the Hegelian project; others are more broadly related to 19th century Germany's response to the liberal individualism of the Enlightenment. This response involves such themes as a developmental, collectivist and embodied idea of freedom, a dramatic turn away from natural law theory, and a certain historiosophical vision of human nature. Finally, the incarnation thematic encompasses a whole range of rhetorical images, such as humanisation, concretisation, collective self-realisation, actualisation, self-negation, etc. that are particularly prevalent in the philosophical environment under investigation.

Thus, the main concern lies in establishing the "off-spring" of the Absolute whose *necessary* embodiment in political life is part of a secularisation drama enacted by the attempt to reconcile humanity to its "true" nature. The specific bearing of the incarnate God on this reconciliation can be broken down into a few key motifs. These motifs provide the original structure of this study, as well as the thematic signposts, along a rather conventional chronological narrative from Hegel's early theological critique of Kant through the Young Hegelians to the early Marx. The thematic of the incarnation to be considered here focuses on the following core concepts: alienation/humanisation, mediation, the idealisation of the Prussian State (which refers primarily to Hegel) and philosophical anti-Judaism, which is evident from Hegel to Marx. The following paragraphs shall preliminarily define how each of these categories refers to the incarnation thematic as it develops from Hegel to Marx.

A. Alienation/Humanisation

The German word for the incarnation is *Menschwerdung*, literally, becoming-man or humanisation. In the term *Menschwerdung* the suggestion of movement, or more specifically, historical movement, is much more pronounced than in its English counterpart. *Menschwerdung* also contains two significant components of German philosophical discourse. *Mensch*, or Humanity, that has its roots in the late Enlightenment/early Romantic anthropological humanism of Herder and Goethe; *Werden* (becoming) which Hegel made a central component of the dialectic as the synthesis of Being and Nothingness. Humanisation expresses a historiosophical process leading towards the divinisation of man, but also presupposes a stage where humanity is not yet.

This not-yet stage of humanity is alienation. Alienation, which originated in Christian thought, refers to man's distance from God. To overcome alienation, man must bridge this distance. *Menschwerdung* thus implies the movement from *Unmensch* to *Mensch*, from alienation to freedom, via an engagement with historical life. This cannot happen by itself but must be mediated by institutions and ideologies which illuminate the correct path. If one were to sketch out the process being intimated here under the umbrella of the idea of *Menschwerdung*, it would follow the following three steps:

- 1) In traditional Christian teaching, the Incarnation represents the mystery of God's divine Sonship in the human form of Jesus Nazareth. For the sake of human salvation, the Incarnate God assumes the burden of human sinfulness, is crucified and ascends to heaven. The message is that God is love, and that man should no longer submit to the alien ordinances of the Mosaic law, but rather do voluntarily out of love for God and others what that law would otherwise command.
- 2) In Hegel, the becoming man of God, is only paradigmatically revealed in the individual Jesus Christ, for the representative moment must be elevated to a concept of the divine coming to knowledge of itself in human history, and ultimately, in the Christo-Germanic State. In and through the State, the individual becomes whole.
- 3) In Marx, the Hegelian State is a form of alienation as is the God it is modelled upon. Following Feuerbach, God is formulated as a projection of humanity's alienated essence. Thus, the Becoming-Man of God is the de-alienation of man which implies, unlike Feuerbach, not theorising the transition from God to man but rather transforming the socio-economic conditions that give rise to alienation. This task is delegated to the proletariat, the bearers of the universal principle, whose de-alienation sets the example for the rest of society to follow.

B. Mediation

Mediation is another concept which has considerable import in Hegel and Marx and is also a central characteristic of the incarnate God. The incarnation represents the mediation between Man and God, the need for which arose due to the distance or alienation which man felt from God. Hegel, in rejecting the self-legislating moralism of

Kant, comes to a similar conclusion. There can be no relation between an individual and an abstract moral law. That law must be mediated to the individual through the community in which he is imbedded. In Judaism it is true that Moses mediated the law of God to man, and did so within the context of the Jewish national-religious community. However, because this law of God was not accessible to the Gentile, it had to be universalised. This Pauline formulation of supersession of the law by love given in the incarnation serves as a basis for Hegel's early theological critique of Kant. In that critique, the dialectical tension between Christian love and Judaic law is reconstructed in terms of a conflict between Hegel's own embryonic concept of love and later Spirit, and Kant's more formulaic moral ought.

In his systematic quest for the *Mittlernbegriff*, a mediating term, Hegel ultimately formulates the State as the concrete mediator between the individual man and the world-historical march of reason coming to knowledge of itself, becoming free in a historico-institutional form adequate to its content. Through the progressive development of the Young Hegelians through to the early Marx, most of the argument centres on criticisms showing why the State is not suited to play that role. Other mediating concepts are proposed such as the intellectual community (Bauer), future-orientated revolutionary praxis (Cieszkowski), love (Feuerbach), and communism (Marx). In one sense, Marx's attitude to mediation is critical and intrinsically tied to alienation, particularly as formulated in his critique of Hegel's State. For Marx, the fact that the State appears to mediate between the individual and freedom merely reflects the individual's, i.e. civil society's, alienated character. Nonetheless, the revolutionary negation of this alienated mediation becomes a form of mediation itself insofar as communism replaces the State.

For this reason, it is not surprising that the fundamental debates of the Young Hegelians centred on christology, or that Hegel's critics charged him with modernising the incarnation in terms of the Prussian monarch. However, these critics including Marx, oversimplified the issue. Hegel did not see the incarnation in terms of a person and, in fact, the notion of personhood is relatively insignificant in his philosophy. Rather, the incarnation simply becomes the historical mediation between man and God, or the Absolute, ultimately concretised in the political institution of the State. Thus, even if the personhood of Christ is of relative insignificance to the incarnation thematic from Hegel to Marx, the transformation of the individual Jesus Christ into a series of ideas by which individual freedom could only be realised, interlocks with a metaphysical tradition in German thought emerging from early 19th century idealism. The absolutist view which characterises this portrayal of personhood is noted by the Russian philosopher Berdyaev: "It (this tradition) was the engulfment of Man, of the personal human features, by the world-ego, by the self-revealing world-spirit, by the human race, by the unique one, by the social collective, or by the superman and his will to power."⁴⁴

In sketching out briefly the categories of alienation/humanisation, mediation, the intent has been to focus the argument from the beginning on the "secular" ingredients immediately recognisable in the Hegel-Marx lineage. It may be disputed that these ingredients derive from Hegel's reformulation of the incarnation, but it is less plausible that they are not important components in both philosophies. There are two other categories which tie in directly with the central concerns of this thesis. One is Hegel's attitude toward the Prussian state, the other is philosophical anti-Judaism.

⁴⁴ N. Berdyaev, *The Beginning and the End*, p. 33.

C. The Idealisation of Prussia

The imagery of militarism, duty-bound discipline, and reform from above have colonised both the popular and scholarly imagination to such an extent that the nation, Prussia, is invariably identified with the traditional pillars of the Prussian State. In fact, Prussia, the quintessential *Vernunftstaat*, an artificial product of intelligence and will, was always more of a concept than a country - dismantled by the Allies in 1947 just as it was established by Frederick the 1st in 1701, by decree. However, beyond this historical data, there is a arguably a more understudied speculative theological dimension to the conceptual nature of Prussian etatism.

As noted above, the interpretation of Prussia's legacy in German history has influenced the way in which the ideological credentials of Hegel have been assessed, particularly since the Second World War.⁴⁵ The approach taken in this presentation accepts both Hegel's association with Prussia and his political metaphysics at its face value without seeking to apologise for it, or diminish the totalitarian implications which some scholars have attempted to read into it. Nonetheless, in order for this approach to be successful, and thereby redeem Hegel from misleading criticism, it must be shown how the Prussian State could have been viewed in the way it was. This will involve a brief review of the main features of the Prussian State, the role of *Bildungsideologie*, the central role allocated to a disinterested bureaucracy representing, at least in theory, the

⁴⁵ A lively debate on Hegel's Prussianness was carried out in the 1960s. See the exchanges between S. Hook and Pelczynski/Avineri in W. Kaufmann, ed. *Hegel's Political Philosophy*. A thorough, objective account is given by O. Pöggeler, "Hegel's Begegnung mit Preussen," Ed. Pöggeler, *Hegels Rechtsphilosophie im Zusammenhang der europäischen Verfassungsgeschichte*, pp. 311-341.

general will of the State, and the messianic hope invested in Prussia as the embodiment of a united German spirit. All these factors once illustrated and combined with Hegel's metaphysical aspirations should go some way toward reevaluating the notion of Prussia in relation to Hegel's supposed totalitarianism.

The specific bearing this has on Hegel's reformulation of the incarnate God is not simply that Hegel saw in the Prussian State the incarnation of the Christo-Germanic Absolute Spirit via reason rather than faith. It is rather that the criteria of universality, mediation and concretisation, self-realisation can all be applied to the Prussian State in such a manner as to strongly suggest that the embodiment of God understood as absolute reason lies therein. In other words, Hegel's term, the "divine on earth," with reference to the Prussian state should be seen in the context of his metaphysical inheritance rather than loaded with unfounded or unfinished totalitarian implications. There are a number of differences between Hegel's Prussia and the Nazi State – most fundamentally that Hegel lacked a mythical *Führerprinzip* that subordinated the rational bureaucratic apparatus to its will. However, the mystical-totalitarian interpretation was taken seriously enough to spawn a backlash that attempted to restore Hegel's liberal or revolutionary credentials.⁴⁶ We have already reviewed this response above. However, with specific reference to the Prussian dimension to our argument, it should only be added that both

⁴⁶ An obvious target of criticism in this vein would be R. Butler's *The Roots of National Socialism*. The work, written during the Second World War, attempts to trace national socialism back to Hegel's idealisation of the Prussian state. Butler interprets Hegel's notion of the state as incarnation only in negative terms, claiming that the idea of the "divine on earth," has reactionary implications. Given the context of the Second World War, and his simplistic categorisation of Prussian history which defines two periods Romanticism (1783-1815) and Reaction (1815-1848), it is not surprising that Butler draws the conclusions he does. More famous, however, and therefore arguably less excusable, is K. Popper's post-war *The Open Society and Its Enemies* which drew similarly ill-founded parallels between Hegel as the official philosopher of the Prussian State and as a prophet of Nazi ideology.

the liberalisation (Pelczynski, Avineri) and Marxianisation (Marcuse) of Hegel was, to a certain extent, achieved only by distancing him from the political, historical and speculative theological undercurrents in which he lived and in which his philosophical system developed.

Hegel's idealisation of the Prussian State applies less to the Young Hegelians, although they still hoped for a revival of the Reform era, and hardly at all to Marx, although Bakunin saw Marx's ideal of a centralised communist utopia as part of a Prussian legacy. Furthermore, the Young Hegelian rejection of Hegel's Prussian incarnation does not sweep the metaphysical inheritance away with it. Rather the structure is maintained with other components. In Marx, the same criteria for universality, mediation, and an "emancipation bearing" class such as the bureaucracy which Hegel applies to various aspects of the State, find similar form in Marx's turn toward the working class and communist society. Within this continuous transposition of metaphysics onto social theory, a larger problematic is operative which cannot be ignored. John Dewey in a war-time speech "Lessons from the War" made a remark not unrelated to the larger implications of the incarnation thematic in German history: "The German people regarded themselves as the source and chief upholder of absolute and final idealistic principles in a world progressively given over to naturalism and empiricism and liberal democracy."⁴⁷ The reaction to Western individualism and its mechanistic world view, though evident as much in early 19th century French conservatism or in the Russian slavophiles and spiritualists, takes on a specifically metaphysical character in Hegel's response to the Kantian enlightenment. And because

⁴⁷ J. Dewey, *The Later Works*, Vol.14. ed. J. Boydston, p. 322.

this response was informed by an ambition to translate a Christian thematic into rational concepts it had, like Christianity, to define itself vis à vis a concept which embodied all the characteristics, i.e. atomism, alienation, egoism, mechanism, etc. which it was reacting against.

D. Philosophical Anti-Judaism

It has been said that one of Hegel's major objectives was to find a *Mittlernbegriff* between the individual subjected to Kantian moral law, and the community of which this individual was naturally a part. In other words, Hegel is interested in the concrete embodiment of the moral law. Although God and the moral law are not identical in Kant, insofar as the postulate of God is necessary to legitimate the moral law, Kant's God is primarily understood as a lawgiver. Because the assignment of the moral law is dictated by a God "outside us," Hegel saw in Kant's association of God and the moral law, a fundamental form of alienation. In the early writings, Hegel addresses this separation of man from God by linking Kant to the Mosaic law, and his own philosophy of love and reconciliation to Jesus Christ.

Beginning with the young Hegel, an argument for an underlying incarnation thematic can be advanced based on the frequent parallels drawn between alienation, liberalism and Judaism throughout the period studied. In the particular case of Hegel, these parallels are formulated in association with his overall criticism of the transcendentalism of the Kantian moral ought. The Jewish God enforcing Torah-bound conduct and the moral law dictating the demands of duty are seen as similar alienating

constructs which do not account for the diversity and fallibility of finite existence. The incarnation represents a reconciliation to finitude in the form of love's supersession of the law. True freedom is presented as freedom from the law understood as the imposition of a "command to obey" on free subjective wills.

Hegel's association of Kant and Judaism is a motif marginal to his more systematic critique in terms of the concepts of German idealism, and the influence of Schelling and Fichte. However, it will be argued that a fundamental provocation for this critique, that Kant did not consider knowledge of God possible, derives from Hegel's grand design to conceptualise the incarnation philosophically. The association between Judaism and Kant is not merely allegorical, but an expression of Hegel's metatheory of reconciliation in embryonic form. In simplest terms, this involves Hegel's attempt to formulate in the conceptual terms of philosophy what the pictorial anthropomorphism of the Jesus Christ figure does in religion.⁴⁸ Although the analogy between Kant and the Jews and Hegel and Christ is more difficult to extrapolate from the mature philosophy, the form it later takes can be alluded to, albeit briefly, via the following argumentation: the movement from the Judaeo-Kantian abstract freedom to Hegelian concrete freedom revolves around the self-objectifying Spirit, fully recognising itself in the State, as a derivative of the Christian incarnation. Among the Young Hegelians, particularly Hess, Feuerbach, and the early Marx, the Judaeo-Kantian paradigm recurs in a number of

⁴⁸ See W. Hamacher, "Pleroma: zu Genesis u. Struktur einer dialektischen Hermeneutik bei Hegel," an introductory essay to his translation of Hegel's early essay *Der Geist des Christentums, Schriften 1796-1800*, p.59: "Just as Christ turns against the empty formalism of the fetishistic faith, the literalism of the Jewish law, and demands the fulfillment of its spirit, so too, Hegel turns against that form of Judaism, with which Christianity itself is burdened, and the puritanical moral law of its critic. Kant is the Jew. Hegel the Christ."

respects but most fundamentally as a condition of egoism and alienation characteristic of capitalist society which must be superseded by a new model of intersubjectivity. Hess's distinction between the egoistic Mammon worship of Judaism and the Christian religion of love, Feuerbach's distinction between the Judaic Father God representing the egoistic I, and the Son representing the sacrificial thou, and Marx's reference to "emancipation from Judaism" as the emancipation of society from materialism,⁴⁹ are only the most explicit reference to the Judaeo-Kantian condition which must be superseded by a new communitarian model.

Conclusion

If its influence can be established in the following chapters, the incarnation thematic will in the end reveal itself as a two-edged legacy in German political philosophy. On the one hand, the idea that humanity becomes, that there is a human essence or freedom to be historically and politically actualised contains the communitarian antidote to the ontologically orphaned modern individual. On the other hand, as a monistic and absolutist vision, potentially subject to arbitrary ideological imperative, it contains the seeds of a totalitarian hell. Thus, at the heart of the incarnation thematic lies the idea of the individual's self-realisation being mediated by some instrument or form of intersubjectivity outside of which that very same individual is insignificant. This is a motif which is evident in the Gospel of John, in Hegel, in Marx, and in any form of community that links freedom to inclusion in, and unfreedom to exclusion from, it. Freedom must be constructed, a premise that implies instruments of

⁴⁹ "On the Jewish Question," *MECW*: Vol. 3, pp. 146-174.

domination and manipulation, for the supposed common good, in other words, a political condition.

As if in response to the ancient dictum, nature abhors a vacuum, the specifically political dimension of Hegel's speculative incarnate God involves the concretisation of transcendent ideals and the reconciliation of the atomistic individual to the greater whole. The vacuum demands its fulfilment, fragmentation its unity, and the alienation of the Jewish people a savior. This simplification only serves to define the schematic and self-consciously revolutionary sense in which Hegel configured his metaphysical response to the Enlightenment. As formulated by Macquarrie, "God (for Hegel) is not simply 'subject,' as in Judaism or Kantian deism, but 'spirit' which has gone out of itself into the object. Thus, in Hegel the immanence of God is more strongly stressed than in much traditional theism."⁵⁰ In the following chapter, we shall construct the "anticipatory climate" of that divine immanence in terms of the convergence of the Kantian God and Judaism.

⁵⁰ J. Macquarrie, *Jesus Christ in Modern Thought*, p. 220.

Chapter 2

The Anticipatory Climate:

Judaeo-Kantianism as the Background for Hegel's Critique

Moses and Kant did not proclaim feeling, and their cold Law knows neither love nor the stake. T. Adorno/M. Horkheimer¹

Introduction

When Kant made the appeal to lead man away from self-imposed immaturity and toward a realm of moral autonomy, he did not realise that there were parts of the German soul which might prefer darkness to Enlightenment, and a religious imagination to an orderly ethical code. If he had known then, what Nietzsche later proclaimed, namely that the German loves "clouds and all that is obscure, becoming, crepuscular, damp and dismal,"² he might have better anticipated the backlash that greeted his reception by the 19th century. Mechanistic sterility, atomism, spiritual froideur, petty bourgeois self-interest, clinical detachment from all products of fancy, such is the set of terms which have caricatured the Kantian project.

It is generally from these sets of problems that a discussion of the Enlightenment legacy begins. However, since Germany had never experienced the political expression of this new development, as had the French and Americans in their respective revolutions, the foundational discourse about the modern individual and his purpose, essence, or Absolute was rooted in a deeper, and more theoretical past, namely the Protestant reformation. For German thinkers for whom the line between theology and philosophy was more blurred than in other traditions, the Protestant reformation is seen

¹ T. Adorno and M. Horkheimer, *The Dialectic of the Enlightenment*, p. 114.

² F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 156.

as giving birth to the modern idea of subjectivity and self-determination. The Reformation denied institutional mediation, replacing the rites and rituals of the Church with the preached word and bible reading by which the individual conscience was to establish a more direct relation to God. In philosophical terms, the declining appeal of a mediating Being is further evidenced in 17th century Rationalism wherein the transformation of God by Descartes, Malebranche, and Berkeley, into a "being within the human spirit," made the idea of a "mediator between God and man (extra nos!)" appear ever more problematic."³ Kant's notions of the "law within" and "equality before the law" can be seen as part of the Protestant philosophical contribution to this development whereby superstition and faith, traditional structures legitimated by their longevity alone, are abandoned in favour of the self-certain I answering to the dictates of reason and the moral law.

The purpose of this chapter is not, however, to investigate Kant's overall contribution to the secularisation of Christianity, or the influence he had on the rationalist theologians of his time.⁴ Nor is it our purpose to enter current liberal-communitarian debates that often designate Kant and Hegel as the theoretical Godfathers of their respective programmes, although some of this literature will be considered where relevant. Rather, the following discussion seeks to create an "anticipatory climate" for Hegel's speculative appropriation of the incarnate God by illuminating the "Judaic" qualities in Kant's thought. By "Judaic," we mean the revival, within a Protestant philosophical tradition, of an ethical and ontological relationship that bears certain important resemblances to the metaphysical principles and moral values encoded in the Old Testament.⁵ As a paradigm of relevance to the subsequent Hegelian project, the

³ H. Küng, *The Incarnation of God*, p. 8.

⁴ for Kant in the context of Enlightenment christology see J. Moltmann's brief treatment in *The Crucified God*, pp. 92-98; V.A. McCarthy, "Christus as Chrestus in Rousseau and Kant," *KS* (1982): 191-207.

⁵ The convergence of Judaeo-Protestant adherence to Old Testament values, and bourgeois ideology is touched upon by Max Weber in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* where he refers to: 1) the close relationship between Kantian-Talmudic morality and ascetic Protestantism (p. 270); 2) the reliance of the Puritan work ethic on the moral principles of the Old Testament (p. 123); 3) "Old Testament rationalism...of

association between Kant and Judaism turns on two points of convergence: 1) the denial of God as a mediating Being in favour of a God which cannot be known but nonetheless legitimates a rational moral law and contract or covenant among self-legislating individuals. 2) an individual relationship to God as a Father that guarantees one's self-interest and pursuit of moral perfection, and corresponds to a certain utilitarian outlook. In both these points, the denial of a mediator is an expression of freedom and self-certitude as much among Kant, in the form of the morally autonomous self, as among the Jews, for whom the status of a privileged relation to God made such mediation redundant. While the philosophical common ground between Judaism and Kantianism may not appear to be very extensive, it is not accidental that both were later identified, by 19th century critics, with a petty-bourgeois outlook symptomatic of capitalist society and, by sympathisers, with Germany's fragile Enlightenment heritage. Furthermore, both points of convergence claim a much greater resonance in Germany's philosophical history than Kant's negative view of the Judaic religion.

Thus, the Judaeo-Kantian paradigm is not only sociological, but philosophical. It anticipates and provokes the Hegelian call for reconciliation and mediation heavily informed, as it will be argued, by a more revelatory and historiosophical conception of the divine, or Absolute; one by which religion cannot be reduced to morality, nor God, to a nameless postulate. The "God" which commands obligation to the moral law, either as an internalised construct or a set of maxims, provides the basis for Hegel's explicit analogy between Kant and Judaism, an analogy that Jewish philosophers themselves affirmed albeit from a pro-Kantian perspective. In short, both in terms of its Jewish philosophical inheritance and Christo-Germanic response, the Kantian philosophical and ideological world-view represents values akin to Judaism in its secularised form. By Judaism, we understand not only the Old Testament, the Torah or the Talmud, or the more marginal mystical traditions, but rather the general set of ideological beliefs which constituted the meaning of Judaism in its German philosophical and cultural context. In this context, of relevance to our argument is only the set of definitions which Judaism

a small, bourgeois, traditionalistic type," (p. 123). In support of his claim, he also refers to the works of Heine, Keats, Macaulay, and Matthew Arnold.

shared in common with the general outlook of the Enlightenment as it was perceived from the early 19th century onward. This speculative leitmotif must first be explicated before it can be seen how the association between Kant, the moral law, Judaism, and bourgeois individualism forms a type of antithetical paradigm in contrast to which the metaphysical revalidation of the incarnate God develops from Hegel to Marx.

The chapter is divided into two sections. Section 1 focuses on Kant's formulation of God, Jesus Christ, and the distinction between love and respect. It shows how the reduction of God and Jesus Christ to a principle of practical reasoning or a moral example, and the subordination of love to respect, derive from Kant's restriction on the limits of metaphysical knowledge and the moral life. Section 2 focuses on broad historico-philosophical trends related to the 19th century reaction to the Enlightenment and the secularisation of Christian-Jewish relations. Concluding remarks focus on some possible objections to constructing a Judaeo-Kantian paradigm, including Kant's negative view of Judaism, and the liberal challenge to the claim that Kant's moral philosophy is atomistic.

I. Kant's Metaphysical and Moral Understanding of God

The following presentation relies on select texts and secondary literature which substantiate the claim that the Kantian concept of God and morality shares similarities with the Judaic one, which a christologically-inspired Hegelian world-view considered inadequate. In this first section we must rehearse, in a rather condensed form, what were Kant's basic criteria for metaphysical cognition, and how these criteria could accommodate concepts such as God, immortality, and freedom, so long as these are "beyond knowledge", but not if they are claimed to have also an empirical or historical value, namely the incarnate God.

In the *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics (PFM)*,⁶ Kant states that "metaphysical cognition must consist of nothing but a priori judgments." A priori judgments, that is, judgments independent of experience, are of two kinds: explicative and ampliative. Explicative, or analytical judgments, add nothing to our understanding of the concept; whereas ampliative, or synthetic judgments do. Kant illustrates the distinction with reference to the sentences, "all bodies are extended" (analytical), and "some bodies have weight," (synthetic); only the latter predicate "weight" goes beyond our accepted definition of a body and therefore adds to our understanding of what a body is. This small example highlights one of Kant's central metaphysical concerns, namely how to separate philosophy from the natural sciences by grounding synthetic judgments a priori. In response to Hume, who had questioned whether concepts could have any meaning apart from experience, Kant claimed one could have concepts which, though not derived from experience, could be nonetheless applied to it. The task of synthetic a priori judgments was to connect these concepts to the objects of experience. How this is possible is Kant's central concern in the *PFM*.

Metaphysics does not concern itself with objects of our senses but rather: "the occupation of reason merely with itself and the supposed knowledge of objects arising immediately from this brooding over its own concepts, without requiring experience or indeed being able to reach that knowledge through experience."⁷ Thus Kant distinguishes between "pure cognitions of understanding" (which relate to concepts given in experience) and "transcendent cognitions of reason" (which relate to objects not given in, or transcending, experience). The origin of the transcendental ideas lies in three syllogisms, psychological, cosmological, and theological. They are called syllogisms because they encompass the claims of pure reason to knowledge of itself; they are innately given in reason. Although these ideas are regulative, that is, without objective

⁶ For the condensed expository purposes in this section, the *Prolegomenon* is preferred to the more extended discussion of metaphysical cognition given in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

⁷ *PFM*, § 40.327.

validity, they can be used to order experience into a greater unity that has a bearing on man's highest ends:

Thus, the transcendental ideas serve, if not to instruct us positively, at least to destroy the impudent and restrictive assertions of materialism, of naturalism, and of fatalism, and thus to afford scope for the moral ideas beyond the field of speculation.⁸

A. The Idea of God

In outlining Kant's idea of God, the primary concern is not with the theoretical proofs which preoccupied him in the early stages of his career, but rather with God's moral function as a postulate of practical reason, an interest of his later years. Kant's idea of God, which along with freedom and immortality are the sole objects of metaphysics, is formulated as a regulative principle unifying and attributing an overall meaning to things empirically experienced. Although reason has its limits, hypothesising principles beyond those limits helps to legitimate what we can cognize within them. The moral life, Kant argues, would be impossible, if it did not presuppose a best world, a *summum bonum*. Underlying the *summum bonum* are the three postulates: immortality, freedom, and God. In the ethical realm, these three principles are necessary to legitimate the moral law. The belief in immortality makes it possible to approximate a pure moral disposition that would not be possible if restricted by a finite life. Freedom underlies and enforces the distinction between the realm of freedom and the realm of necessity, ensuring the autonomy of the will from inclination. Finally, God is the ultimate condition underlying the *summum bonum*, and consists of two principle characteristics: intelligence, i.e. that he acts according to rational conceptions of law; and will, i.e. his causality in accordance with these laws. As a postulate, the idea of God cannot be theoretically proven. Nonetheless, it plays a central role in practical reasoning by legitimating the possibility of moral perfection.

⁸ Ibid., § 60.363.

Insofar as God is postulated as a hypothetical *as if*, rather than an empirically existing entity, the function of God, like freedom and immortality, in Kant's metaphysics and morals, is a regulative rather than a constitutive principle.⁹ Without such a principle, we would not be able to explain the significance of our attempt to rationally appropriate the world:

The ideal of the highest Being is nothing else than a regulative principle of reason to regard all connection in the world as if it arose from an all-sufficient, necessary cause, in order, in the process of explaining the latter, to arrive at the rule of a systematic unity, necessitated by universal laws; it is not a being outside me, but merely a thought within me.

Because this ideal is beyond experience, it is not possible to assign predicates to it that are derived from sense experience. Nonetheless, through analogical thinking, we can define that Supreme Being in terms suitable for our needs although they do not give a precise understanding of what it exactly is.

Kant's idea of God has been challenged on a number of points. The most important is whether God, as an entity legitimating the "ought" of the categorical imperative, can simply be assumed as an intrinsic part of human reason. While this question raises issues central to Kant's moral philosophy as a whole, in the first instance it might be said with reference to our specific concerns, that a non-participatory and non-revelatory God implies speaking via a command, the "thou shalt" which bears a formulaic resemblance to the nameless Old Testament God speaking through the Mosaic law.

⁹ Kant's most specific discussion of regulative and constitutive principles occurs in a footnote in *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone (RLR)*, p. 65: "In general, if we limited our judgment to *regulative* principles, which content themselves with their own possible application to moral life, instead of aiming at *constitutive* principles of a knowledge of supersensible objects, insight into which, after all, is forever impossible to us, human wisdom would be better off in a great many ways, and there would be no breeding of a presumptive knowledge of that about which, in the last analysis, we know nothing at all."

Another common criticism is Kant's attribution of anthropomorphic qualities, intelligence and will, to a noumenal being which the mind cannot know. Some have resolved this difficulty with reference to Kant's distinction between *thinking* and *cognizing*, whereby one can think God as an intelligence, but not cognize him.¹⁰ The nuance is expressed in the case of all three postulates underlying the summum bonum through Kant's use of the *as if*. One needs to act as if one were immortal, as if one were free (of inclination), as if there were a God.

We can now summarise the principle points so far: 1) Kant's separation of categories (of understanding) and transcendental ideas (of reason) gives a substance and depth to the moral ideas which he considered missing in traditional materialism that could only derive these ideas from sense experience. This Kant sees as his fundamental contribution to metaphysical thinking; 2) The three transcendental ideas underlying moral behaviour, immortality, freedom, and God, are regulative principles that we follow *as if* they existed in reality; 3) God is deduced from the moral law and assigned the predicates, Supreme Intelligence and Will, to "bring the cognition of God as near as possible to the completeness indicated by the idea of God." 4) Although God cannot be theoretically proven, he has a practical function legitimating the possibility of moral autonomy; 5) The theoretical postulate of God can be made practical through the application of analogical thinking and the *as if* device.

¹⁰ See F. Ferré, "In Praise of Anthropomorphism," *IJPR*, 16 (1984): 203-212. Ferré still concedes that Kant's attribution of anthropomorphic qualities to God must allow for some flexibility: "The need to represent God somehow is practically pressing, forced by thinking in accordance with morality, and therefore a special analogical dispensation is allowed." F.E. England is more severe: "Kant's way of stating the nature of the inference from the primary fact of moral obligation to the Idea of God is extremely unsatisfactory." *Kant's Concept of God*, p. 179.

B. The Incarnate God

The fact that God cannot be theoretically known because it can not be deduced from any necessary, i.e. a priori, truth already suggests that Kant did not think much of either revelation or Jesus Christ. As the standard literature points out, neither the philosophy of religion nor the idea of Jesus Christ are particularly important to Kant's central concerns and should be seen primarily as a "confirmation and corollary to the content of the ethics."¹¹ Or, more precisely, Jesus Christ acts as a teaching aid for the masses of believers lacking the intellectual fortitude to grasp the truth of the moral idea. For the common man could not postulate a God to legitimate his moral behaviour without also postulating a human, moral example. Thus, although Kant cannot assign any empirical validity to the revelation of the incarnate God at some far-off time and place, he still believes it to serve a practical moral purpose. As for religion, it can only have meaning insofar as it has meaning for man, and it only has meaning for man insofar as it is deduced from a law which man gives himself. Religion is that law within us legitimated and sanctified by a highest being; it is "the recognition of all duties as divine commands."¹² Although morality does not require the idea of a higher being, it is helpful to recognise and do our duties as if they were divine commands which provides an "added force" to the law which we give ourselves.

¹¹ E. Cassirer, *Kant's Leben und Werk*, p. 407; See also, R. Kroner, *Von Kant bis Hegel*, pp. 216-217; K. Vorländer, *Immanuel Kant: Der Man und das Werk*, p. 173.

¹² *RLR*, p. 142.

In the *Groundings for the Metaphysics of Morals (GMM)*, Kant states explicitly that the incarnate God is deduced from the moral law and not vice versa:

Worse service cannot be rendered morality than that an attempt be made to derive it from examples. For every example of morality presented to me must itself first be judged according to principles of morality in order to see whether it is fit to serve as an original example, i.e. as a model. But in no way can it authoritatively furnish the concept of morality. Even the Holy One of the gospel must first be compared with our ideal of moral perfection before he is recognized as such. Even he says of himself, "Why do you call me (whom you see) good? None is good (the archetype of the good) except God only (whom you do not see)." ¹³

This passage provides one of the most explicit indications of Kant's attitudes towards the relationship between the Father God of traditional Judaic monotheism (and Kantian philosophy!) and the Son. The Holy One, the incarnate God, has no autonomous status as the causal agent of the moral law because its existence depends on a conformity to criteria of morality which we assign ourselves. These criteria may be disguised as, or legitimated by, God as a good and moral lawgiver. However, God only exists by virtue of our need to postulate a higher being as a regulative principle of reason. God is an internal thought, not an external being. Insofar as God's goodness is only our rational idea of moral perfection projected onto a higher being, the autonomy of the incarnate God as an example, however pure, of that goodness is significantly reduced. The relationship between God as goodness and its incarnation is made explicit when Kant answers the question: "In what sense is God good?":

Solely from the idea of moral perfection, which reason frames a priori and connects inseparably with the concept of a free will. Imitation has no place at all in moral matters. And examples serve only for encouragement, i.e.,...they make visible what the practical rule expresses more generally. But examples can never justify us in setting aside their true original [model], which lies in reason, and letting ourselves be guided by them. ¹⁴

¹³ *GMM*, pp. 20-21.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

This making visible of what the practical rule expresses more generally reveals how the incarnate God is configured morally without assigning it the status of a mediating concept between Man and God, one which makes freedom, God and immortality in some sense empirically valid. Rather it is made into a construct which humans believe in as long as they cannot understand the general principles of practical reasoning without such interpretive guidance.

The personification of God allows us to represent to ourselves a practical, moral ideal in a humanly comprehensible form. However, the relationship between abstract criteria (that is, predicates attached to God as lawgiver, the perfectly moral world) and their personification in Jesus is not the relationship between an idea and its objective reality. In Kant, neither God nor its incarnation are ideas which have no empirical validity. As a result, a concept of the historical Christ as the incarnate God, as the objective living reality of an abstract postulate, is not particularly necessary. In fact, it would only complicate matters. For if we are to conceive of the "ideal of a humanity pleasing to God" by reason alone, then such a conception would be discredited if it had to rely on a precedent or model in the past. While such a view makes sense within the context of Kant's efforts to autonomise reason, he appears not to do justice to the ontological value of the historical precedent in Christianity, the fact that God's assumption of an historical and human form expresses his love and communion with man. Kant's argument that a pure faith of unassisted reason is superior to an historical faith because the latter is largely restricted to its immediate historical context, while consistent with his criteria for knowledge, neglects the significance of the living historicity of Jesus Christ as opposed to an abstract idea.¹⁵ This neglect highlights the

¹⁵ For further arguments against Kant's view here, see A. Wood, "Kant's Deism," *Kant's Philosophy of Religion Reconsidered*, pp. 13-15. However, Wood appropriately claims that Kant's main point in invalidating the historical value of the revelation is that (p.15)," the morally required cannot extend beyond what a rational being might justifiably be convinced of, and no rational being could ever be justifiably convinced of any claim to supernatural revelation."

distance in Kant's philosophy as a whole between metaphysical postulates of reason such as freedom, God and immortality, and objective reality.

The most detailed discussion of the Son of God occurs in a section of *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone (RLR)* entitled, "The Personified Idea of the Good Principle." The Son of God is formulated as a representation of a morally perfect human being pleasing to God. It is an ideal which we should seek to emulate:

Now it is our universal duty as men to elevate ourselves to this ideal of moral perfection, that is, to this archetype of the moral disposition in all its purity and for this the idea itself, which reason presents to us for our zealous emulation, can give us power.¹⁶

In introducing this section, Kant paraphrases and interprets the opening lines of the Johannine gospel ("In the beginning was the Word...") to emphasise that the archetype of the moral disposition predates the supposed descent of that archetype into human form. To a certain extent, this makes the actual historical appearance of Jesus Christ superfluous: "We need...no empirical example to make the idea of a person morally well-pleasing to God our archetype; this idea as an archetype is already present in reason."¹⁷

Furthermore, only those aspects of the archetype are morally instructive which conform to what reason could achieve without it. Thus, to base one's belief in Jesus Christ on miracles and other events beyond the grasp of reason is a sign of "moral unbelief," of the lack of faith in the ability of reason itself to legitimate the perfect moral disposition. So, why is the archetype necessary at all? Because of the human need to schematize, to make the supersensible intelligible through analogical reference to something sensible:

¹⁶ *RLR*, p. 54.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

It is indeed a limitation of human reason...that we can conceive of no considerable moral worth in the actions of a personal being without representing that person, or his manifestation in human guise. This is not to assert that such worth is in itself so conditioned, but merely that we must always resort to some analogy to natural existences to render the supersensible qualities intelligible to ourselves.¹⁸

Effectively, Kant's Son of God is only a metaphor for the moral ought which we present to ourselves as a model of ideal behaviour. It represents 'our own highest maxim,' to act in accordance with the law within, rather than in and through an external being no matter how traditionally sacred.¹⁹ Even though there is an infinite gap between our own evil and this maxim, we should pursue it, "as being judged by him who knows the heart...as a completed whole," and we shall be rewarded for our efforts: "Thus may man, notwithstanding his permanent deficiency, yet expect to be *essentially* well-pleasing to God."²⁰ Kant makes clear that this disposition, i.e. doing as if we are judged by God, should in no way compensate for our own imperfect allegiance to duty. We should not rely on the love or forgiveness of God in determining moral behaviour. Nor should we rely on "expiations, be they penances or ceremonies," or "invocations or expressions of praise (not even those appealing to the ideal of the vicarious Son of God),"²¹ to absolve us of the responsibility of acting in accordance with the law. Even on our deathbed, we should not appeal to formal ceremonies to relieve us from the "reproaches of conscience," but rather do what good we can still do to compensate for or dilute our past evil.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 60.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 61.

²¹ Ibid., p. 71.

Insofar as nothing has moral worth except our disposition and duty to act in accordance with the highest maxim, the rites and rituals of institutional religion contribute little to this project: "Dogmas tell us only what God has done to help us see our frailty in seeking justification before Him, whereas the moral law tells us what we must do to make ourselves worthy of justification."²² The becoming-man of God, *Menschwerdung Gottes*, has no metaphysical content in Kant but refers to "becoming a man well-pleasing to God," in terms of individual moral choices made in accordance with the highest maxim.²³ The reduction of Christ to a moral example accommodates this individual "becoming well-pleasing to God" only in the sense that Christ symbolises "the demand within each of us to have a holy will- that is, to will duty for its own sake."²⁴ It may be that Kant sought to salvage Jesus Christ from the more radical atheistic strand of the Enlightenment by showing his utility for practical reason as an exemplary moral teacher.²⁵ Nonetheless, insofar as the content of that teaching pre-exists his historical incarnation, he does not appear to be a particularly necessary being. Because Kant dismisses the actual historicity of incarnation, and the metaphysical dimension of God's act of self-objectification given therein, and reduces Jesus Christ to a moral exemplar and instructor, there is little to distinguish Kant's position from the Judaic. Although Kant separates himself from Judaism by the fact that the latter obeys an external rather than

²² In a letter to J.C. Lavater, April 28, 1775, *Kant: Philosophical Correspondence, 1759-99*, p. 80.

²³ *RLR*, p. 70.

²⁴ See D. Savage, "Kant's Rejection of Divine Revelation and his Theory of Radical Evil," *Kant's Philosophy of Religion Reconsidered*, ed. A. Wood, p. 73.

²⁵ A view taken by V.A. McCarthy, "Christus as Chrestus," p.189.

an internal law, nonetheless the allegorical rendering of divine Sonship is suggestive of Old Testament inclinations which are reinforced in his moral philosophy, and particularly, the subordination of love to "respect for the law."

C. Respect and Love

In the preface to the *GMM*, Kant asserts the need for a moral science grounded in a priori reason and thereby free of confusing and contradictory empirical evidence: "for the metaphysics of morals has to investigate the idea and principles of a possible pure will and not the actions and conditions of human volition as such." ²⁶ It is the task of reason, as the determining ground of the will : " to produce a will which is not merely good as a means to some further end, but is good in itself

(§396)." While the will arbitrates between human reason and inclination, the pure will, for it to be fully autonomous, must be based on reason alone. The intrinsic goodness of the will as a product of reason separates it from a will used as a means towards some other end which places it in the service of natural inclinations or desire. Therefore, the moral worth of particular actions depends on "the principle of volition according to which, without regard to any objects of the faculty of desire, the action has been done."²⁷ Kant here prepares the groundwork for deriving moral principles from a law of pure reason alone, the categorical imperative. And further, there must be some motive or force which inclines the subject toward obedience to this imperative. This impulse Kant calls duty: "the necessity of an action done out of respect for the law." ²⁸ The imperative of duty binds the subject to uphold its own self-determined law.

²⁶ *GMM*, p.4.

²⁷ *PFM*, Preface.

²⁸ *GMM*, p. 13.

One of the implications of the doctrine of autonomy which later critics would draw is that the autonomous self becomes dominated by its rational faculty. It therefore makes it difficult to see how Kant can retain a non-dichotomous conception of the person, i.e. one which identifies the idealised rationalised faculty with the empirical self.²⁹ While this does not imply that Kant defines respect as mere submission to the law, nevertheless, it is helpful to point out the potential for this interpretation in order to better understand how later associations between Kantian philosophy and Judaism often rested on the implicit austerity and legalism given in such a definition.

While this legacy may or may not emanate from the core of Kant's own thinking, it is a fact that the supreme moral law, the universalizable "ought" principle must exclude natural inclinations which by their nature are particular and plural:

Now an action done from duty must altogether exclude the influence of inclination and therewith every object of the will. Hence, there is nothing left that can determine the will except objectively, the law, and subjectively pure respect for this practical law, i.e. the will can be subjectively determined by the maxim that I should follow such a law even if all my inclinations are thereby thwarted.³⁰

This subjective principle, which Kant explains in objective terms, as "pure respect," is implicitly associated with *feeling*, insofar as respect is formulated as an inclination to duty. What Kant seems to be saying is that, while respect for the law is necessary to explain duty, at the same time, it also seems like a feeling or compulsion and therefore, (consistent with his principles), is of no moral value. He tries to address this problem by making respect a uniquely noumenal feeling:

²⁹ Kroner formulates this point as a fundamental inadequacy of Kant's moral thought, *Von Kant bis Hegel*, Vorwort p.IX: "Is not the ethically willing and acting agent at once empirical and rational, and only through this identity a genuine self? Kant did not pay enough attention to this problem."

³⁰ *GMM*, p. 13.

But even though respect is a feeling, it is not one received through any outside influence but is, rather, one that is self-produced by means of a rational concept; hence, it is specifically different from all feeling of the first kind, which can all be reduced to inclination or fear. What I recognise immediately as a law for me, I recognize with respect; this means merely the consciousness of the subordination of my will to a law without the mediation of other influences upon my sense. The immediate determination of the will by the law, and the consciousness thereof, is called respect, which is hence regarded as the effect of the law upon the subject and not as the cause of the law.³¹

He develops the argument further by stating that, while respect is neither fear nor inclination, it is similar to both in the way it makes the law its object. It resembles fear as a subjection to an external law, and inclination in the sense of a law self-imposed. Kant tries to reconcile respect to its feeling content without compromising its rational base by defining it as self-produced by reason. Or as refined in the *Critique of Practical Reason*:

Respect for the moral law, therefore, is a feeling produced by an intellectual cause, and this feeling is the only one which we can know completely a priori and the necessity of which we can discern.³²

A system whereby moral actions are committed by a self-motivated respect for the law, rather than under the compulsion of inclination, is more faithful to his idea of autonomy than if the self were enslaved to feelings beyond its control. It is, of course, the assumption that inclination entails enslavement or submission that critics have often objected to. He partially mutes this dissent by appropriating "beneficent feelings", purged of their irrational and emotional content, under a category of duty or respect for the law. This theme is taken up in the treatment of love.

³¹ Ibid., p. 14.

³² *Critique of Practical Reason*, Beck, ed. pp. 181-182. Kant's most extended discussion of respect appears under the heading, "Incentives of Pure Practical Reasoning." In trying to analyse how respect can be both a rational recognition of the law and a feeling, some commentators have sub-divided it into intellectual and affective aspects. The intellectual aspect of respect concerns recognising the authority of the law based on practical reasoning; the affective aspect, i.e. feeling aspect of respect, is the "experience of constraints which the Moral Law imposes on our inclinations."

In Kantian terms, the feeling of love is not required for moral actions; rather, love, if called at all into service, usually acts as an emotional complement to actions performed out of respect for the law. Actions done out of duty are uniformly better than those done from inclination. Even actions towards the general goal of happiness, which consists of "all inclinations combined into a sum total," only have moral worth when performed out of duty, not inclination.³³ The consistency of Kant's approach becomes clear when he argues that the moral worth of Christian love depends on its being motivated by duty:

Undoubtedly in this way also are to be understood those passages of Scripture which command us to love our neighbour and even our enemy. For love as an inclination cannot be commanded, but beneficence from duty when no inclination impels us and even when natural and unconquerable aversion opposes such beneficence, is practical, and not pathological, love. Such love resides in the will and not in the propensities of feeling, in principles of action and not in tender sympathy; and only this practical love can be commanded.³⁴

In other words, practical love or beneficence from duty is nothing other than respect for the law. Kant's use of the language of command reinforces the impression of an intrapersonal authoritarianism whereby the will is understood as an ideal self counterposed to the self of inclination. The practical love that resides in the will is duty-bound, a commanded love. This is because, as an ought, it springs from an ideal self which rules over the self of inclination. Kant may be right in claiming that love is fully practical only when commanded. Furthermore, his speculation over the intent of the Scriptures in these terms suggests how a commanded love could be non-contradictory in

³³ Thomas Hill claims that Kant's system does make room for superogatory acts but only as a function of "principles of wider imperfect duty." As a motive for consistent moral behaviour this amounts to an indefinite "sometimes", rather than a definite "always" or "never". "Kant on Imperfect Duty and Superogation," *KS*, 62 (1971): 55-76. Marcia Baron, "Kantian ethics and Superogation," *JPh* (May 1987): 237-262, also accounts for Kant's failure to separately categorise superogatory acts by the fact that they can more or less be accommodated in his framework of perfect and imperfect duties. For a criticism of Kant's account of superogatory acts as moral self-indulgence, see D. Heyd, "Beyond the Call of Duty," *KS*, 71 (1980): 308-324.

³⁴ *GMM*, p. 12.

accordance with Kantian dictates. Yet, it is far removed from the Christian understanding of the commandment of love as given, e.g., in John 15:12 in which it refers not to an action in accordance with a specific law but rather to the existential bond between the Father and Son and the community of faith.³⁵ Thus, the nature of obedience arises not out of an individual and rational response to a specific duty but rather is embodied in the community itself. Therefore, in spite of Kant's New Testament reference to loving thine enemy, his treatment of commanded love is more inclined toward Old Testament criteria of duty and respect for the law.³⁶ This is confirmed by the description of determinants of the will that follows the passage cited above. Kant separates these determinants into objective and subjective. The objective is the law, the subjective is respect for the law. Because there is no place for love in the subjective category, we are led to believe that commanded love is none other than respect. The Kantian Old Testament interpretation postulates a commanded love residing in a codified will, self-legislating only in a formal sense. Kant's claim that respect is a feeling, however much a self-willed one, cannot ignore the fact that its object, the law, is self-imposed as a moral ought; and, since it clashes with the current state of the will, it must be considered as something particularly alien to inner harmony of the moral agent.³⁷

³⁵ See C.K.Barrett, *The Gospel According to John*, p. 476.

³⁶ See also Kroner, (*Von Kant bis Hegel*, p.214) who notes Kant's "very artificial and contrived formulation " of Jesus' commandment of love.

³⁷ Although it is beyond our specific consideration here, the debate over love as a valid motivational factor in moral reasoning has been revived by feminist philosophers criticising the rationalist austerity of Kant's system as a whole. The implication that feminist critics draw is that community ties endanger self-determination and impartiality in the face of moral choices and competing self-interests. What is particularly feminist in denouncing separation from the community is given particularly in the work of Carol Gilligan. Her basic point is that any system of justice or moral development, such as in Kohlberg or Rawls based on securing individual rights, derives from a male-dominated

The Kantian neglect of feeling and the dualistic conception of human nature provided much of the ammunition for subsequent critics such as Schiller,³⁸ Schleiermacher, Fichte, Schelling. Unlike Kant who began as a mathematician and turned to religious and aesthetic questions towards the end of his life, the immediate post-Kantian environment consisted of young poets and theology students, such as Hegel and Schelling, who later turned to philosophy. They considered that a universalistic and rational morality had to be complemented by the creative, aesthetic spirit and a more organic idea of community.

At this point, attention can be drawn to a number of Hegel's objections to Kant's idea of God which will be taken up more fully in subsequent chapters. Firstly, he believes that cognition of God is possible. While this has something to do with Hegel's epistemological and metaphysical departures from Kant, most simply, it is based on the

world-view. She claims that feeling communal and self-sacrificial is central to female identity and supplements those attributes that practical reason bring to moral judgment. Based on the female experience, human autonomy signifies something in addition to practical reasoning: self-negation and the capacity to seek connections with and care for others. A good summary of the feminist critique of Kant is provided by Sally Sedgwick: "What the feminist critique challenges is not the importance of human judgment and self-determination, but their supposed independence from and priority over the affective side of our nature." p. 73. "Can Kant's Ethics Survive the Feminist Critique?" *PPQ*, 71 (March 1990): 60-79.

³⁸ Although professing a strong admiration for Kant, Schiller satirised his doctrine of virtue in the form of a mock dialogue:

--- "Gladly I serve my friends, but also I do it with pleasure. Hence I am plagued with doubts that I am not a virtuous person..."

--- "Sure your response is to try to despise them entirely, and then with aversion do what your duty enjoins you." This exchange articulates to such an extent what many have considered wrong with Kant's moral philosophy, that it has been elevated to a critical approach under the title "The Schiller's Joke Objection," in the scholarly literature. Cited in R. Galvin, "Does Kant's Psychology of Morality Need Basic Revision," *MIND*, 100 (April 1991): 228.

idea that religion and philosophy both have God as their object. If religion bases human redemption on the cognition of God through revelation, then philosophy, as spirit, must likewise have such cognition. Secondly, Hegel's God reveals himself actively and historically, whereas for Kant, God is a postulate contrived to validate the individual pursuit of moral autonomy. Thirdly, for the early Hegel, love is construed as recognition of oneself in the other. This intersubjective aspect makes it out to be an independent category of experience, rather than an impulse subordinated to respect. The juxtaposition between Judaism and the moral law on the one hand, with Christianity and love on the other, in the Frankfurt essay, "The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate," represents in a simplified form what Hegel more explicitly elaborates in his later system. As such, the Frankfurt essay, which will be treated in more detail in the next chapter, presents Hegel's first explicit attack on Kantian morality. Fourthly, Hegel's God is mediated to man through the individual's communion with the concretised universal of ethical life, whereas for Kant it is mediated via the individuals communion with that which is universal in him, namely the moral law.³⁹ Whereas Kant, denying the theoretical

³⁹ Insofar as Hegel does not address, in his early theological writings, the more intersubjective morality formulated by Kant in terms of "sensus communis" in the *Critique of Judgment*, the argument formulated there is not considered relevant to this presentation. It may be that Hegel, by relying solely on the *GMM*, and *The Metaphysics of Morals*, over-emphasised the rigid individualistic character of Kant's moral thought. However, it is not our purpose to adjudicate on the validity of Hegel's critique. Rather it is to survey the elements of Kant's moral thought that formed the basis of Hegel's critical departure. Nonetheless, insofar as "the sensus communis" has become a basis for a communitarian reinterpretation of his political thought, most notably by Hannah Arendt (*Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, ed. by R. Beiner) we can briefly review its main points here. Sensus communis or *Gemeinsinn* is based on a shared communicative ability given in speech. It is defined by Kant in the *Critique of Judgment* (§ 40) as: "a faculty of judgment which in its reflection takes account (a priori of the mode of representation of all other men in thought), in order, as it were, to compare its judgment with the collective reason of humanity." The faculty of judgment departs from the self-legislating autonomy of practical reasoning by grounding itself in a paradigm of shared experience, the sensus communis (§ 41): "we cannot escape from regarding taste as a

proofs of God, seeks his relation to objective reality in terms of a postulate of practical reason, Hegel seeks to bridge that distance in terms of the interpenetration of a metaphysical Absolute and history as presented in the incarnation.⁴⁰

II. The Judaeo-Kantian Paradigm

The previous section has attempted to illuminate components of Kant's thought which not only bear a relationship to certain Old Testament ethical and theological ideas, but also which found favour among German Jewish philosophers. It was, after all, often these philosophers who called for the return to Kant, for the return to sobriety, pragmatism, and logical rigour, following the romanticist national fantasies,

faculty for judging everything in respect of which we can communicate our feeling to all other men, and, so as a means of furthering that which everyone's natural inclination desires." It is, however, not clear to what extent Kant would have been willing to transfer this form of communication to the moral or political realm. Arendt herself pointed out that Kant himself did not consider that the *Critique of Judgement* belonged to political philosophy. (as noted by R. Beiner, in his "Interpretive Essay," in Arendt's work cited above, p. 141).

⁴⁰ A similar view has been put forward by Ernst Bloch, *Natural Law and Human Justice*, p. 162: "For Kant of course the 'primacy of reason' so conceived is only a postulated reason, not a real active reason, because there is in Kant the absence of a concept of history that could have overcome the dualism between experience and necessity and the realm of freedom. Hegel created this concept of history in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, as a dialectically progressive revelation of depth, of that depth which is spontaneity itself and is not satisfied by its simple externalisation or the reality of dualistic experience. Rather, this externalisation appears as part of history, as the history of the mediation of the self with its content; but the freedom of the children of God- the being-for-itself of the self- appears as the goal in becoming...Being-for-itself thus leads into the principal idea of Christian-religious freedom: God became man. Substance is not an object up on high or something alien that initiates fear and fate; rather substance is the subject."

and Hegelian system-building of the first half of the 19th century. As such, the Judaeo-Kantian paradigm can be said to represent a type of recurring metaphor for the troubled legacy of the Enlightenment in Germany. Adorno and Horkheimer's speculation that "the dissolution of idol worship is a consequence of the interdiction on mythology enacted in Jewish monotheism and carried out by its secularised form, the Enlightenment," is not fixed to the late 18th century alone. For, despite the fact that Kant worked within a Christian cultural context, his endorsement of liberal values of individualism, cosmopolitanism, and rationalism harmonised him with a Judaic world-view throughout Germany's experience of modernity.

However, equally, the Judaeo-Kantian paradigm had a negative side. From Hegel to Marx, as well as for countless other Christian conservatives and socialists, Judaeo-Kantianism formed the antithetical constant by which various forms of organic, intersubjective or communitarian unity defined themselves. As summarised by Rürup: "Anti-semitism is sociologically and ideologically a protest movement against the idea of 1789, against the liberal political and social order and the capitalist order associated with it."⁴¹ Despite the vast literature on German anti-semitism, the philosophical dimension of that protest against the Enlightenment has not received sufficient attention.⁴² In the context of the argument advanced here, namely that the Christian

⁴¹ See R. Rürup, *Emanzipation und Antisemitismus: Studien zur Judenfrage der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, p. 106.

⁴² On the philosophical dimension of German anti-Judaism, see Adorno/Horkheimer, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, "Elements of Anti-semitism,: The Limits of Enlightenment" pp. 168-208, and on Enlightenment morality and its bearing on some Judaic themes, "Juliette or Enlightenment and Morality," pp. 81-119; Jean-Francois Lyotard, *Heidegger et "les Juifs,"*; on the affinity of Jewish philosophy for Kantian philosophy see J. Guttman, *Die Philosophie des Judentums*; H. Liebeschütz, *Von Georg*

secularisation thematic must define itself vis à vis an opposing paradigm, that dimension takes on greater relevance. Three historico-philosophical phenomena can be identified which help to define it in its particularly German context.

The first phenomenon, which can be called pure Judaeo-Kantianism, concerns the affinity of German Jewish philosophers for Kantian thought.⁴³ Kant was endorsed by Enlightened Jews because the ideas of a non-immanentist God, universal tolerance, and respect before the law corresponded to their own values and their need to shed the pariah status associated with Orthodox Jewry. This programme furthered particularly by Moses Mendelssohn had, however, certain negative consequences. Mendelssohn made a fundamental point about Judaism that would suffer a similar fate to Kant's ideas in the

Simmel zu Franz Rosenzweig; J. Habermas, "The German Idealism of the Jewish Philosophers," in *Philosophical-Political Profiles*, pp. 21-43.

Scholars of anti-semitism tend to focus more on the cultural climate of racism within a Christian secularisation thematic. See, for example, Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction*, pp. 63-73 and "Judaism and Christianity against the background of modern secularism," in *Emancipation and Assimilation*, pp. 111-127; Book length treatment would include Rürup, *Revolution und Antisemitismus*; Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction*; Rose, *Revolutionary Anti-semitism from Kant to Wagner*. Rose's richly argued study is unfortunately, and fundamentally, compromised by an emphasis on Kant's biographical antisemitism at the expense of more systematic philosophical affinities between Kant and German Jewish intellectuals. This neglect of certain critical facts of German philosophical culture enables him to trace the unlikely lineage from Kant to Wagner; a recent focus on the Hegelian dimension of philosophical anti-Judaism can be found in R. Sonnenschmidt, "Zum philosophischen Antisemitismus bei G.W.F. Hegel," *ZRG*, 4 (1992): 289 -301. Because "anti-Judaism" has a broader interpretive scope than "anti-semitism," which is restricted to racial attitudes, it is the preferred usage in our study.

⁴³ See Habermas, "The German Idealism of the Jewish Philosophers," p.27: "Kant's attractiveness to the Jewish mind is naturally to be explained first of all by the way he unfolded the free attitude of criticism based on rational belief and of cosmopolitan humanity into its most clairvoyant and authentic shape (aside from Goethe). Kant's humanism influenced the convivial social interchange assimilation without insult that had its moment in the salons of Berlin around the turn of the nineteenth century."

face of the romantic critique; namely, that the Jewish religion made no claims which could not be verified within the bounds of reason in that the regulative principle of its law was the only guiding characteristic.⁴⁴ It is less important whether or not this presented an accurate picture of Judaism (and many orthodox rabbis at the time claimed it did not) because Mendelsohn was considered the most influential spokesman of Judaism by non-Jewish intellectuals at the time. Throughout the 19th century, the attraction of Kant and neo-Kantianism for Jewish intellectuals working in the secular philosophical idiom, from Moses Mendelsohn, through Salomon Ludwig Steinheim and Moritz Lazarus to Hermann Cohen,⁴⁵ is reflected in the sense that God as a postulate legitimating a rational and moral law was never problematic from the standpoint of their own Jewish faith. Nor, for that matter, was it problematic to endorse other Kantian values such as individualism, political liberalism, tolerance and cosmopolitanism, for they were the values which the Enlightened Jews symbolically bore. As aptly summarised by Sorkin: "The enduring contribution of German-Jewish intellectuals lay in their attempt to temper nationalism with the ideal of *Bildung* in order to build a humane community."⁴⁶

While Kantian ethical autonomy provided a philosophical basis for Jewish self-understanding, it was equally associated in the writings of the romantic, Hegelian, and early socialist movement - with all that was wrong with the Enlightenment. A classic

⁴⁴ See J. Guttman, *Die Philosophie des Judentums*, pp. 303-317.

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 337- 362.

⁴⁶ D. Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry*, p. 177.

expression of this counter Enlightenment sentiment is provided by the historian Ernst Troeltsch:

Those who believe in an eternal and divine Law of Nature, the Equality of man, and a sense of Unity pervading mankind, and who finds the essence of Humanity in these things, cannot but regard the German doctrine as a curious mixture of mysticism and brutality. Those who take an opposite view- who see in history an ever moving stream, which throws up unique individualities as it moves, and is always shaping individual structure on the basis of a law which is always new-are bound to consider the west European world of ideas as a world of cold rationalism and equalitarian atomism, a world of superficiality and Pharisaism.⁴⁷

The second phenomenon is thus the secularisation of the tension between Christo-Germanic and Judaic world-views. Firstly, the 19th century emphasis on history and Hegelian historiosophy hierarchised civilisations in terms of stages progressing toward some ideal of humanity. Therefore, Judaism, as historically prior, was considered also theoretically inferior, to Christianity.⁴⁸ Secondly, the neo-Pauline formulation of love as the fulfilment of the law which, when adopted and elaborated by Hegel, came to represent a conflict between love as intersubjectivity, i.e. the recognition of the self in the other, and law as obedience to a self-legislated moral ought. As stated in Chapter 1, Hegel's neo-Pauline formulation from the early theology reappears in the *Philosophy of Right*, in the tension between the morality of civil society (law) and the ethical life of the

⁴⁷ E. Troeltsch from "The Ideas of Natural Law and Humanity in World Politics," cited in Lukes, *Individualism*, p. 70.

⁴⁸ This view was challenged by the Hegelian Jewish philosopher Nachman Krochmal in *A Guide to the Perplexed of Our Time* (1851). Krochmal argued, in a Hegelian vein, that the Jews were the bearers of absolute universality because they contributed the concept of monotheism to the world. Therefore, contrary to what Hegel had argued, the Judaic contribution could not be historiosophically superseded as the Hellenic and Romanic periods were, whose concepts were limited to a particularistic world-view. See S. Avineri's essay on Krochmal, in *The Making of Modern Zionism*, pp. 14-22.

state (love). Thirdly, the tension between predicates assigned to the secularised Christian worldview and those assigned to the secularised Judaic worldview parallels the romanticist conflict with the Enlightenment. Thus, Christian socialism, conservatism, and Hegelianism, all shared, to a certain extent, the conceptual baggage that juxtaposed the brotherly love of Christianity with the bourgeois egoism associated with Judaeo-Kantianism.⁴⁹

It can be argued that, underlying all the forms which this secularisation took, there was a culture of negative attitudes toward Judaism and its Enlightenment correlates adapted to, and embodied in, changing social and historical forms. From the viewpoint of one Jewish intellectual historian, the so-called Christian principles were used as polemical metaphors to fortify the collective psychology of exclusion. As Katz argues:

For the purpose of excluding Jews, it did not make much difference how watered down these Christian notions were. As long as they retained some resemblance to the original Christian concepts, they served to exclude or could be used as a means for excluding Jews from being a part of Christian society.⁵⁰

One could go further and say that the criteria of exclusivity had to adapt to a sequence of historical interpretive categories: from religious, to philosophical, to socio-political, and lastly, biological. The philosophical category concerns most fundamentally a tension between alienation and freedom in the context of a secularisation thematic. As aptly summarised by Rose:

⁴⁹ The polemical phraseology consisted of such juxtapositions as "jüdische-französische Liberalismus" against "instinktartige, natürliche Demokratie und Menschenliebe" or "asiatisch demokratisch" against "volkstümlich germanisch." see E. Sterling, *Judenhass: die Anfänge des politischen Antisemitismus in Deutschland*, p. 119.

⁵⁰ J. Katz, *Out of the Ghetto: The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770-1870*, p. 87.

The German philosophical revolution equipped this notion (of ethnic prejudice) with a theoretical framework which held that the Jews were not only ethnically "apart" from other people, but somehow morally "against humanity" because they suffered from a defect of truly human moral feelings, notably love and freedom. The Jews were a people that needed still to be "redeemed into full humanity" by emancipation or assimilation; if this gentle dissolution of Judaism were not thought feasible, then harder measures were recommended. In both cases, the "destruction of Judaism" was the objective.⁵¹

This formula follows the following pattern: The Jews denied the Son of God, thereby denying the true path to human or, in this case, German emancipation. As such the secularisation of Christianity in terms of a variety of philosophical reformulations does not simply generate its new form out of itself. Rather it defines itself vis à vis an Other, an alternate ontology or world-view, in this case, the Judaeo-Kantian one which impedes the progress toward German emancipation.

If there is any truth to this darker subtext, then the third historico-philosophical phenomenon would have to concern the tragedy of the German Jews and the full renunciation of Enlightenment values in the Nazi period. While the subject is beyond the purview of the 19th century focus of this thesis, the Holocaust cannot but be projected back onto one aspect of the secularisation problematic that informs it. For it could be argued that, unlike other countries where anti-semitism was more political or sociological in nature, as either a part of lower class racism or upper class prejudice, the tragedy of the Jews in Germany has a more metaphysical character. This can be seen in Heidegger's transition from an individualist to a collectivist formulation of Dasein,⁵² the German

⁵¹ Rose, pp. xvi-xvii.

⁵² Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, p. 157. On the change in Heidegger's thought after 1933, Habermas notes, p. 157: "Whereas earlier the ontology was rooted ontically in the existence of the individual in the lifeworld, now Heidegger singles out the historical existence of a nation yoked together by the Führer into a collective will as the locale in which Dasein's authentic capacity to be whole is to be decided."

Blut und Boden mythology as opposed to the "rootless cosmopolitanism" of Judaic liberalism, and, most bizarrely, in the Hitlerian Gospel reading that made Jesus into a hero against Jewish capitalism.⁵³ Whether Nazi ideology can be seen as a perversion of an incarnationist metaphysics, or more simply the use of Christian motifs as populist propaganda, there is an eerie abstractness that threads its way through the history of German anti-semitism. Insofar as the German idea of freedom was formulated as a *dialectical Becoming* rather than an *ontologically given variable* in terms of what is innate in man and society, that freedom could only be realised by an equally grand Overcoming. The obstacle as well as the end were presented as equal partners in conflict. Alienation and Freedom became metaphysical absolutes in conflict which sought embodiments in historical categories .

Arguably, the Jewish fate was sealed when the criteria of alienation switched from the principles of bourgeois liberal to a biological status which the Jew could do nothing about. For the growth of secularism, and consequent shift from the distinction between Christian and Jew into one between German and Jew, made conversion to Christianity an increasingly meaningless prerequisite for assimilation.⁵⁴ While it would be difficult to prove systematically, it appears this neo-primitive principle of exclusion combined with modern science is related to the philosophical manner in which German-Jewish relations were secularised. The idea of freedom in terms of an Overcoming of the alienation represented by the Jews, the "Deniers of the Son of God," made the emancipation of society (from Jewry) an all too sinister project. As expressed by the Nazi-sympathetic writer Jünger: "...it becomes increasingly impossible for the Jews to entertain even the slightest delusion that they can be Germans in Germany; they are faced with their final alternatives...either to be Jewish or not to be."⁵⁵

⁵³ While the Nazi religious ideology is grounded more in Germanic mythology than Christianity, Hitler appropriated and distorted the traditional New Testament critique of Judaism: "The Galilean wanted to free his Galilean land from the Jews, he directed his teachings against Jewish capitalism, and so the Jews killed him." Cited in E. Röhm and J. Thierfelder, *Juden-Christen-Deutsche*, Vol. 1, p. 67.

⁵⁴ W. Mosse, *The German-Jewish Economic Elite: 1820-1935*, p. 39.

⁵⁵ Cited in Habermas, "The German Idealism of the Jewish Philosophers," p. 22.

Conclusion

The central concern has been to define the philosophical culture that anticipates the speculative appropriation of the incarnate God by Hegel and passed on to Marx. The broad historical philosophical phenomena outlined above- pure Judaeo-Kantian, and the simultaneous secularisation of Christianity and anti-Judaism, and the tension between alienation and freedom, a perverted strand of which potentially leads to an explanation of the Holocaust- comprise some of the elements of that culture. Nonetheless, the formulation of the Judaeo-Kantian paradigm might unsettle on two scores which should be addressed before proceeding further. Firstly, it could be argued that any philosophical affinity established between Kant and Judaism ignores Kant's negative attitude toward the Jewish religion expressed most explicitly in the *Anthropology*. There, Judaism is described as an immoral and unfree national religion because it enslaves itself to a law which is *not* self-imposed. Rather, it is imposed by an alien God outside rational man.⁵⁶ This raises a question expressed by Rose: "How is it possible to understand the apparent contradiction between Kant's crude remarks in his writings against Jews and Judaism, and his vision of a universal peace and a just society where the Jew would be welcome?"⁵⁷

The first challenge has been taken up in both negative and positive terms of how Kant was perceived by his German and Jewish philosophical successors. Hegel's associated Kant and Judaism negatively in terms of the implicit subservience to a self-legislated moral ought. This then developed to a juxtaposition between the morality implicit in bourgeois civil society, and the intersubjective recognition of oneself in the other provided by the ethical life. The positive association concerns the role Kantian ethics and the intellectualist conception of God played in establishing a rational understanding of Jewish religion. Although this relationship is not particularly significant for the present discussion, it reflects the extent to which the Jewish association with

⁵⁶ For a defense of Judaism against Kant's critique, see M. Sokol, "The Autonomy of Reason, Revealed Morality, and Jewish Law," *RS*, 22 (1986): 423-437.

⁵⁷ Rose, p. 93.

Kantian philosophy was not merely Hegel's early polemic, or a device of anti-liberal propaganda, but rather, had its roots in certain shared central tenets which are affirmed by the Jewish philosophers themselves. Thus, the primary concern has been the convergence of Judaism and Kantianism in terms of a set of values: individualism, the sanctity of private property, the transcendent nature of the Father God, religious or metaphysical, and a non-sensual moralism.⁵⁸

Secondly, it could be argued that, although there might be such an affinity between Judaism and Kant, if it is designed to contrast their abstract individualism and atomistic character in preparation for Hegel and Marx's respective communitarian and socialist critique, then this does not do justice to Kant (or Judaism) and revives a scholarly debate which to a certain extent is already passé.⁵⁹ The second point is of

⁵⁸ Again this characterisation of Judaism is affirmed from within and from without. From within, see E. Rivkin, "Judaism's Historical Response to Economic and Social and Political Systems," in *Religion, Economics and Social Thought*, pp. 375- 387. Rivkin lays stress on the central role of the individual in the Hebrew bible as being largely due to the need to seek expiation of personal guilt. As a result, one was required to take responsibility for one's acts, a feeling heightened by the knowledge that there was only one God as the Father of each and every individual. Secondly, this God served to legitimate a system of voluntary exchange and contract relationships. Thirdly, as Rivkin argues, although there may be important contradicting nuances, p. 390: "There is an inextricable link between traditional Judaism and a divinely-dictated system of private property rights." See also, S. Schwarzchild, "The Theologico-Political Basis of Liberal Christian- Jewish Relations in Modernity," in *Das deutsche Judentum und der Liberalismus*, who points in broad terms to an association between Judaic and Kantian rationalism opposed to a more organicist and historiosophical German philosophical culture.

From without, a typical if not stereotypical description of the Jews and their affinity for capitalism is provided by the late 19th century sociologist Sombart who cites three traits: "The predominance of the will, selfishness, and the abstractness of their mental constitution." Cited in A. Mitzman, *Sociology and Estrangement*, p. 203.

⁵⁹ Such criticism is voiced for example by John Rawls: "Those who think of Kant's moral doctrine as one of law and guilt badly misunderstand him. Kant's aim is to deepen and justify Rousseau's idea that liberty is acting in accordance with a law that we give to ourselves. And this leads not to a morality of austere command, but to an ethic of mutual respect and self-esteem." *A Theory of Justice*, p. 256; and W. Kymlicka: "We get nowhere towards identifying these problems (i.e. whether Kantian liberalism can accommodate the communitarian critique. S.S.) by invoking old slogans about abstract or atomistic individualism, slogans which have stood in the way of or taken the place of,

more serious concern, because it potentially forces the author to take an ideological stand regarding Kant's philosophy. Admittedly, the presentation thus far shares views similar to the Hegelian, feminist, communitarian, and socialist critiques of Kant. However, it has not been the objective here to rehearse these critiques or show what may be wrong with either Kant's viewpoint or the liberal endorsement of it. Rather, it has been to approach Kant neutrally, but from a less studied angle, as an interpretive foundation for later discussion. Furthermore, the treatment of Kant presented here has not been directly concerned with emphasising questions of atomism or individualism, but rather with social ontologies derived from separate thematisations of the Absolute. Hegel categorically rejected Kant's conception of God as a *Gedankending* (a thought thing) that could not be known. This theme, in turn, is extended in ethical and political terms in Hegel's early theology, the *Phenomenology* and the *Philosophy of Right* (§§ 135-137), whereby Kant's God and moral view is seen as a purely formal correspondence of the will with the subjective self.

To a certain extent, the Kant-Hegel conflict will always have a sustenance, allying those who think that freedom is the subjection of the individual to rational maxims of his or her own choice (the Kantian view) against those who think that freedom is the voluntary participation of the individual in a good community or State (the Hegelian view). Or, as one commentator has it:

For Kant the State is a postulate of Reason, not the incarnation of the national forces of a people. It is not, as it was to be later with Hegel, a value in itself; for him it is nothing but the basis which must be provided in order that the morality of the citizens may develop itself.⁶⁰

Disregarding the too restrictive definition of Spirit as the "national forces of a people," and the purely stylistical intent of 'incarnation', this formulation might serve as a basic

serious analysis. Progress will only be made when the rhetoric is dropped." *Liberalism, Community and Culture*, p. 70.

⁶⁰ R. Aris, *The History of Political Thought in Germany, 1789-1815*, p. 91.

introduction to political philosophical differences which, it has been argued, are strongly linked to differing theoretical approaches to the relation between God and man.

These are universal questions which gain historical and cultural immediacy in their German environment. This chapter has attempted to frame them in a manner that does justice to the 'anticipatory climate' in which the young Hegel and his idealist and romanticist colleagues experienced the need to reconcile the dualisms which were perceived, rightly or wrongly, to have emerged from the Kantian realm. In the following chapters, the analysis of Hegel's early theology and later system will show how the key themes of the supersession of law by love, Unhappy Consciousness by Revealed Religion, morality by ethical life, civil society by State derive from a conceptualisation of the Absolute which is neither a postulate nor a moral example, but rather a self-objectifying and historically engaged God incarnate.

Chapter 3

The Incarnate God in Hegel's System

The gradual crumbling that left unaltered the face of the whole is cut short by a sunburst which in one flash, illuminates the features of the new world. (Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*)

Introduction

The above passage, vague and literary as it is, intimates the self-consciously revolutionary character of Hegel's thought, the origins of which have been attributed to a number of influences ranging from Hellenism to Herder. The following chapter examines the extent to which it derives from the attempt to reformulate philosophically the Christian idea of the incarnate God.

In the most general sense, this can be argued on two fronts. Firstly, that the tension between the alienation of the Judaic realm and the freedom revealed in the incarnation is transposed onto the modern world as a tension between Kantian and Enlightenment philosophy, on the one hand, and Hegelian speculative philosophy, on the other. Secondly, that religion illuminates in one "flash" what speculative philosophy must demonstrate through a more laborious struggle. The previous chapter set the stage for this framework by reviewing the "old world" in a Hegelian light. It showed, firstly, that Kant's concept of God and certain aspects of his moral philosophy preserve a fundamental dualism between morality and nature in order to restrict the freedom which

morality aspires to, to the realm of reason. The supremacy of reason which culminates in Kantian subjective idealism leads to God becoming a postulate of pure practical reason. Because God is literally within man, Kant has little need or interest in a mediator such as is represented in the incarnation. Thus, Kant's incarnate God is formulated as an illustration derived from a moral idea we give ourselves.

The chapter also showed that the interiorised dualism between man and God, inclination and duty, in Kant, parallels the exterior dualism between the man and God, the self and the Law, in the Judaic religion. A Judaeo-Kantian paradigm was formulated to capture the affinity of Enlightenment Jews for Kantian thought, and the association of Judaism and Kant made by 19th century critics of Enlightenment morality and liberalism, Hegel and Marx included. This paradigm applied, albeit crudely, by Hegel in the early theological writings, serves as a metaphor for alienation throughout the later system which a Christian-inspired philosophy of reconciliation would seek to overcome.

The following survey of Hegel's speculative appropriation of the incarnate God contains a number of qualifiers concerning both its scope and objectives. Firstly, the limited focus precludes any adequate introductory treatment of Hegel's system either independently or in the context of German idealism along the lines of authoritative interpretations, such as by Hartmann, Kroner, Taylor, or Inwood¹. Nonetheless, one major aspect normally treated in standard accounts of Hegel's departure from Kant in the context of German idealism is fundamental to the discussion here. That is that in all

¹ N. Hartmann, *Die Philosophie des Deutschen Idealismus*, R. Kroner, *Von Kant bis Hegel*, C. Taylor, *Hegel*, M. Inwood, *Hegel*.

major categories of philosophical analysis , Kant's separation of thought and being (metaphysical), subject and object (epistemological), morality and nature (ethical), is seen as symptomatic of an Enlightenment tension which Hegel sought to remedy. At the focal point of this condition, as Hegel stressed in his article "Faith and Knowledge" of 1802 was the tendency of philosophers, i.e. Kant, Jacobi, and Fichte, to posit Truth or the Absolute, beyond knowledge as a subjectively derived ought (Sollen). Thus, the Hegelian *Ausgangspunkt*, from a purely philosophical position is how knowledge of God is possible, and how the series of dualisms resulting from the "metaphysics of subjectivity" can be reconciled. As there is a consensus in the literature concerning this basic departure point, which in the cases of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel often has its origins in questions related to the philosophy of religion,² the following presentation only differs in the restrictive emphasis it places on the incarnation thematic in Hegel's philosophical development.

Secondly, the chapter is not concerned with either an in-depth analysis of Hegel's theology or his historical relation to Christianity. Thus, Hegel's treatment of the proofs of God's existence, trinitarianism, Spinozist pantheism, the role of the Church, the influence of Lutheranism or Wurttemberg pietism, all of which have been isolated and treated (often at book-length) by others, are not considered fundamental to the arguments advanced here. Nonetheless, efforts will be made to treat aspects of these subjects in passing.

² See R. Kroner, *Von Kant bis Hegel*, p. 223.

Thirdly, insofar as exhaustive treatments of Hegel's christology can be found elsewhere (most notably in Küng, Brito, Yerkes³) the following chapter restricts itself to those aspects that contribute to an understanding of the role of the incarnation in Hegel's philosophy and political thought, and in the development from Hegel to Marx. Thus, Hegel's views on sin and atonement, the Immaculate Conception or Resurrection of Christ, as themes normally encompassed by christology, are considered beyond the purview of this thesis. It is for this reason that even the word 'christology' must be used with caution in the following presentation. For, it should be said from the outset, Hegel was not particularly interested in the *individual* Jesus Christ. Rather, even in the early theology, he was searching for a better formulation for which Jesus Christ was only a mouthpiece. Thus, one cannot loosely identify christology and the incarnation thematic in Hegel without doing a disservice to the larger philosophical ramifications of the divine/human unity in his system, which the Christian Church can only express in symbolic form.⁴

Because the incarnation will be shown to have a bearing on several central Hegelian themes, some preliminary reference should be made as to how it appears relevant outside the more restricted context of christology or the philosophy of religion.

³ H. Küng, *The Incarnation of God*, E. Brito, *La Christologie de Hegel*, J. Yerkes, *Hegel's Christology*.

⁴ J. McTaggart (*Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, p. 229), makes a similar point concerning Hegel's view of the incarnation: "in him (Jesus Christ) the Church symbolises that universal incarnation which the Church has not sufficient speculative insight to grasp without a symbol."

This will be discussed in terms of three central themes.

1) *Judaeo-Kantianism*. Hegel's departure from Kant is executed in terms of a) a radically alternative approach to the possibility of knowledge of God, and the role of the incarnate God in making that knowledge possible; b) a doctrine of love, which is not a feeling subordinated to the moral law, but rather a category of experience that reconciles the dualism between the finite self and the rational moral law; c) an association between Judaism and Kant in terms of (a) and (b), in order to present the speculative incarnate God as a suitable alternative.

2) *Reconciliation*. Hegel's central theme of reconciliation derives from an ontological tension between alienation and freedom, archetypically resolved in the Incarnation, and transposed onto the modern world in terms of humanity's drive toward self-realisation or freedom. The task of philosophy is therefore to comprehend this archetype by elevating it to a concept. This elevation can be characterised as a transition from the Incarnation to Humanisation, from the *Menschwerdung Gottes* to the *Menschwerdung*, a process whereby the divine or Spirit, i.e. the divine acting in and through humanity, comes to knowledge of itself.

3) *The incarnation in the system*. The significance of the incarnation for Hegel's system can be demonstrated in two principal forms: a) the continuity between themes of the early theology and the later system; b) the relationship of certain key philosophical concepts to the place of the incarnation in Hegel's major works.

These three points roughly accord with the structure of the following chapter. Section 1 reviews the early theological writings with particular emphasis on the Frankfurt essay, "The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate." The critique of Kantian commanded love, alluded to in the last chapter, and the Pauline concept of *pleroma* are addressed in terms of the Judaeo-Kantian tension between law and love which Hegel seeks to reconcile. Section 2 provides a textual survey of the treatment of the incarnation doctrine in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (*Phen*) the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* (*LPH*) and the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* (*LPR*). This is intended to provide the reader with a basic understanding of what was actually said about the incarnation, before it is assessed in terms of key themes in the system as a whole. Section 3 breaks down Hegel's

speculative appropriation of the incarnation into some of these key themes: the relation between representations and concepts, becoming and mediation.

I. The Law/Love Dichotomy: The Early Writings

At the beginning of this century, when the fragmented manuscripts from the early Bern and Frankfurt periods were grouped together by Nohl under the heading *Early Theological Writings (ETW)*, there was a sense in the scholarly community that Hegel's philosophy had been revealed *in statu nascendi*. The ponderous meditations of the *Phenomenology* or *The Logic* were seen to be lucidly and energetically introduced by the young Hegel, "humain, vibrant, souffrant".⁵ Nonetheless, there have been few full-length works on the early theological writings,⁶ and their fragmented character cautions against drawing significant parallels to the later system. On the other hand, to neglect them as unsystematic meditations not only ruptures the continuity between the theological and philosophical Hegel, but also discounts important themes that arguably have their origins in these writings. The most important theme which finds expression in embryonic form in the early writings is the necessity of humanity to reconcile itself to the divine through philosophy. Even at this early stage, Hegel realised that this reconciliation could not be

⁵ See A. Koyré, "Hegel à Iena," *RHPR*, (September-October 1935), p. 422. Koyré provides a useful survey of the early impact of the *Early Theological Writings* on the scholarly community; see also, P. Asveld, *La pensée religieuse du jeune Hegel*, pp. 1-11.

⁶ Hamacher, "Pleroma: zu Genesis und Struktur einer dialektischen Hermeneutik bei Hegel," and Rohrmoser, *Subjektivität und Verdinglichung* are notable exceptions. There is, however, a considerable body of literature on the young Hegel, including Lukács, Asveld, Görland, Peperzak, Bourgeois, that treats these writings in passing.

satisfactorily pursued without, "becoming in the end a metaphysical treatment of the relation between the finite and the infinite."⁷ It could be carried out neither through the ordinances of an alien God above (Judaism) nor through an alien law within (Kantian morality), but rather through some concept of unity, which Hegel first found in love.

A. Love

The Frankfurt period has been said to announce the "birth of Hegelianism"⁸ insofar as the dialectic of reconciliation finds its first thematic expression there. In *The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate (SCF)*, the most philosophical of Hegel's early theological writings, this reconciliation takes place in the form of love. The essay is pervaded by a radical hostility to law and legalism, even in the Kantian sense of self-legislation, the "interiorisation of the master/slave relationship" (Bourgeois).⁹ Hegel saw in Mosaic law, a commanded, external authority which imposed itself through coercive practises, however well-integrated and codified within the Jewish community. This master/slave relationship between the dependent Jews and their sovereign God undergoes a dramatic change with the arrival of Jesus: "Over against commands which required a base service of the Lord, a direct slavery, an obedience without joy, without pleasure or love, i.e. the commands in connection with the service of God, Jesus set their precise opposite, human urge and so a human need."¹⁰ The formulation of love in the early

⁷ ETW, "Positivity of the Christian Religion," p. 176.

⁸ E. Brito, *La Christologie d'Hegel*, p. 54.

⁹ B. Bourgeois, *Hegel à Francfort*, p. 59.

¹⁰ ETW, "SCF" p.206.

writings is a metaphor for unity and reconciliation. He is not concerned with romantic or erotic love, but rather with an abstract category of experience that reacts to both the servitude imposed by the Kantian law within and the Judaic alien God without.¹¹ It reacts in a metaphysical, psychological, and ethical sense.

The metaphysical sense derives from the tension Hegel establishes between two relations: particulars in opposition to universals (i.e. feelings in conflict with rational laws), and particulars as part of universals (i.e. the whole self). While love reconciles the particular to the universal, the distinction between the two is retained in Judaeo-Kantianism: "For the particular-impulses, inclinations, pathological love, sensuous experience,...the universal is necessarily and always something alien and objective."¹²

¹¹ For further discussion of the Judaeo-Kantian association in the early Hegel, see Rebstock, *Hegels Auffassung des Mythos in seinen frühschriften*, p. 148; Noro, *Das Problem der Ethischen Autonomie und die 'Positive' Religion in den Jugendschriften Hegels*, p. 96; H.Küng, *The Incarnation of God*, pp. 113-123; W.D. Marsch, *Die Gegenwart Christi in der Gesellschaft*, pp. 60-61; B. Bourgeois, *Hegel à Francfort*, pp. 59-64; R. Sonnenschmidt, "Zum philosophischen Antisemitismus bei G.W.F. Hegel," *ZRG*, 4 (1992): 289-307. All make the similar point that Hegel saw in Kantian and Judaic morality and its relation to God a duality which needed to be overcome by a Christian-based reconciliation found in love. As summarised by Brito, p. 55, "the Jewish slavery to an alien God interiorises itself in the Kantian submission of the singular to the universal." More explicit is Hamacher, p. 59: "And just as Christ directs his teachings toward the empty formalism of the fetish belief, against the literalism of the Jewish Law with the challenge to fulfill its spirit, so Hegel directs himself toward that form of Judaism, from which Christianity itself is derived, and against that puritanical moral law of its critic. Kant is the Jew. Hegel the Christ." One exception is Baumeister, (*Hegel's frühe Kritik an Kant's ethik*, p. 103), who argues that Hegel's idea of love fulfilling the law is only a means to interpret the Kantian duty in such a way that love is implicit in it.

¹² "SCF," p. 211.

By uniting the distinction between the particular and the universal, Jesus unifies inclination with the law. The spirit of the law is fulfilled through the spontaneous act of love that does voluntarily what the law commands. As such, Kant's reduction of transcendent love to respect, to a 'command in accordance with the moral law' must be dismissed:

Love itself pronounces no imperative. It is no universal opposed to a particular, no unity, no unity of the concept, but a unity of spirit, divinity. To love God is to feel one's self in the 'all of life,' with no restrictions, in the infinite. In this feeling of harmony there is no universality, since in a harmony the particular is not in discord but in concord, or otherwise there would be no harmony.¹³

In this passage, the Hegel *souffrant* of the early period is reflected in the struggle to conceive of a theologically-derived unity which thus far has eluded philosophical formulation. Rather than lapsing into theological dogmatics or mysticism, an attempt is made to grasp this reconciliation in philosophical terms by distinguishing between a finite restricted by a postulated infinite (Judaean-Kantianism) and a finite that elevates itself to the infinite of which it is logically a part. A similar point is developed in the "Fragment of a System," written around the same time: "Philosophy therefore has to stop short of religion because it is a process of thinking and...implies an opposition with nonthinking [processes] as well as the opposition between the thinking mind and the object of thought." Whereas philosophy can only 'disclose the finiteness in all finite things' (even when it appeals to an illusory infinite) only religion can elevate the finite to the infinite. This is because the infinite of religion is not posited to restrict the finite (for that restriction is the essence of the master/slave relationship expressed in Judaean-Kantianism) but rather is an existing reality of which the finite is a part.¹⁴

In a psychological sense, love is a foundational expression of Hegel's ideal of

¹³ Ibid., p. 247.

¹⁴ ETW, "Fragment of a System," p. 313.

unity.¹⁵ It is a feeling but not a feeling among other feelings. Rather love:

destroys objectivity and thereby annuls and transcends reflection, deprives man's opposite of all foreign character, and discovers life itself without any further defect. In love the separate does still remain, but as something united and no longer as something separate; life [in the subject] senses life [in the object].¹⁶

The ethical sense is treated in terms of a critique of Kant's notion of commanded love, outlined in the previous chapter. Hegel extols the virtues of uncommanded, and therefore, unkantian love through this essay. His argument is substantiated by various references to the "thou shalts" of Mosaic law as formalistic Kantian maxims:

'Love God above everything and thy neighbour as thyself' was quite wrongly regarded by Kant as a 'command requiring respect for a law which commands love.' And it is on this confusion of the utterly accidental kind of phraseology expressive of life with the moral imperative (which depends on the opposition between concept and reality) that there rests Kant's profound reduction of what he calls a "command" (love God first of all and thy neighbour as thyself) to his moral imperative.¹⁷

By drawing attention to the Old Testament qualities of a commanded love, Hegel not only reinforces Kant's Judaic character, but intimates to what extent love is liberated when it is no longer subjected to the moral imperative.

These aspects of love direct themselves towards the Judaeo-Kantian paradigm introduced in the last chapter and reflect a first attempt to transcend Kant's ethics in terms of a critique of Judaism. Furthermore, the means by which Hegel chooses to

¹⁵ Also Bourgeois: "Love is the first manifestation of the 'concrete universal,' the identity of identity and difference - in the Hegelian system, the anticipation of the later 'Spirit'."

¹⁶ *ETW*, "Fragment on Love," p. 305.

¹⁷ "SCF," p. 213.

respond to and overcome this paradigm, one he formulates as an "absolute antithesis"¹⁸ to his own ideal, foreshadow the main themes of his later system.¹⁹ In spite of these assurances, the fact that Hegel chooses a parallel between Judaism and Kant to develop his philosophical system is puzzling, even if it is just a symptom of an early theological background. For the moment, a simple two-fold explanation can be provided. On the one hand, Judaism, insofar as it represented an antithesis to Hegel's speculative christianity, assumed a philosophical status as a metaphor for the alienation of the age.²⁰ Furthermore, in this age, Kant's ethics assumed a certain theological status insofar as it had acquired the status of a dogma and creed from which all subsequent philosophical systems had to depart. Kantianism and Judaism are thus conflated as representatives of a particular, yet fundamental, problem for Hegel, namely the problematic relationship between God and man.²¹

The fact that the Judaeo-Kantian paradigm is a stylised construct ironically confirms its import for Hegel's philosophical development. For Hegel simplified both the essence of Judaism and Christianity in order to distance his own Christian-based philosophy from the Kantian variant. This can be seen, firstly, in the change in comparative frameworks in his early theological writings. Essays from the Bern period,

¹⁸ Bourgeois, p. 70.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 64, 76; Rebstock, p. 189.

²⁰ See also Marsch, pp. 60-61, who argues that Hegel's critique of Judaism is directed at the Enlightenment.

²¹ See also Küng, p. 113, "Precisely because Kant summarised the essentials of the entire modern development, Hegel's criticism of Judaism is at the same time aimed at this recent development insofar as it has led to a confrontation between God and man (and hence between man and man, people and people)."

such as the "Positivity of the Christian Religion" and the Kantian "Life of Jesus," treat Christianity as opposed to the Greek folk religions, or, as an isolated subject of study. Only in the "Spirit of Christianity and its Fate," are Jesus and love portrayed in dramatic opposition to Judaism and its Kantian element. Secondly, as Hirsch has pointed out, Hegel neglects or significantly downplays the masculine or masterly element (*herrisches Element*) in the Christ-figure.²² Thus, deliberately or not, Hegel portrays a one-sidedly merciful and feminine Christ in order to separate his idea of Jesus from the elements of lordship and bondage which he associates with Judaeo-Kantianism. Thirdly, the judgmental and legalistic dimension reserved for Judaism is reinforced by a more general point, namely Hegel's unsophisticated and dismissive view of that religion. Even in his later *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, he tended to lump together all its varieties, the Hebrew nomadic religions, the formal religion of Israel, orthodox Judaism or the mystical Cabbal, into a rather unsophisticated monolith based primarily on the legalism of the Mosaic code and the severe tests of faith as presented in Job.²³ By focusing on an authoritarian Father God, Hegel particularly ignores those aspects of Judaism - such as a redemptive view of history or idea of love that predates the incarnation - that conflict or dilute his own christocentric view.²⁴ While these three points expose

²² E. Hirsch, "Die Romantik und das Christentum, insbesondere bei Novalis und dem jungen Hegel," *ZST*, 1 (1923): 42-43.

²³ On the changes in Hegel's later view of Judaism, see E. von der Luft, "The Unfolding of Hegel's Berlin Philosophy of Religion, 1821-1831," *PhR*, 25 (1989): 55-57; on the relationship between this view and Hegel's master/slave dialectic, see Sonnenschmidt, pp. 299-300.

²⁴ Hegel drew particular attention to the manner in which the Mosaic code placed "the laws of right and morality...in the same rank and stated in equally positive form with the most trifling regulations (Hegel means here the sacrifices and ceremonial matters). This forms a marked contrast with our concept of God. Their cultus is then the service of God; the good or righteous person is one who performs this service by keeping both

inadequacies in Hegel's treatment of Judaism, it is less motivated by anti-semitism, than by a rather single-minded interest in constructing a formal antithesis and dramatic tension which a philosophical reformulation of the incarnate God is meant to counteract.

B. Pleroma

Insofar as this counteraction is not a suppression but a supersession, it operates in a dialectical way. Hegel borrows the Pauline term for fulfilment, *pleroma* and uses it to express the unification of inclination to the law:

This expanded content we may call an inclination so to act as the laws may command, i.e. a unification of inclination with the law whereby the latter loses its form as law. This correspondence with inclination is the *pleroma* (fulfilment) of the law...The inclination [to act as the laws may command], a virtue, is a synthesis in which the law loses its universality and the subject its particularity; both lose their opposition, while in the Kantian conception of virtue this opposition remains, and the universal becomes the master and the particular the mastered.²⁵

Pleroma, is the synthesis of is and ought insofar as it modifies inclination in such a manner that there is no need to restrict it in accordance with a law that demands submission to an ideal, or that presumes an opposition between commander (whether it be God, or the moral law) and commanded.

Hegel's use of *pleroma* is a remarkably understudied subject given that it appears to express in its earliest state the cornerstone of his dialectical thought, the concept of *Aufhebung* (sublation).²⁶ The term is used on three occasions in the "SCF" to refer to

the moral commandments and the ceremonial laws. That is the service of the Lord. That the Jewish people gave itself up wholly to this service is connected with their representation of God as the Lord." *LPR*, fn. p. 373.

²⁵ "SCF," p. 214.

²⁶ Most likely, the lack of attention to *pleroma* is based on the assumption that Hegel is simply borrowing a Pauline concept applied in *Romans* to explain the challenge of Jesus' gospel of love to the Judaic concept of legal righteousness. One notable exception is W. Hamacher. There has been more controversy among biblical scholars over the origins of the use of *pleroma* in Paul. Some suggest it derives from the gnostic technical

completion or fulfilment of an opposition, a dichotomy, a subservience to the law or, in general, an alienated state.²⁷ Insofar as *pleroma* is portrayed as a dialectical concept that fulfils and preserves, is it not the theological equivalent, if not the transparently philosophical prototype, of the later "sublation" (*Aufhebung*)? Certainly his definition of the term strongly suggests such an interpretation: "a unification of inclination with the law whereby the latter loses its form as law."²⁸

In the context of Hegel's early writings, law, both in the Judaic and Kantian sense, represents division and diremption, egoism, and servitude to an alien God without or an alien master within. Love, on the other hand, transcends reflection, unites subject and object, cannot be reduced to a moral imperative, and sublates law. Finally, *pleroma* is the fulfilment of law by love, the prototype of the later *Aufhebung* - the process by

is W. Hamacher. There has been more controversy among biblical scholars over the origins of the use of *pleroma* in Paul. Some suggest it derives from the gnostic technical term referring to the realm of the aeons, the *pleroma*. In Valentinian cosmology, the *pleroma* is the realm or Totality from which emanates pairs of aeons, or ideas, that represent a hypostatized intellectual universe. Sophia was cast out of the *pleroma* because she lacked a twin (alienation, diremption) and, as a result, created the Demiurge (Yahweh, the Judaic God) who created the world and man. When man went astray, because the world was only a flawed image of the *pleroma*, a Saviour came to redeem it before returning to Sophia in the *pleroma*. Some commentators have rejected that the *pleroma* references in the New Testament (there are a total of 17) can be interpreted in gnostic terms. Others have sought a middle ground. In the entry on *pleroma* in *Exegetische Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, Band 111, p. 283, H. Hubner suggests that the Christian community took up *pleroma* from its intellectualist meaning in the gnostic-Hellenic environment and transformed it from a cosmology, i.e. a hypostatized intellectual universe to a soteriology, a doctrine of salvation.

²⁷ The three instances are: 1) This correspondence (of law) with inclination is the *pleroma* of the law (p. 214); 2) the sanctity of love is the completion (the *pleroma*) of the law against divorce (p. 217); 3) What is religious then, is the *pleroma* of love; it is reflection and love united, bound together in thought (p. 253).

²⁸ For further discussion on the relation between *pleroma* and *Aufhebung*, see Hamacher and Brito, p. 63; Peperzak, p. 153; and Niel, *De la médiation dans la philosophie de Hegel*, p. 49.

which an object is affirmed through its negation and thereby assumes a new status. In this three-fold schema: law, love, pleroma, the dialectic makes its first appearance as the philosophical expression of Hegel's early theological theme.

Naturally, in his juxtaposition of the dichotomy of master and mastered (Judaean-Kantianism) and the unity of love, Hegel executes a simplification that serves his designs, but does little justice to either Kant or Judaism. Hegel's concordance with Kant's emphasis on reason and autonomy is well-documented.²⁹ In fact, Hegel's Kantianism would set him polemically apart from the Romantics whose ideas in the early writings he most seems to share. Nonetheless, the foundational tension between law and love that recreates itself on successive plateaus in Hegel's later system (between unhappy consciousness against revealed religion, morality against ethical life, civil society against the State), consistently juxtaposes an old world of division, reflected in Judaean-Kantianism, with the new world of reconciliation, reflected in the speculative appropriation of the incarnate God. In the following section, some attempt will be made to trace the continuities and discontinuities between these early writings and the form that appropriation takes in the later system. Only then can some conclusions be drawn as to whether, "The Incarnation is the movement of what came to be Hegel's explicitly central theme, the transition from substance to subject, a movement actualised in the immediacy and the self-consciousness of a particular historical human being."³⁰

²⁹ A more sympathetic reading of Hegel's relation to Kant in the early period is given in Görland and Baumeister.

³⁰ D. Schlitt, *Hegel's Trinitarian Claim*, p. 163.

II. The Incarnation in the System

It would at this stage seem plausible to develop the parallels between the early formulation of love as the recognition of the self in the other,³¹ and the mature formulation of Spirit as the "knowledge of oneself in the externalization of oneself,"³² and thereby establish a continuity from the theological to the philosophical Hegel. Nonetheless this is a risky enterprise in that, by assigning so much emphasis to the role of love in Hegel's theory of reconciliation (even if it is later abandoned in favour of other concepts such as life and Spirit) one necessarily discounts debts to his contemporaries, such as Fichte and Schelling, and to the philosophical discourse of German idealism. Although this debt cannot be treated here, Hegel's criticism of these systems, as noted in the introduction to this chapter, follows principles that do not diverge substantially from the thrust of the argument in the early writings. For example, the essay on "Faith and Knowledge," which appeared in the first edition of the *Kritische Journal der Philosophie* - his collaborative effort with Schelling in Jena- reiterates the criticism of Kant and Fichte that God is something beyond knowledge, and thereby retains the old form of metaphysical thinking whereby the finite is opposed to the infinite.³³ Likewise, the essay on "Natural Law", which we shall return to briefly in the next chapter, is a criticism of the tendency of both the empirical sciences and natural right theory toward abstraction. Abstraction in Hegel's thought implies the separation of particulars from

³¹ *ETW*, "Fragment on Love", p. 307.

³² *Phen.*, § 759.

³³ In "Faith and Knowledge," the opposition is formulated as Kant's "false infinite"; p. 81: "This infinitude, strictly conditioned as it is by its abstraction from its opposite, and being strictly nothing outside of this antithesis..."

universals, thus isolated facts can be as abstract as transcendent ideals. In other words, the dualities are preserved, and will continue until metaphysics is replaced by speculative philosophy which shows all things to be both mediated and immediate, finite and infinite. This perfunctory treatment of Hegel's corollary concerns during his early Jena period only serves to make the basic point that his so-called purely philosophical objectives develop upon, or at least do not diverge from, the central focus on reconciling opposites, the most fundamental of which remained the opposition between man and God.³⁴ In the previous section, this reconciliation appeared in terms of dialectic of law-love-pleroma. The following section now draws attention to Hegel's specific references to the incarnate God in his system with special attention devoted to *The Phenomenology of Spirit (Phen.)*, the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History (LPH)*, and the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion (LPR)*.

A. The Phenomenology of Spirit

Hegel sets as his principle task in the *Phenomenology* to transform philosophy from the "love of knowing" to "actual knowing"³⁵ by showing truth to be a progressive unfolding, rather than a property of propositions statically opposed to falsehood. Actual knowing, or absolute Spirit, as Hegel terms it, is asymptotically approached as a process of Truth 'consuming itself through its development.'³⁶ What Hegel proposes,

³⁴ This "central focus" would, however, exclude topics addressed in the Habilitationsschrift, *De Orbitis Planetarum*, and the essays generally grouped under the label "early political writings".

³⁵ *Phen.*, § 5.

³⁶ *Ibid.* § 20.

therefore, is a biography of consciousness in its diverse forms progressing towards its consummation in the Absolute. Part of the work's obscurity derives from the fact that this biography is not a chronological account (the Enlightenment and Kantian morality appear long before the discussion of revealed religion), but rather an hierarchical ordering of moments that give ever-increasing clarity to the 'coming-to-be of knowledge.'

The incarnation occupies only a small, albeit important, position second to last in the work, in a section entitled, "The Revealed Religion."³⁷ The justification for ordering religion after all previous accounts of consciousness' manifold forms is made in the introductory paragraph to the section on Religion, § 672:

In the structured forms hitherto considered which are distinguished in general as Consciousness, Self-consciousness, Reason, and Spirit, religion, too, as consciousness of absolute Being as such, has indeed made an appearance , although only from the standpoint of the consciousness that is conscious of absolute Being; but absolute Being in and for itself, the self-consciousness of Spirit, has not appeared in those 'shapes.'

³⁷ The contradiction between the limited space devoted to the incarnation in the *Phen.* and the importance attributed to it by Hegelian theologians can be partially resolved by suggesting that the reconciliation between the human and divine which occurs throughout the *Phen.* is paradigmatically achieved in the human individual of Jesus Christ, which is the specific subject of the section on 'revealed religion.' Hans Küng, who claims that Hegel is attempting to formulate 'a religion in philosophical form' places Jesus Christ in that context: " as the one in whom the grand reconciliation has been revealed: in him heaven and earth, supreme abstraction and absolute immediacy, have found each other; in him divine nature and human nature appear as one." *The Incarnation of God*, p. 224. For this reason, Küng is critical of those studies which seek the essence of the *Phen* in other subordinate spheres, such as Lukács , in the social sphere, or Kojève, in the master/slave dichotomy or Heidegger in the parousia, or presence, of Being (Küng's references are, respectively: Lukacs, *The Young Hegel*, pp. 449-568, Heidegger, *Hegel's Concept of Experience*, pp. 166-169; for Kojève he relies on Rohrmoser's criticism cited in *Subjektivität und Verdinglichung*, p. 102. Although one can concur with Küng's point that those studies which do not grasp the foundational role assigned to religious reconciliation are one-sided, it is more debatable whether, "Hegel was convinced that a reconciliation of man with the splintered reality of his world is made possible by religion alone." For a more philosophically orientated interpretation of the section on 'revealed religion,' see Theunissen, *Hegel's Lehre*, pp. 216-290.

In other words, thus far there has been a duality between various forms of consciousness, and consciousness of an absolute Being. This duality posits absolute Being as an object, but not as a self-conscious subject. Revealed religion makes the latter form possible in that it is the revelation of Spirit to itself. The birth of the self-consciousness of Spirit is anticipated with reference to the hope and despair of the Unhappy Consciousness. The despair results from the futile attempt of the human imagination to represent a deity that it does not know, yet still signifies an object of its hopes and fears (§ 752):

The Unhappy Consciousness is the tragic fate of the certainty of self that aims to be absolute. It is the consciousness of the loss of all essential being in this certainty of itself, and of the loss even of this knowledge about itself- the loss of substance as well as of the Self, it is the grief which expresses itself in the hard saying that 'God is dead.'

The conflation of the "loss of all essential being in this certainty of itself" and the grief over the death, i.e. non-existence of God brings together Enlightenment self-certitude and Judaeo-Kantianism and formulaically posits them in a realm immediately preceding the birth of self-conscious spirit.³⁸ It is at once an abstract attack on the vanity of reason, and a concrete, at least in Hegelian terms, summary of the state of Spirit before the arrival of Christianity. This can be seen in that the content of the religion of morality is

³⁸ Some commentators have been misled by Hegel's use of the Lutheran phrase "God is dead" to claim that the Unhappy Consciousness refers to Christianity. Shanks (*Hegel's Political Theology*, p. 21-22), has adequately criticised this view (which he identifies with Sklar, Findlay, and Solomon among others) to show that while the Unhappy Consciousness refers most fittingly to Judaism and the Enlightenment, it can also accommodate the positive or institutional aspects of Christianity as defined in Hegel's early theology: "Essentially, Hegel is suggesting, the rational necessity of the Incarnation lies right here: in its character as a radical antithesis to the Unhappy Consciousness *in all the many various forms that consciousness may adopt* (my italics, Ibid. p. 23)." As a metaphor for the divided self, the Unhappy Consciousness applies to Hegel's notion of Judaeo-Kantianism, both structurally, in the sense that the passage anticipates Christianity's definitive moment, the incarnation, and content-wise in that it refers to the emptiness derived from the self-certainty of reason, a common characteristic of Hegel's Kant critique.

"bound up with the negativity of the Enlightenment," (§ 676) and with the Unhappy Consciousness defined, in the sphere of morality, as the "pain of Spirit that wrestled, but without success, to reach out into objectivity (§ 673)." As Macquarrie summarises this conjunction of the Unhappy Consciousness and the Enlightenment: "God is not simply 'subject', as in Judaism and Kantian deism, but 'spirit' which has gone out of itself into the object."³⁹ Thus, the idiosyncratic juxtaposition of Judaism, Kant's God, and morality derives from Hegel's speculative approach to the incarnation as a symbol of the reconciliation anticipated in the modern day.⁴⁰ The need and despair of Judaism, the Unhappy consciousness, has, in Hegel's terms, recurred on the level of philosophy which now call forth the birth of the reconciled spirit (§ 758):

That absolute Spirit has given itself implicitly the shape of self-consciousness, and therefore has also given it for its consciousness - this now appears as the belief of the world that Spirit is immediately present as a self-conscious Being, i.e. as an actual man, that the believer is immediately certain of Spirit, sees, feels, and hears the divinity. Thus this self-consciousness is not imagination, but is actual in the believer. Consciousness, then, does not start from its inner life, from thought, and unite within itself the thought of God with existence; on the contrary, it starts from an existence that is immediately present and recognizes God therein.

³⁹ J. Macquarrie, *Jesus Christ in Modern Thought*, p. 220.

⁴⁰ Fackenheim explains the relationship between the anticipation and necessity of the incarnation as follows: "It (the incarnation) is, however, not simply contingent because it is expected, and it is expected because it is recognized as needed. Without this prior expectation the redemptive event would not be recognized as redemptive when in fact it occurs." *The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought*, p. 138. The primacy of expectation highlights the redemptive quality of the incarnation as a reaction to a need which Hegel saw historically in the Judaic realm and philosophically in the modern day (para. 761) : "The hopes and expectations of the world up till now had pressed forward solely to this revelation, to behold what absolute Being is, and in it to find itself. The joy of beholding itself in absolute Being enters self-consciousness and seizes the whole world; for it is Spirit, it is the simple movement of those pure moments, which expresses just this: that only when absolute Being is beheld as an immediate self-consciousness is it known as Spirit."

Two points can be made concerning this difficult passage. Firstly, the reference to Spirit's 'implicit' shape as self-consciousness, and to the 'belief of the world' that Spirit is immediately present (rather than the *fact* that Spirit is immediately present) leaves the possibility open - which does in fact follow- that Spirit here, in this incarnation in Jesus Christ, is not entirely self-conscious. For Spirit must eventually return to itself, and the pictorial representation of Christ must be elevated to a concept. Yet, secondly, Hegel then makes a more general point, namely that consciousness cannot abstractly postulate a God and then form a relationship with that thought, as in Kant, rather one sees God in the empirically given event of the incarnation, and elevates that concept of the God-within humanity and history, to a thought. As such, the incarnation is not an arbitrary thought-act, but rather a necessary response to a need that elevates the empirical 'accident' to a universal.

The essence of the Absolute religion is that the divine being is revealed, and to be revealed, means to become known (§ 759):

This incarnation of the divine Being, or the fact that it essentially and directly has the shape of self-consciousness, is the simple content of the absolute religion. In this religion the divine Being is known as Spirit, or this religion is the consciousness of the divine Being that it is Spirit. For Spirit is the knowledge of oneself in the externalization of oneself; the being that is the movement of retaining its self-identity in its otherness.

Speculative knowledge is the knowledge of revealed religion, which means that it knows God as the unity of Thought and Existence, individual and particular, as immediate self-consciousness which is Spirit. However, because he was sensuously present, the incarnate God, "this individual man," must pass from "being" to "having been" (§ 763) and thereby return to Spirit. The religious community preserves the incarnate God through "picture thinking" (§ 765), by refreshing its image, and idealising

the early Christian community (§ 766). As such the religious community becomes "distant" (§ 787) from its own reconciliation, its immediate consciousness of the Christ figure (in the Christ of faith) is divided from the true religious consciousness which is unity and reconciliation.

Nonetheless, the divine substance paradigmatically reconciled to human self-consciousness in the incarnation plays a foundational role in Hegel's system on two counts, that reflect a structural continuity from the early theology. Firstly, the definition of Spirit as the "knowledge of oneself in the externalisation of oneself" - derived from the paradigmatic act of the divine Being's self-externalisation in the incarnation - bears resemblance to the early account of love described above.⁴¹ Secondly, this externalisation, for which Hegel uses the term "kenosis" (§ 755, 787) fulfils the same task that *pleroma* achieves, as the fulfilment of the law, in the *SCF*.

This has two further implications: 1) Since the incarnation is an act of God emptying into man for the sake of God's own interest in self-recognition, the incarnation appears an act done for the benefit of God rather than for humanity. Whereas *pleroma* in the early essay is specifically anthropocentric in its Pauline attention to Jesus' fulfilling of the law; kenosis refers exclusively to the activity of the divine substance, where Jesus Christ receives no mention. In comparison to the all-encompassing movements of the Absolute, the figure of Jesus Christ becomes merely a vessel that is 'emptied into' by the

⁴¹ Nonetheless, 'love' is still an elementary form of reconciliation. As stated at the end of the section on 'revealed religion' (§ 787): "The world is indeed implicitly reconciled with the divine Being; and regarding the divine Being it is known, of course, that it recognizes the object as no longer alienated from it but as identical with it in its love. But for self-consciousness, this immediate presence still has not the shape of Spirit."

divine substance, rather than the human living substance that has come as the fulfilment (pleroma) of the law.⁴² While this shift does not change the meaning of the incarnation for Hegel, it does transform the figure of Jesus Christ, from an active agent of fulfilment (pleroma) to a passive vehicle of a metaphysical or cosmic process (kenosis).

Secondly, in the last paragraph of the *Phen.* (§ 808)⁴³, Hegel applies the term kenosis to the Becoming of Spirit. The Becoming of Spirit has two sides: 1) Nature; 2) History. Whereas Nature is "nothing but this eternal externalisation of its (Spirit's) continuing existence," History is a "conscious, self-mediating process- Spirit emptied out into Time." The distinction Hegel draws between nature and history not only parallels the two acts of God's self-externalisation, i.e. Creation and Incarnation, but joins the birth of history with the birth of Christ, where freedom has become self-conscious in that humanity realises its divinity in terms of an historical process. This provides Hegel with the central message of the philosophy of history: "The realm of Spirit which is formed in this way in the outer world constitutes a succession in Time in which one Spirit relieved another of its charge and each took over the empire of the world from its

⁴² The pleroma/kenosis relationship can be clarified with consideration to the Johannine Logos or Son which appears as the executor or mediator of the divine will (or in Hegelian terms, the Activity or Spirit of God understood as pure Being) and predates its finite incarnation in the individual Jesus Christ. This distinction is quite evident in so-called kenotic christology, as provided in the 18th century example of Charles Chauncy: "This union (between the divine word and the man Jesus) was formed by the kenosis of the son, on the one hand, and the plerosis (the passive form of pleroma: to be filled) of the human Jesus on the other, "filling" him with all the communicable or 'transient,' that is 'transferable' gifts and graces of God." Cited in Norman B. Gibbs and Lee W. Gibbs, "In Our Nature: The Kenotic Christology of Charles Chauncy," *HTR*, 85 (April 1992): 227.

⁴³ § 808: "But the other side of its Becoming, History, is a conscious self-mediating process- Spirit emptied out into Time; but this externalisation, this kenosis, is equally an externalisation of itself."

predecessor." Thus the paradigmatic act of kenosis in the incarnation is elevated to absolute knowing by means of Spirit coming to knowledge of itself through the recollection of a plurality of Spirits (that is, the stages of the world spirit) that in the end form a whole. The incarnation as the paradigmatic externalisation is the starting point for the Absolute which is an end that consummates itself through its development. It is thus here where logic, as pure being, and history, as the Becoming of Spirit, first join.

B. The Philosophy of History

The definition of history in the *Phen.*, of "Spirit emptying itself into time" implies in the *LPH* that "reason is the sovereign of the world; that the history of the world, therefore, presents us with a rational process."⁴⁴ Hegel subdivides this principle into two points: 1) that nature is guided by laws of reason; 2) that reason's rule over the world is connected to the religious truth of providence, in that the world is 'not abandoned to chance' but rather guided by some divine purpose.⁴⁵ Providence is according to Hegel related to the knowledge of God:

In the Christian religion God has revealed Himself- that is, given us to understand what He is; so that He is no longer a concealed or secret existence. And this possibility of knowing Him, thus afforded us, renders such knowledge a duty.⁴⁶

Insofar as this obligation is not only religious but philosophical, it implies that philosophy cannot disassociate itself from the divine. However, "that development of the thinking

⁴⁴ *LPH*, p. 9.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.12.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

spirit, which has resulted from the revelation of the Divine Being as its original basis, must ultimately advance to the *intellectual* comprehension of what was presented in the first instance, to *feeling* and *imagination*."⁴⁷ Feeling is a primal mode, an 'animalic form' which, unlike reason, cannot aspire to certainty. If recognition of God is reduced to feeling, it becomes arbitrary and purely subjective. Thus, what was felt in the divine revelation, must be now comprehended in thought. The role of world history in this schema is that it represents the rational unfolding of the divine purpose. Because a parallel must be sought between God's activity in nature and in spirit, or history, and this activity, revealed in the incarnation, must be seen to be accomplished, Hegel suggests his method is a 'theodicy', a justification of the ways of God. ⁴⁸

The desire for perfectibility, as a human characteristic, sets spirit off from nature. Spirit is a progressive development "to make itself *actually* that which it is *potentially*."⁴⁹ It is divided into a number of stages that represent the course of world history and in which freedom plays a central part:

Its (history's) expansion, therefore, does not present the harmless tranquillity of mere growth, as does that of organic life, but a stern reluctant working against itself. It exhibits, moreover, not the mere formal conception of development, but the attainment of a definite result. The goal of attainment we determined at the outset: it is Spirit in its Completeness, in its essential nature, i.e. Freedom. ⁵⁰

Freedom is a self-actualising potentiality that passes through successive stages: Oriental,

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 17.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.55.

Persian, Judaic, Hellenic, Roman, and Germanic. Christianity makes its appearance as the last stage of the Roman period, just before the Germanic.

The centrality of Christianity for the development of freedom is confirmed in that "this new principle (the Triune God of Christianity) is the axis on which the History of the World turns. This is the goal and the starting point of History."⁵¹ This division of history into a before and after history can be clarified with reference to the philosophical origins of the Western Christian chronology which begins with the birth of Christ. Modern world history begins with the birth of Christ insofar as the historical penetration of the divine inaugurates the self-conscious and progressive development of human potential. The incarnation, as a starting point, represents the mediating realm between past and future; between Providence, as the secret to which only an abstract Absolute is privy, and the final judgment when history has come to an end. Thus, the unfolding of world history as freedom begins in and through the revelation of the Absolute in the incarnation. In short, Hegel is presenting a Christian interpretation of world history.⁵²

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 319.

⁵² K. Löwith (*Meaning in History*, p. 59) makes reference to the importance of Hegel's philosophy of history within this development: "He (Hegel) is the last philosopher of history because he is the last philosopher whose immense historical sense was still restrained and disciplined by the Christian tradition. In our modern universal historicisms and historical maps, the Christian time-reckoning has become an empty frame of reference, accepted conventionally like other means of measurement and applied to a material multitude of cultures and religions that has no center of meaning from which these cultures and religion could be organised, as they were from Augustine to Hegel."

However, it is also little recognised how long it took for the incarnation to fix itself as the beginning of the "Christian time-reckoning." An intriguing account of the origins of the Western chronology is given in the chapter "The Time of the Incarnation," in D. Wilcox, *The Measure of Times Past: Pre-Newtonian Chronologies and the Rhetoric of Relative Time*. It was Augustine who sought to synthesise Babylonian and Roman history with the Christian narrative, a task he passed on to Orosius, instructing him to recount the disasters that predated Christianity so as to counteract pagan critics who

Two further points should be considered with reference to the treatment of incarnation in the section on Christianity. Firstly, unlike the Enlightenment and Kantian variants, Christ cannot be reduced to a Socratic figure: "If Christ is to be looked upon only as an excellent, even impeccable individual, and nothing more, the conception of the Speculative Idea, of Absolute Truth is ignored. But this is the desideratum, the point from which we have to start."⁵³ For the speculative idea given in Christ is the self-objectification of Spirit and thus has a metaphysical significance which the Kantian symbol or moral illustration of a perfect human being cannot accommodate.

Secondly, reason and religion are not in conflict, nor is religion in conflict with the State where freedom is actualised. The difference between religion and the realm

blamed the Christians for the fall of Rome. Although locating historical events on one time line, Orosius begins the narrative with the founding of Rome and the incarnation appears only in the 752 year after that event. It was the Easter calendar of Victorius of Aquitaine that fixed the dating system from the birth of Christ onward. It began as a liturgical calendar for the clerics, but gradually secular events were recorded as well for the sake of predicting future events.

Parallel secular and liturgical calendars existed with considerable overlap until the twelfth and thirteenth centuries when the incarnation was generally acknowledged as the one fixed point of origin for modern history. In the words of Otto of Freising: "So then, with the birth of the new Man who supplanted the old...let us begin our annals from his (Jesus Christ's) birth." (cited in Wilcox, p. 144). Philosophically, this point of origin for modern history is achieved in Joachim of Fiore who centred Christ in the second stage, the middle of time, in terms of a turning point for man. As such the incarnation represents the present, the birth of the new man; a middle point represented a realm between the age of darkness and the age of judgment. See also, O. Kohler, "Der Neue Äon," *Saeculum*, 1 (1961): 188. Kohler makes the important point, which Augustine had originated in terms of parallels between the human and historical lifespan from birth to death, that the theological orientation had a universalistic drive because it saw all humans in and through, one man, the Son of God. In this sense, the varying time lines recording the secular events of various civilisations, are consolidated into a universal modern world history beginning with the birth of Christ.

⁵³ *LPH*, pp. 87-88.

where freedom makes itself known, i.e. the state, is that religion is:

Reason in the soul and heart-that is a temple in which Truth and Freedom in God are presented to the conceptive faculty (or imagination): the State on the other hand, regulated by the selfsame Reason, is a temple of Human Freedom concerned with the perception and volition of a reality, whose purport may itself be called divine. Thus Freedom in the State is preserved and established by Religion, since moral rectitude in the State is only the carrying out of that which constitutes the fundamental principle of Religion as Human Reason.⁵⁴

In Hegel's system, the task of executing the basic principles of religion in the context of the State is assigned to the Germanic World. The relationship of religion, as Hegel defines it, and the State in the Germanic realm to the concept of freedom will be taken up in subsequent discussion. For the moment, suffice it to say that the realisation of freedom which religion revealed in the incarnation is to take place among the Germanic peoples who are the "bearers of the Christian principle."⁵⁵ The unity between the spirit of the new world and the Germanic spirit is achieved in that the universal principle of Christianity is fused with the concrete subjectivity of the Germans, which Hegel terms *Gemüt* (Heart or human warmth). *Gemüt*, is an abstract principle inherent in the German people. It is a "Natural Totality" a sensibility underlying fellowship based on an inner subjectivity.⁵⁶ This feeling unites itself with the higher purpose revealed in the incarnation, whereby the absolute objectifies itself (the incarnate God) thereby showing man his relation to the divinity: "It is necessary that for the indefinite susceptibility which we designate 'Heart,' the Absolute also should assume the form of an Object, in order that man on his part may attain consciousness of his unity with that Object."⁵⁷ It is not

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.335.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 341.

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 95-96.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 351-352.

coincidental that Hegel's use of *Gemütlichkeit* as a criterion for "bearing" the Christian principle is similar to his definition of love in the early theology, as an all-encompassing, but abstract, category of experience. *Gemütlichkeit* is an "enveloped, indeterminate totality of spirit in reference to will"; it has no particular aim such as riches or honour; it is undivided, surrendering itself to every object. It "does not concern itself with any *objective* condition but with the entire condition of the soul- a general sense of enjoyment."⁵⁸

However, the "higher principle" which the Germanic realm is to bear cannot be restricted to the religious realm but must enter the secular world, which does not occur until the Reformation. The reconciliation between man and God is now seen as possible in secular existence: "Morality and Justice in the State are also divine and commanded by God, and that in point of substance there is nothing higher or more sacred."⁵⁹ In other words, the reconciliation which took place in the individual soul must be externalised in the ethical world for it to achieve concrete universality.

Insofar as world history is the actualisation of the idea, of freedom becoming self-conscious, the transfer onto the ethical realm is not a contradiction of the Christian faith. It merely makes that faith more universal and rational. For the faith is only a belief that man is reconciled to the divine, whereas the ethical world shows this reconciliation to be an actuality. World history is "the development of Idea of freedom,"⁶⁰ but the

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 350.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 422.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 456.

laws of true freedom are only found in objectivity which is the embodiment of reason in the ethical realm.

C. The Philosophy of Religion

The philosophy of religion is problematic from the standpoint of Hegel's relation to Christianity because the compartmentalising of religion under one subject heading undermines the underlying theological thematic in more central parts of the system. Nonetheless, by abstractly relating religion to philosophy in terms of their common object, God, the foundational role of religion in Hegel's system is preserved.

The *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion (LPR)* is divided into three parts: the Concept of Religion, the Determinate Religion, and the Consummate Religion. The section on the incarnation falls under "The Consummate Religion" as a sub-section of "The Second Element": Representation, Appearance. Hegel's particular discussion of the incarnate God occurs in section entitled "Reconciliation" and is subdivided into three parts: a) The Idea of Reconciliation and Its Appearance in a Single Individual; b) The Historical, Sensible Appearance of Christ; c) The Death of Christ and the Transition to Spiritual Presence.⁶¹

⁶¹ Hegel presented four lecture series on the philosophy of religion (1821, 1824, 1827, 1831), and some controversy has arisen as to the consistency of his views, and particularly, as to which of the lecture series can be taken as definitive. The most recent international edition (a collaboration involving English, German, and Spanish versions based on the German critical edition compiled by W. Jaeschke) has settled on the most complete 1827 version, with extensive footnoting and cross-referencing to other editions. For the purpose of Hegel's christology, there were some shifts in emphasis responding to critics and scholarly debate at the time. However, the changes appear to be less dictated by systemic developments than pedagogical experiments in presenting the

The purpose of treating the 'Second Element' (of the divine) is to "consider the (eternal) idea as it emerges out of universality and infinitude into the determinacy of finitude."⁶² This emergence is dependent upon an Other, which Hegel terms the Son that, in the first instance, exists freely and actually apart from God. Otherness is a prerequisite of difference, which is established by its having an objective status apart from God.⁶³ As in the *Phen*, the distinction between nature and history, is reiterated here in terms of two forms of Otherness.

The first is the Other which appears as Nature entering into relationship with humanity but not with God. Nature, "is created by God, but of itself does not enter into a relationship with him- in the sense that it is not possessed of knowledge."⁶⁴ The second Other is formulated in terms of an abstract tension between alienation and its sublation. For there to be a reconciliation, humanity must be conscious of alienation as an antithesis to its freedom. This antithesis Hegel identifies with evil.⁶⁵ This is consistent with the demands of the dialectic, namely, that an antithesis must be posited in order for it to be sublated, "the inner nature of spirit, consists in the sublatedness of the antithesis."⁶⁶ Until the incarnation, Nature coexists with humanity as evil, finite, and

material to his students. For a review of the shifts which did take place, see P. Hodgson (the American editor of the English edition) , "Hegel's Christology: Shifting Nuances in the Berlin Lectures," *JAAR*, 53 (1985): 23-40; also E. Von der Luft, pp. 54-64.

⁶² *LPR*, p. 432.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 434.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 453.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 452.

negative, opposite to God who is good, infinite, positive. However, the Otherness of the Son is that which "eternally posits and sublates itself; the self-positing and sublating of otherness is love or spirit."⁶⁷ The incarnation reconciles the opposition between the two sides; evil and humanity on the one, the good and God on the other. If this does not occur then humanity is only conscious of its relation to the divine, as an Other, that is as a product of Nature which God created, but which has no knowledge of the creator. Thus, the purpose of the explicit sublation is that

the substantiality of the unity of the divine and human nature comes to consciousness for humanity in such a way that a human being appears to consciousness as God, and God appears to it as a human being. This is the necessity and need for such an appearance.⁶⁸

Unlike in Kant, this union cannot be derived from a thought, such as the moral ideal, but must at first exist sensually, in order that it become a "certainty for humanity." Furthermore, it cannot exist in humanity universally, but must appear in "just one human being." For only in the form of humanity as singular and particular, can this unity be said to have achieved sense-certainty. Finally, this singularity is abstract if the divine appears in a *general* singular form; rather it must appear in one *particular* form to the exclusion of all others so that its certainty is recognised in opposition to the rest of humanity. Thus, there are two criteria for the appearance of God - that consciousness can grasp the divine human unity, and that its singularity is exclusive.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 454.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 458.

In this form, the incarnation inaugurates a new consciousness of humanity being reconciled to the divine. What Hegel terms the "consciousness of absolute reconciliation" is defined as a "new consciousness of humanity," or "a new religion."⁷⁰ Because the certainty of the divine/human unity is dependent on the self-objectification of Spirit given in the incarnation, and this unity is only certified through this sensual appearance, the philosophy of Spirit, as opposed to philosophy as such, presupposes the incarnate God. If, as Hegel says, "the object of religion, like that of philosophy, is the eternal truth, God and nothing but God and the explication of God,"⁷¹ then this truth is not a general truth but a truth only affirmed in the sense that God is self-objectifying, and the proof of this self-objectification lies in the incarnation. The self-objectification cannot be philosophically 'thought,' it must first be made certain for humanity. Only then, can philosophy attempt to *conceptualise* what religion *represents*. In this sense, the Incarnation is not only philosophically necessary in that philosophy shows it to be necessary in terms of a religious form, but rather it is necessary for philosophy as Hegel understands it. While reconciliation is represented in, but not wholly expressed by the

⁷⁰ Because the idea of spirit is encompassed in the form of self-othering, which paradigmatically occurs in the incarnation, the death and resurrection of Christ, only reveals that death, i.e. the ultimate symbol of finitude, is shared in by the divine. The negation of the negation which is represented in Christ's overcoming of his own death through the resurrection, is merely the return of Spirit to itself. To a certain extent then, the incarnate cannot be separated from the trinitarian God insofar as God is self-othering: "God is, but also is as the other, as self-distinguishing, so that this other is God himself, having implicitly the divine nature in it, and that the sublation of this difference, this otherness, and the return of love, are the Spirit." Ibid., p. 469. See H. Niel *De la Médiation dans la Philosophie de Hegel*, p. 348: "For Hegel, this movement identifies itself with the act by which man emerges from his otherness to recognise himself as God. Incarnation and Redemption cannot be separated from one another." For a theological account of this problem see K. Rahner's entry on "Incarnation," in (*Encyclopedia of Theology*, p. 91) in which the definition of the incarnation "includes Jesus' human life, his death and resurrection."

⁷¹ LPR, p. 78.

individual Jesus Christ, the incarnation is philosophically necessary because otherwise religion and philosophy would not have the same content.

III. Thematic Components

A. Representation to Concepts

When Hegel notes in the *LPR* that, "philosophy does nothing but transform our representations into concepts,"⁷² he is referring to a dialectical process whereby our knowledge of the objects of consciousness progresses from immediate sense-certainty through representations to concepts. Representations are "a consciousness of something that one has before oneself as something objective."⁷³ The objectivity of representations is rendered through sensible forms or images (*Bilder*), which are not just objects present to the senses, but are used by the mind to represent something. Thus with every representation we have a two-fold meaning, its immediate meaning and its inner meaning. Hegel demonstrates this in religious terms in the sense that the Christian consciousness images to itself the Father begetting a Son (an immediate meaning) which is derived from "a familiar relationship" intended to represent for ourselves a central characteristic of God (an inner meaning). Representations are therefore best seen as symbols invented by consciousness in order to grasp an object not immediately given to sense-certainty through objects that are.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 145.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

The move from representations to concepts is characterised by a movement from the particular to the universal. For example, Hegel says that to describe an object as blue is a representation of the colour in which an object appears to intuition. However, to describe what blue is, that is to know blue in relation to itself, involves a concept of blue. It is a distinction between blue and blueness, between saying something is "blue" and defining what blue "is." ⁷⁴ Concepts are therefore forms whereby thinking penetrates to the essence of an object by defining it in-itself.

Alternatively, the difference between a representation and a concept can be explained in terms of the difference between *who* and *what* the incarnate God is. From the standpoint of religious representation, the incarnate God is Jesus of Nazareth who was born to Joseph and Mary and died on the cross. However, this is only a representation, a taking to be true, that tells us little about what the incarnate God is. The concept of the incarnation, that is, what the incarnate God is, is determined philosophically in terms of "the Self-Objectification of Spirit." Thus, the turn from the *who* to the *what* of Jesus Christ, or from the individual to the idea of Jesus Christ as the central focus of speculative christology, is encompassed in philosophy's elevation of representations into concepts. The Church's image of the God-Man conceptually expresses: "the unity of divine and human nature, implying that the otherness...finitude, weakness, and frailty of human nature, does not damage this unity, just as otherness does not impair the unity that

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 152: In Hegel's words "Thought dissolves this form of the simple, in which the content is found in representation, in such a way that distinct determinations within this simple reality are grasped and exhibited so that it is known as something inwardly manifold."

God is in the eternal idea."⁷⁵ The concept of divine sonship as "being-for-self in the other" characterises that it is in God's nature to differentiate itself in, and return from, an Other. However, God does not reveal himself in the Son *per se*, but rather in the individual Jesus Christ in and through the Son. The idea of Sonship as the divine Being's self-differentiation is made real through the incarnation in the individual Jesus Christ; for only in this form does God objectify itself in a concrete Other. Hegel thereby draws a clear line between Sonship, or the concept of Incarnation, and Jesus Christ, the representation of incarnation. However, they are intrinsically linked in that the latter shows in actuality what it is in God's nature to be.

B. Becoming

"The German himself is not, he is becoming, he is 'developing.'" ⁷⁶ When connected with another of Nietzsche's aphorisms, namely that Protestantism is the original sin of German philosophy,⁷⁷ there may be grounds to suggest that *Menschwerdung* (the Incarnation) and *Werden* (Becoming) are closely related concepts in the Hegelian, if not the German philosophical, heritage. Indeed, the self-externalisation and return to itself of Spirit which is paradigmatically revealed in the incarnation is

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 458.

⁷⁶ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 156. See also another appropriate passage from the *Gay Science* cited by Michael Inwood in the entry on "Being, Nothing, Becoming," *Hegel Dictionary*, p. 44: "We Germans are Hegelians even if there never had been a Hegel, in so far as we (in contrast to all Latins) instinctively assign a deeper sense and richer value to becoming, to development, than to what 'is'; we hardly believe in the justification of the concept 'being'."

⁷⁷ Idem, *The Anti-Christ*, pp. 135-136.

intrinsically linked to idea of Becoming (Werden), which is one of the cornerstone's of Hegel's logic and system. However, insofar as Becoming is an ancient idea with a philosophical history that predates Christianity, found particularly in Heraclitus and Aristotle, caution is advised in seeking an exclusive association between the two. Thus, the idea must first be assessed in terms of its discussion in Hegel's system apart from his views on the incarnation, and then, how it can be combined with arguments advanced in the previous sections.

Firstly, one must come to terms with the Heraclitian origins of Hegel's concept of Becoming which has become standard interpretation in the scholarship.⁷⁸ Heraclitus, who is famous for such sayings as "you cannot step twice in the same river," "it is in changing that things find repose" and "conflict is the essence of change,"⁷⁹ made conflict the underlying condition of all existence. While it is not difficult to see the influence such a doctrine may have had on Hegel's dialectic, there are at least two reasons to suggest that the principle of Becoming, as Hegel applies it, is derived from, or at least combined with other sources. Firstly, the idea of becoming in Heraclitus refers less to the character of humanity than natural laws that govern mechanical processes of

⁷⁸ On Hegel's discussion of Heraclitus, see the *Vorlesungen uber die Geschichte der Philosophie, Teil 2. Griechische Philosophie* (VGP), pp. 69 -81; Commentaries include N. Psimmenos, *Hegel's Heraklit Verständnis*, and K. Axelos, *Héraclite et la Philosophie*; D. Saintillan, "Hegel et Héraclite: où le 'Logos' qui n'a pas de contraire," *Hegel et la pensée grecque*, Ed. J. D'Hondt: 27-84. Psimmenos and Axelos both provide thorough treatments on the Hegel-Heraclitus relation in its larger 19th century context, with Psimmenos providing useful details on the text editions used in the lectures. Brief surveys of Heraclitus's relation to Hegel's broader hellenic inheritance are provided in Küng, *The Incarnation of God*, pp. 434-438, and J. G. Gray, *Hegel and Greek Thought*, pp. 74-75.

⁷⁹ Heraclitus, *Fragments*, Wheelwright ed. Fragments 21, 22, 27 respectively.

change.⁸⁰ Heraclitus' idea of Becoming is restricted by its "naturphilosophische Weise,"⁸¹ by its abstract reference to the objective process of becoming in nature, and has no bearing on the communion of God and man. Thus, while Hegel's dialectic owes something to these earlier versions of Becoming, the manner in which it is defined in the *Logik* and other works demands that a distinction be drawn between natural change and historical progress.⁸²

In Aristotle's notion of purposive activity and the dynamic of "generation and destruction, a dynamic of transformation from subject to non-subject, or from non-subject to subject is expressed."⁸³ However, this realized purpose understood in terms of Becoming, is only being-for-self, in the sense that development is internal to a self that relates only to itself. Hegel thus feels the need to go beyond Aristotle's metaphysics where the emphasis on purposive activity is restricted to a paradigm of Nature which is not conscious of itself as an Other -toward the Absolute understood as Spirit. For Spirit is not only being-for-self, but also other-being. This Hegel terms the "most sublime Notion and the one which belongs to the modern age and its religion", i.e. Christianity. In other words, the God of Greek metaphysics who is immutable and thinks only himself

⁸⁰ Perhaps, for this reason, Lenin found such an accurate synopsis of dialectical materialism in Heraclitus' atheistic rendering of the universe. Lenin refers to the following fragment: "This universe, which is the same for all, has not been made by any god or man, but it always has been, is, and will be -- an ever living fire, kindling itself by regular measure, and going out by regular measure." Cited in Axelos, p. 229.

⁸¹ *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie, Teil 2*, p. 75.

⁸² *Phen.*, § 25.

⁸³ See Aristotle, Book V of the *Physics*, 225a, and Book 11:11,1067b-1068a of the *Metaphysics*.

must be, and is, superseded by a God who is self-othering and developmental. The higher human value associated with Becoming is tied to the emergence of subjectivity given in Christianity. As such, Hegel, "le Héraclite de la subjectivité,"⁸⁴ can appropriate Heraclitus' emphasis on movement and conflict into his pure logic, but this is only the most abstract formulation of becoming. For the mechanical and objective identity of being and nothing passes subsequently into Life and finally, Spirit, where it finds its highest and most human form.⁸⁵

This simple fact can be allied to another basic fixture of Hegel's system which complicates the discussion of Heraclitean influences on his notion of becoming. Namely, the hierarchical and developmental quality of the history of philosophy where earlier systems give way to subsequent and superior ones. Heraclitus and Hegel are historically separated by Christianity and the Christian mystics such as Jakob Boehme whom Hegel held in high regard and for whom the idea of becoming is equally central.⁸⁶ In this light, Christianity can be seen as bringing the uniquely historical, as opposed to natural, dimension of Becoming to bear on the human condition. The self-realisation, or

⁸⁴ Saintillan, p. 83.

⁸⁵ *Enc.*, § 88.5.

⁸⁶ The early Christian philosopher, Justin Martyr considered Heraclitus a Christian *avant la lettre*. See Axelos, pp. 225-227. Boehme, aware of Heraclitus or not, held that everything was born in struggle and that God was the unity of darkness and light. By giving a Christian spiritualist formulation to this "Ewiges contrarium zwischen Finsternis und Licht," in terms of the relation of the Father and Son, Boehme's achievement lies, according to Hegel, in the profundity by which absolute contradictions are reconciled. Although considered untrained and unsystematic (he was a shoemaker by trade), it is a sign of Boehme's significance for Hegel that he closes the "Vorperiode der neueren Philosophie" (Premodern period of philosophy) in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, see *Vorlesungen*, Vol. 9, pp. 78-87.

Becoming, of humanity is no longer a cycle of generation and decay, as in the Aristotelian or Heraclitean forms. These two points, the mechanistic nature of the idea of Becoming in Aristotle and Heraclit, and the transformation this idea undergoes in Christianity, suggest that a restrictive association of Hegel's use of Becoming to Heraclitus or Aristotle hardly does justice to the closer parallels suggested in the Christian usage; or in a usage which integrates logic, Becoming, and history, "the self-emptying of Spirit into time," in a manner similar to Hegel's interpretation of "revealed religion."

However, before drawing any explicit conclusions, a closer look at Hegel's formulation of Becoming in the *Encyclopedia of Logic (Enc)* is warranted. Becoming is derived from the negativity of being or, "the Truth of Being and Nothing is accordingly the unity of the two: and this unity is Becoming."⁸⁷ As such, the beginning is the unity of being and nothing which however looks forward to something other, to something which 'as yet is not.' From this arises Hegel's familiar formulation which he considers the first definition of the absolute, namely the identity of identity and non-identity. The unity of being and nothing as the beginning or purest form of the Absolute, already presupposes a change to an Other, a becoming: Being is the passage into Nought, and Nought the passage into Being."⁸⁸ Thus, the restlessness of the Absolute is implicit from the beginning insofar as Being at the beginning is already in transition to something which is no longer the beginning. This negation that affirms and thereby makes progress possible, Hegel saw as a fundamental and unique achievement of his philosophy that set itself off from other philosophies which assert the beginning in terms of a concrete and

⁸⁷ *Enc.*, § 88.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, § 88.4.

static Being whose negation is not implicit in its nature.

This, in short, is the essence of Hegel's dialectic. Or, as stated in the *PR*:

The logical is the dialectical where being, considered as such on its own account, turns out to be the untrue, even turns out to be nothing; and the next determination, the truth of being, is Becoming. Becoming is a simple representation relating itself to itself, something wholly immediate, although it contains within itself the two determinations, being and nonbeing.⁸⁹

Although Hegel draws a distinction between the immediate and the mediated - the former is defined by its self-sufficiency, while the latter by its relation to other things- becoming, as a transition from being to nothing, or from nothing to being, is both immediate, i.e. relating itself to itself, and mediate, i.e. determined.

As an expression of the identity of identity and non-identity, of being and nothing, becoming can be rigorously analysed without reference to suggestive parallels to Hegel's christological influences, and specifically, the concept of the *Menschwerdung*.⁹⁰ Nonetheless, to do so undermines the foundational role assigned to the incarnation both as the archetypical self-externalisation of Spirit and the beginning of history as becoming, i.e. the purposive activity of providence. Ultimately, a purely philosophical assessment of Hegel's concept of Becoming separates Being from the divine Being for whom the self-negation revealed in the incarnation is a fundamental testimony to the fact that Becoming is intrinsic to its nature. This divine Being is for Hegel Spirit, the Becoming of which, as outlined in Section 2a above, has two sides: Nature and History. The

⁸⁹ *LPR*, p. 158.

⁹⁰ For two such examples, see X. Brenner, *Die Kategorie des Werdens in der Hegelschen Logik des Seins* and U. Guzzoni in *Werden zu Sich: Eine Untersuchung zu Hegel's 'Wissenschaft der Logik'*.

historical side is for Hegel the more important aspect of Becoming, insofar as it is not merely a continuous natural cycle of birth and decay but rather the self-actualisation of Spirit in historical time. Because the actualisation of Spirit operates in and through humanity, one cannot separate *Werden* from *Menschwerdung*, that is the logical category of Becoming, from the process of humanisation.

This is not to say that any direct parallels between the dialectical formulae Being\Nothing\Becoming and God\Man\Becoming-Man of God (Gott\Mensch\Menschwerdung Gottes) can be drawn. Hegel at no point refers to such parallels directly. Nonetheless, it can be inferred from the relationship between the unity of being and nothing and the unity between God and man paradigmatically represented in the incarnation. In both cases Becoming is "The Being that does not lose itself in Nothing."⁹¹ Furthermore, in Hegel's view, the same contradiction which characterises the identity of Being and Nothing in the Logic is evident in the Incarnation. In fact, Hegel phrases this contradiction in similar terms - in the *LPR*: "This determination, namely, that God becomes human...is the most difficult moment in religion,"⁹² and in the *Enc.*: "It (Being= Nothing) is one of the hardest things that thought expects itself to do."⁹³ Thus, it can be said that Becoming cannot be reduced to logical formulas or a natural mechanical process, but only gains its true, Hegelian meaning in terms of its Christian significance as *Menschwerdung*, the self-externalisation of Spirit in and through humanity.

⁹¹ *Enc.*, § 88.5.

⁹² *LPR*, p. 457 fn.

⁹³ *Enc.*, § 88.1.

C. Mediation

The concept of mediation and mediacy implies something arbitrating between two opposing poles. As such it expresses a unity or ideal position, such as in the Aristotelian mean of the *Nichomachean ethics*, or in Jesus Christ as the mediator between man and God. Hegel's approach is somewhat different in that mediation is not directly a mean between two poles but rather the process itself by which these two poles interrelate. That is, mediation is a condition of going out into and returning from an other. Nonetheless, the end result is the same in that mediation implies a unity between subject and object, infinite and finite, abstract and concrete that is achieved through self-differentiation.

Hegel's discussion of mediation is often conducted with reference to its opposite, immediacy. Immediacy refers to a condition whereby the subject of consciousness is separated, or alienated, from its object. It is pure thinking, the beginning. The transition from immediate to mediated existence occurs through Spirit, which is the "movement of becoming other to itself, i.e. becoming an object to itself."⁹⁴ In this movement the immediate subject alienates itself and returns to itself, and thereby acquires the characteristic of mediation. In this movement:

Spirit has made its existence identical with its essence; it has itself for its object just as it is, and the abstract element of immediacy, and of the separation of knowing and truth, is overcome. Being is then absolutely mediated.⁹⁵

Mediation has a general and fundamental function in Hegel as the reconciliation of

⁹⁴ *Phen.*, preface, § 36.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, § 37.

opposites. Thus, nature and freedom, particular and universal, being and nothing, man and God, all demand the *Mittlernbegriff* (a middle term).

However, the incarnate God as the mediator between the human and the divine encompasses all these dichotomies, because it represents the foundational form of mediation which philosophy makes as its object.⁹⁶ The significance of mediation for understanding Hegel's speculative appropriation of the incarnate God is thus two-fold. Firstly, the mediation between the human and the divine revealed in the incarnation shows the divine to be active in, if not the sum total, of human individual activity. As noted in the introduction, the High God of antiquity, the abstract God of law and reason always appealed to the philosopher and intellectual who could love God by way of contemplation. However, insofar as this meant little to the populus, such a High God only achieved abstract universality. The Mediator made God accessible and showed him to be part of humanity, and in Christian tradition, this Mediator emerges from the Judaic tradition (John 1:17-18): "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known." The Judaeo-Christian Mediator makes God universally accessible, not in the abstract sense of the universal quality of reason to deliberate on the divine, but rather in the concrete sense of becoming visible, sensible and, literally, popular. For both this reason and for reasons specific to his philosophy, Hegel considered Christianity the philosophy of the people and the (true) religion of the philosopher.

⁹⁶ *Enc.*, § 384.

Secondly, as an expression of a relationship between a subject and itself which is derived through the encounter with an Other, mediation bears a resemblance to Hegel's concept of love. Love, as the quest for self-recognition through the Other, is in fact, the most basic form of mediation, expressing a union of opposites in a more intuitive and immediate form. Thus, according to Niel, Hegel's concept of mediation passes through three stages. At the initial stage it is represented in the act of love. In the second stage, in the *Phen*, it represents the ideal relation among the interlocking moments of the whole. Finally, it comes to represent the identity between logic and history. In spite of their diversity, Niel argues that all the formulations of mediation are united in "the idea that the incarnation (not specifically intended in the Christian sense) of the infinite in the finite realises itself in the act whereby all the different finite beings detach themselves from their individuality and pass into each other." ⁹⁷

Although mediation has a logical and epistemological significance beyond or apart from speculative christology, its central role must be seen to operate within the project Hegel sets himself at the beginning, namely the reconciliation of divine and human. It does not imply that the reconciliation given in the incarnation is the inspiration for the concept of mediation. For mediation itself is a relatively anonymous activity of Spirit, going out of and returning to, itself. As Löwith has noted: "This mediation appears historically in Jesus Christ as Mediator, but this is in itself as anonymous as the 'logical essence' of God."⁹⁸ Nonetheless, this principle is so quintessentially Hegelian, so rooted in the dialectic and the philosophy of reconciliation, that is, the unity of the human and

⁹⁷ Niel, pp. 16-17.

⁹⁸ See K. Löwith, "Hegels Aufhebung der Christlichen Religion," p. 139.

the divine, that for Hegel the attribute of mediation to the divine Being can only be assigned in and through the precedent set by Jesus Christ as Mediator.

Ultimately, the unity of the human and the divine is for Hegel a question of how the individual acquires freedom, that is, self-recognition and self-realisation. The self-abandonment of the individual into a larger whole is an imperative of his conception of freedom. Mediation characterises this process, not only in that freedom finds a form adequate to its content in the consummation of the historical process of self-mediation, but that this, ultimately political consummation, is a mediation between the individual and Spirit in the form of ethical life and the State.

Conclusion

The isolated focus on the incarnation in this chapter has nonetheless not been restricted to a christological focus. For the various definitions attributed to the incarnation in Hegel's works - the unity of opposites in love and pleroma (*SCF*), as the paradigm of self-knowledge through externalisation (*The Phenomenology of Spirit*), the fundamental nexus of freedom and history (*The Philosophy of History*), 'the consciousness of absolute reconciliation,' (*Philosophy of Religion*), the *concept* of the incarnation, the idea of humanisation as **Becoming**, the paradigmatic mediation between infinite and finite - all have bearing on his central themes. Nonetheless, one must still ask: Is Hegel's speculative appropriation of the incarnate God a rehabilitation or distortion of Christianity? Insofar as the foregoing presentation has attempted to navigate between

theological and philosophical prejudices concerning the role of Christian influences in Hegel's system, it has deliberately fostered an ambiguity between the general idea of incarnation, i.e. the activity of Spirit in the mature works, and the Christian idea of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. For exactly this reason (the theologian) Macquarrie ponders on Hegel's formulation: "whether the historical incarnation in Jesus of Nazareth has anything like the weight of the ontological self-externalisation of the Absolute Spirit in the world of the finite."⁹⁹ Macquarrie sees Hegel resolving the contradiction between the particular event of Christ and its universal significance by interpreting the former as the "historical counterpart of Spirit's universal incarnation and self sacrifice."¹⁰⁰ The historicity of the incarnate God shows that it is in the nature of the divine to be Spirit, that is, externalise to itself in the finite. As such, Hegel transforms the symbolic moment of the Jesus Christ event into a realm and process of interpenetrating opposites founded on a grand ontological expression concerning what it means for humanity to become. In doing so, the problem of individual sin and redemption for the community of faith is superseded by, and subordinated to, the goal of collective self-realisation in a rational new world.

Furthermore, the speculative incarnation represents a fundamental antithesis to the alienation he saw expressed in Judaeo-Kantianism. Hegel's "revolutionary-emancipatory interest" which philosophers such as Theunissen have attributed to Christianity¹⁰¹ -but have not systematically isolated the incarnation as the central moment of that "interest" as has been attempted here - can only be effectively integrated into the philosophical

⁹⁹ Macquarrie, pp. 220-221.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 220.

¹⁰¹ see Theunissen, *Hegel's Lehre*, p. 6.

problematic of the system if it is dislodged from its conventional habitus in the *Early Theological Writings* and the *Philosophy of Religion*. For the conjunction of the religious and philosophical in Hegel's new world lies precisely in the foundational tension between the human and divine, between alienation, i.e. the divided self, and humanisation (*Menschwerdung*), its self-actualisation and its freedom.

It is perhaps at the level where Hegel not only schematically posited Judaeo-Kantianism in his early theology, but also all symptoms of dualism, i.e. immediacy, abstraction, alienation, egoism, which needed to be overcome, that the idea of the political already enters the scene. For the political suggests the instrumentalisation of reason for the sake of the common good. The freedom implied by the self-manifesting divine must be concretised in the realm of ethical life. The substance underlying this realm must be made into the collective Subject and mediate between the individual and freedom. In this light, the role of the incarnate God in Hegel's political thought, the subject of the following chapter, can be seen in relation to his central concerns rather than as a purely metaphorical motif that is often suggested in the following familiar passage:

It is in the organisation of the state that the divine has broken through into the sphere of actuality; the latter is permeated by the former, and the worldly realm is now justified in and for itself, for its foundation is the divine will, the law of right and freedom. The true reconciliation, whereby the divine realizes itself in the domain of actuality, consists in the ethical and juridical life of the state: this is the authentic discipline of worldliness.¹⁰²

¹⁰² *LPR*, p. 484, fn. 250.

Chapter 4

The Rational Mediator: The Incarnation and the State

The Ethical Whole is no mere represented or thought God, but a real one. Hegel¹

Introduction

The Ethical Whole is neither a romantic makroanthropos nor a postulate of practical reasoning, but rather the rational reality of a God whose nature it is to be self-othering. Whether or not one accepts such an interpretation, Hegel's conviction that reality is rational and rationality real is an unusual application of logic to political thought. Specifically, it involves the application of the incarnation thematic to the political realm.

The nature of that thematic, detailed in the previous chapter, consists of three principal forms: 1) as the sublation of the Judaeo-Kantian paradigm in the early theology, i.e. the supersession of law by love; 2) as a form of reconciliation between the human and divine, in the most general sense, of humanity's divided self born of dichotomies inherited from the Enlightenment (private/public, necessity/freedom, is/ought); 3) as a motif with considerable bearing on three principal Hegelian themes: the elevation of representations to concepts, becoming, and mediation. Hegel's speculative appropriation of the incarnate God, as it appears in the System, can thus be summarised as a self-

¹ *Philosophie des Rechts. Mitschriften Homeyer*, ed. Ilting, § 76, p. 249.

othering and mediating Absolute which actualises itself in and through humanity and its history. Along these lines, the divine/human unity paradigmatically revealed in Jesus Christ is both a process and a collective ontological condition wherein humanity strives to actualise its divine potential. The previous chapter outlined this problematic and concluded by citing a passage, with suggestive christological overtone, from the *Philosophy of Religion*: "It is in the organisation of the state that the divine has broken through into the sphere of actuality." The purpose of the following chapter is to examine to what extent this "breaking through" can be seen as an application of the speculative incarnate God to the political context where the self-othering Spirit finds a form adequate to its content. In doing so, it will be argued that the controversy surrounding the motif of "the divine on earth" has been misguided. Those who take it literally tend to implicate Hegel as a mystical reactionary; those who deny it attempt, by various means, to argue away theological influences. These two schools of thought can be roughly divided into mystical-totalitarian and liberal-conventionalist.

The mystical-totalitarian view, as seen in critiques ranging across the political spectrum from the early Marx to Karl Popper, consider the notion of the "divine on earth" a reactionary blend of metaphysics and politics that sanctions the predominance of the State over the individual. Thus, while not given to an entirely literalist interpretation whereby the State is said to be seen by Hegel as an actual God on earth, they still assume Hegel viewed "the divine idea" as a totalisation of reason embodied and instrumentalised in the State. Marx considered this a product of Hegel's supposed tendency to "logicise" (logifizieren) empirical relations, so that the logical idea could be mystically deduced from them. As a result, substance and freedom are attributed to the

State as the whole, rather than the empirical relations of civil society where they should naturally reside. For Popper and liberal Kantian critics, Hegel's application of logic (assuming Hegel's identity of the divine and the logical idea) to political thought amounts to a profound and inexcusable subordination of the individual to some larger totality represented by the State.

The liberal-conventionalist interpretation, responding particularly to false assumptions of the mystical totalitarian variety, advocates a non-theological orientation by placing Hegel in the context of Montesquieu, Rousseau or Kant, or by drawing explicit parallels with Aristotelian and Platonic forms of political theorising. This is respectively accomplished by examining Hegel's efforts to radicalise natural law theory and/or realise Kantian morality, or by showing either: a) the continuity from Hegel's early political writings (where Aristotle was an important influence) and the later *Philosophy of Right (PR)*; or b) or substantive Aristotelian and Platonic influences, such as the idea of praxis, and the prioritisation of the whole over the part. Admittedly, the impulse for the conventional Hellenic interpretations has often been to counteract ideologically-motivated or theological interpretations that neglected the extent to which Hegel's philosophy is anchored, albeit in a special sense, in the tradition of Western political thought.²

² See, for example, Riedel's *Between Tradition and Revolution*, p. vii: "This study attempts to correct the distortions and flaws in the history of the book's (The Philosophy of Right) influence by offering a point of view which allows Hegel's Philosophy of Right to be read in the context of Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics*, Hobbes *Leviathan* and Rousseau's *Social Contract*."

Nonetheless, the lack of any serious consideration of speculative theological influences imposes considerable limits on the interpretive capacities of both the mystical-totalitarian and conventionalist attempts to understand the novelty of Hegel's political thought. Some studies which do take seriously the influence of speculative theological thematic, and are relevant to the discussion, will be considered in the main body of our analysis.³ However, that influence cannot be properly affirmed without passing through, and doing justice to, the most recognised interpretations which construe Hegel's problematic in more earthly and pragmatic terms. Nor can the influence be competently construed by analysing Church/State relations, Hegel's contribution to contemporary theological disputes, or suggestive mystical imagery, but rather by assuming, based on what the previous chapter demonstrated, that the theological problematic is already imbedded in certain important ways in Hegel's logic and metaphysics. In turn, Hegel's political thought is derived from his metaphysics. This is a fact recognised by a considerable, if not growing, body of literature,⁴ and intimated in the preface to the *Philosophy of Right (PR)*: "I need hardly say that the chief difference between this manual and an ordinary compendium lies in the method which constitutes their guiding principle."⁵ In the broadest sense then, the problem lies in the fact that the *Philosophy*

³ e.g. Theunissen, *Hegel's Lehre*, Scheit, *Geist und Gemeinde*.

⁴ For systematic examinations on the logical basis to the *Philosophy of Right*, see Hanisch, *Dialektische Logik u. politische Argument* and Steinberger, *Logic and Politics*. However, one might not want to go so far as G. A. Kelly who severely criticises those who try to come to terms with Hegel's political thought without recourse to his metaphysics: "Political theorists whose lasting contributions prove to be built chiefly on constitutional or programmatic material are hardly to be despised but they are misleading guides to the construction of political philosophy as Hegel conceived it." *Hegel's Retreat from Eleusis*, pp. 17-18.

⁵ *PR*, preface, p. 1

of Right is not really political theory at least as defined by Isaiah Berlin: "political theory is a branch of moral philosophy, which starts from the discovery, or application, of moral notions in the sphere of political relations."⁶ While this definition certainly applies to the canon of Western political thought, the novelty of Hegel's system lies in the application of metaphysical and "spiritual" (*geistliche*) rather than specific moral aspects to the idea of the political.⁷

These metaphysical aspects are rooted in the formulation of the system of right based on the logical spirit and the intrinsic relation between logical and empirical reality which underlies it. This involves two logical dimensions. Firstly, that speculative knowing has as its task to comprehend reality as rational and, secondly, that this principal demonstrates itself by passing through a series of stages such that each subsequent stage emerges from the contradictions of the previous one. This dialectical process through Abstract Right, Morality, and the various forms of Ethical Life culminates in the State.

⁶ I. Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, p. 120.

⁷ Riedel attempts to accommodate the Christian aspect in Hegel's thought without recourse to metaphysics or the novelty of Spirit, as follows: "Politics, the science of human social life in the state, becomes the philosophy of right (law) for him (Hegel), because he tries to annul the revolutionary antithesis between a natural law which precedes the state and a law which state power presents to the individuals by grounding both on natural-rational right as such: the freedom of human being qua human. But this natural and rational right has, for Hegel, a historical content, which cannot be specified more precisely here; it consists - since the entry of Christianity into world history - in the equality of souls before God and since the end of the eighteenth century in the equality and freedom of individuals before the revolutionary state." *Between Tradition and Revolution*, p. 164. While Riedel can, through this analysis, address the ontological nature of humanity's self-realisation in the Hegelian State, the Christian influences are overly confined to a historical dimension. For Hegel's speculative projection of the incarnation thematic onto the social and political world showed that the significance of the "freedom of human being qua human" is a *philosophical* as well as a *historical* legacy of Christianity. As such, it cannot be subsumed under a historical category which is, in turn, superseded by more advanced forms, i.e., the French Revolution.

The spiritual aspect is not so much a mystical overtone as a systematic derivative of the concept of Spirit, the "knowledge of oneself in the externalisation of oneself," (Phenomenology) which in turn was shown to share certain similarities with the definition of love in the Frankfurt period. As such, Spirit is closely linked to intersubjectivity in that both are grounded in the self-consciousness of the subject in and through the recognition of an other. It also refers to Hegel's non-mechanical and non-natural formulation of the State itself:

Of course the State is essentially worldly and finite; it has particular ends and particular powers; but its worldly character is only one of its aspects, and it is only to an unintelligent superficial glance that it is finite and nothing more. For the state has a life-giving soul, and the soul which animates it is subjectivity, which creates differences and yet at the same time holds them together in unity. (§ 270, Addition)

The state is neither purely finite, a mechanism for the satisfaction of human needs, nor purely infinite, a utopian ideal, but rather (and predictably) the unity of the finite and infinite.

However, to avoid a theological orientation, one might argue that insofar as the State is non-mechanistic and somehow embodies the higher good, the divine in Hegel's State can be understood in the Aristotelian and Thomistic senses of a contemplative philosophical approach to Being separate from the realm of necessity governed by practical knowledge.⁸ However, to reduce the divine to a synonym of "the theoretical" or "contemplative" and thereby explain away the metaphysical overtones does not do justice to the more structured, and speculatively theological sense in which Hegel's

⁸ In this sense, for Hegel, "the state has for its content man in his relation to the divine and not only in his needful nature, as is the case in natural law theories of society." Joachim Ritter, "Hegel and the French Revolution," in *Hegel and the French Revolution: Essays on the Philosophy of Right*, p. 37.

"divine" is operative in political life. Alternatively, along the lines of Taylor, it is possible to attribute Hegel's concept of the divine Spirit to an original departure from the canons of Western political thought, e.g. Kantian autonomy or Rousseau's "general will."⁹ Taylor argues that whereas Kant and Rousseau define freedom as "human freedom and the will as human will," Hegel attempts to show that "man reaches his basic identity as a vehicle of Geist." However, although Taylor notes that Spirit is self-positing and embodies itself in man and history, he neglects the incarnational thematic that informs this activity. This neglect stems largely from a preference for attributing originality to Hegel's formulation within the parameters of Western philosophy, rather than problematising a religious influence that falls outside them. This influence is neatly summarised by noting, not incorrectly but also not adequately, that "Hegel only accepted a Christianity which had been systematically reinterpreted to be a vehicle of his own philosophy."¹⁰ In fact, the converse is true. Hegel proposed a philosophy which could serve as a vehicle for his systematic reformulation of Christianity. Insofar as this point was established in the previous chapter, and recognised by Hegel's immediate interpreters such as Feuerbach, i.e. that speculative philosophy is religion rendered into thought, the following chapter concerns itself only with the political dimension of that philosophy.

The first section of this chapter will attempt to articulate the manner in which the conventional dialogue with the canon of Western political theory cannot accommodate the metaphysical and theological character of Hegel's political thought. Section 2 establishes certain fundamentals of Hegel's concept of freedom, and shows how the

⁹ Charles Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society*, p.79.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 39.

themes of love and the Judaeo-Kantian are operative in the treatment on the family and civil society. Section 3 treats the State in terms of its structural and systematic relationship to Hegel's speculative appropriation of the incarnate God with particular reference to the relationship between religion and politics, the bureaucracy, the monarch, and world history.

I. Natural Law and Hellenism

A. Natural Law and the "Absonderung"

It has been suggested above that the metaphysical and spiritual background to Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* cannot be accommodated by reference to his critical dialogue with the canon of Western political theory alone. Nonetheless, references of this kind have been made and forcefully defended. For example, Riedel notes that the full title of the *Philosophy of Right - Natural Law and Political Science in Outline; Elements of the Philosophy of Right-* , "points to the origin of Hegel's legal thought, his struggle with classical politics and modern natural law theory, in the course of which he came to understand the limits of both and the condition for overcoming them."¹¹ In claiming Hegel as an heir to "idealistic theories of natural law," Riedel makes a case for conventionalising him in the context of Rousseau, Fichte, and Kant, and thereby muting ideologically or theologically-orientated interpretations that attempt to separate him from the Western tradition. However, the difficulty raised by Riedel's thorough interpretation

¹¹ Riedel, *Between Tradition and Revolution*, p. 104.

of Hegel's departure from both the empirical and formal traditions in natural law,¹² is that it obscures the extent to which the dichotomy between freedom and nature is rooted in a metaphysical and theological problematic. Although Hegel's departure from natural law is informed by the advances of Hobbes, Rousseau and Kant in making the rational and subjective, rather than the divine, will the basis and legitimacy of political life, ultimately it cannot be understood with reference to natural law theory alone.

In his early essay on natural law (1802) Hegel distinguishes between two separate traditions of natural law theory: empirical, that, although not stated explicitly, seems to apply to Hobbes and Rousseau, and formal, that applies to Kant and Fichte. According to Hegel, both are inadequate but for different reasons. Empirical natural law presupposes a hypothetical state of nature from which individuals attain sociability based on some singular and natural human trait, such as self-preservation or language. This trait then becomes a fundamental principle said to ground a host of empirical relations that govern human behaviour in society. Idealist natural law assumes a priority of the individual against the given social order by distinguishing strictly between the realm of freedom and the realm of necessity. However, since that realm of freedom cannot generate a political model out of itself, the idealists are forced to fall back on principles derived from necessity, such as the harmonising of private property relations. In both cases, empirical and formal natural law, Hegel's objection rests mainly on the fact that neither is derived from the empirical relations given in the ethical realm (*sittliche*). Rather, it is derived from the aggregate of the individual relations characteristic of the moral realm of civil society, which are harmonised by a hypothesised contract. In the words of Riedel:

¹² Ibid., pp. 57-104.

for Hegel, as distinct from the idealistic theory of natural law from Rousseau to Fichte, the idea of right is not simply a possibility of thought, but a historically mediated actuality making it necessary for philosophy to relinquish its position of abstract natural law and to 'apprehend and portray the state as something inherently rational.¹³

A number of explanations have been drawn from arguments internal to Hegel's dialogue with natural law theory to explain his departure from it. Some base it on the need to resolve the tension between the historically given (political science) and the rationally postulated (natural law), that is, between the State as a mechanism of need-satisfaction and a soulful, higher realm of ethical life;¹⁴ others in terms of an Aristotelian idea of *Endzweck*, or final cause, whereby every concept, including the state, strives to realise its inner nature.¹⁵ In a sense, the most neutral explanation is that Hegel wishes to synthesise the empirical and idealist version of natural law by showing on the one hand that, in a very Kantian sense, freedom is a potential and realm set off from nature. On the other hand, freedom as a process of self-production occurs within the realm of history and empirical relations.

Insofar as the concept of Right is the "world of mind brought forth out of itself," a "second nature," and the "realm of freedom made actual," suggestive parallels arise

¹³ Riedel, p. 39

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 36-37.

¹⁵ M. Bienenstock, "The Logic of Political Life: Hegel's Concept of Political Philosophy," p. 166: "By arguing that men's practical judgments are directed by an 'end,' Hegel wants to say that they themselves but also men's actions and, beyond these actions, men's way of life as a whole are structured by an underlying unity, a rationality of their own. Whether we are aware of it or not, he argues, our actions, and, indeed, our way of life as a whole are articulated by a conceptual structure; and the task of the political philosopher consists in bringing out this conceptual structure."

with Hegel's speculative formulation of the incarnation. These will be addressed in the following section. For the moment, however, a few parallels can be alluded to which are found in the critique of natural law, but which are generally attributed to either Aristotelian influences or, more prosaically and less convincingly, to an engagement with natural law theory itself. Firstly, there is the distinction between nature and freedom, a distinction evident in Kant, but as a dichotomous rather than dialectical relationship. As reviewed in the previous chapter, in Hegel's thought the incarnation inaugurates the self-consciousness of freedom by showing humanity its own divine potential and thereby liberates it, in Pauline terms, from submission to the Law. Equally, the concept of right is not a natural determination, but a self determination of Spirit. This defining moment is reiterated in a more specifically ethical sense in the distinction Hegel draws, in the essay on Natural Law, between the law and ethical life. Whereas law legislates in the practical realm, subjectively in terms of feeling and physical necessity - and objectively - in terms of work and possessions - both spheres are subordinated to a third absolute sphere of ethical life. Here, the fulfilment of the law or of the practical realm, is seen as a means to elevate the individual from the regulatory guidance mandated by a law grounded in the pursuit of self-interest to freedom which, though first inwardised in the subjective impulse of love, is objectified in ethical life. Thus, the distinction between nature and freedom resembles Hegel's speculative juxtaposition of the Judaeo-Kantian paradigm and the appropriation of the incarnation in both a historical form - the transition archetypically rendered in the pivotal point of the incarnation - and an ethical form - the distinction between law and love.

While these themes will be elaborated on in Section two, for the moment we could say that the evidence of the incarnation thematic in Hegel's critique of natural law lies in the sense in which the ethical life that transcends it shares definitional similarities with the early theological love, and the mature incarnation thematic, in terms of the self-produced intersubjectivity of the (human) Spirit. As such, Hegel's critique of natural law has been characterised as taking human self-determination to its highest extreme by transforming the "contemplation of a pre-established order" into the "production of order".¹⁶ However, this production is not an individual or mechanical activity, but the product of a collective and historically engaged spirit. This simple fact must be stressed to accommodate the dramatic break, "Absonderung," of German political philosophy from the natural law tradition from the early 19th century onward.¹⁷ In place of the universally binding law arises the world spirit that embodies itself in specific historico-national forms. Morality is internalised and replaced by a spiritualised ethical community by which the individual binds itself to the laws of his or her historical context. The suggestive bearing of the incarnation thematic on this general German phenomenon cannot be discussed here. However, the spiritualist dimension of the "Absonderung" reinforces the extent to which an analysis of Hegel's critique of natural law is an insufficient guide to the imperatives that underlie his mature, original political thought.

¹⁶ Stefan Breuer, "The Metamorphoses of Natural Law: On the Social Function of the Pre-Bourgeois and Bourgeois Foundations of Law," *Telos*, 70, (Winter 86-87), p. 100.

¹⁷ On the *Absonderung* thesis, see H. Halborn, "Der Deutsche Idealismus in Sozialgeschichtlicher Beleuchtung," *HZ*, Vol 174, 1952, p.378; H. Kohn *The Mind of Germany*, (p.320) where he cites Troeltsch's classic formulation from "The Ideas of Natural Law and Humanity," (1922): "the State becomes the embodiment of a particular spiritual world as it exists at a given time, and the justice and law it enforces also becomes particular and positive...The result of this view is a total and fundamental dissolution of the idea of a universal Natural Law; and henceforth Natural Law disappears almost completely in Germany."

B. Hellenism

It was mentioned above that the purpose of the liberal-conventionalist interpretation was to re-integrate Hegel into his proper place in Western political thought by countering ideologically-motivated or mystical interpretations. In terms of the Hellenic argument, this has followed two basic lines: 1) emphasis on Aristotelian and, to a lesser degree, Platonic influences in terms of an unreflective identity between the individual and the social order found in the Hellenic polis. As expressed by Taylor: "The polis was the paradigm historical case from which Hegel's notion of *Sittlichkeit* derived" ¹⁸; 2) the influence of isolated philosophers such as Heraclitus, and the neo-platonists such as Proclus and Plotinus.¹⁹ Insofar as Hegel's assessment of individual Hellenic philosophers can be found in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* and, with the exception of Aristotle and Plato, have little bearing on the *Philosophy of Right*, the following discussion will concentrate primarily on the first aspect.

The first aspect of the Hellenic argument concerns the notion that Hegel's concept of *Sittlichkeit* derives from the ethical harmony characteristic of the classical Greek polis. A number of empirical points substantiate this claim. One major exponent, K.H. Ilting,

¹⁸ Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society*, p. 125.

¹⁹ In particular, the essays in W. Beierwaltes, *Platonismus und Idealismus* but also isolated studies on Heraclitus cited in chapter 3. Neo-platonic influences are significant in terms of the close relationship they assume between philosophy and theology which Hegel viewed favourably. Furthermore, these influences were considered of some importance by Hegel's successors such as Feuerbach who criticised him as the "German Proclus," as one who 'theologised reality'. However, neo-platonism is of less significance for Hegel's political thought, and, as it is largely ignored by political theorists who embrace the Hellenic argument, will not be considered here.

mentions that Hegel's most intensive preoccupation with Aristotle (1802-1805) coincides with the writing of his first major work in political theory, the *System of Ethics*.²⁰ In this early work, modelled after Aristotle's *Politics*, Ilting claims Hegel found readymade a theory whereby the political community took precedence over the individual. Ilting further notes that both Hegel and Aristotle developed the ethical idea as a teleological concept. Finally, he points out that Hegel consistently translated "polis" as "Volk" which suggests a Hellenic derivative for *Volksgeist*, the emotive bond of ethical harmony.

The import of Aristotle for Hegel's early political writings is undisputed, particularly in terms of the favourable comparisons drawn between the ethical life of the polis and the abstractions of modern natural law theory: "(in classical politics) individuality as such is nothing, and simply one with absolute majesty - which genuine, living, non-servile oneness, is the only true ethical life of the individual."²¹ The outlines for Hegel's later theory of ethical life are clear, but it should be remarked that he acknowledged the extent to which this unity of the individual with the whole in the Hellenic polis was unreflective in the sense that the subject did not question his

²⁰ See K.H. Ilting, "Hegel's Auseinandersetzung mit der aristotelischen Politik," in *Hegel: Frühe Politische Systeme*, p. 771. Also Riedel, p. 9, makes the claim that "Hegel was one of the first people in Germany to study the texts of Aristotle's *Ethics* and *Politics*," an undertaking whose influence is felt in the early political writings of the Jena period. Ilting's emphasis on Hellenic influences can be seen in the context of his larger interpretive project designed to de-monopolise the influence of the *Philosophy of Right* on scholarly understanding of Hegel's political thought. He has done this by editing and publishing all the student notes from the lectures which Hegel gave on the subject (given in the definitive Hegel *Rechtsphilosophie*) and seeking a coherence and continuity in the Jena essays ("On Natural Law," and "System der Sittlichkeit"), and the isolated treatments on political subjects ("The German Constitution," "On the English Reform Bill").

²¹ From the *Jenaer Schriften*; cited in Riedel, p. 13.

adherence to the natural, social forces that determined him. As such, whatever harmony might have appeared here it was eventually surpassed by the ethical subjectivity of Christianity. This occurred in two senses: 1) that the individual developed an inward sense of self as opposed to the naturally given social order; in other words, the individual became self-conscious and self-determining; 2) that freedom and participation in social life was granted to all before God. Thus, freedom is directed toward the human *qua* human, irrespective of race, gender, creed or social standing; 3) that, from a metaphysical standpoint, substance has become subject, and the two are interdependent.

Furthermore, the Hellenic model cannot accommodate the metaphysical grandeur of a divine spirit realising itself through progressively advanced objective forms, even though liberal-conventionalist such as Ritter, Taylor, and Riedel, have argued that Hegel assumes a number of Aristotelian metaphysical motifs, such as the idea of self-realisation, and praxis.²² While Hegel's relative debt to Aristotelian metaphysics cannot be treated here, attention can be drawn to some fundamental points of divergence. One approach would be to compare the respective accounts of the relationship between metaphysics and political thought. Firstly, there is no systematic interpenetration between the divine and

²² See Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society*, p. 16 who notes that Hegel's idea of the cosmic spirit consists of a synthesis of the Aristotelian metaphysical category of self-realisation, i.e. that being strives to realise its essence, and the concept of expressivism derived from Herder, the notion that man is caught up in the spiritual force of his native language and culture, and is to a certain extent its embodiment. Ritter "Hegel and the French Revolution," pp. 48-49, sees Aristotle's metaphysical influence in Hegel's concept of freedom. Departing from a standard depiction of Hegelian freedom as being "at one with oneself" but also "at home" in this world, he then notes that "Hegel extracts the concept of freedom from all the connections which have overlaid and mantled it in the course of centuries, and reaches back to its classical definition, which Aristotle gave it in the *Metaphysics* 'Free is the man who wills himself and not an other.' For Aristotle, freedom is accordingly man's faculty of selfhood, and Hegel takes up this concept."

the polis in Aristotle. God is "happy and blessed...in and by himself," with no other activities "than those of...internal life."²³ The divine does serve at times as a model for certain forms of political and social behaviour, such as the self-sufficiency of the polis and the godlike preference for listening to rather than playing a musical instrument, but these references do not suggest in any sense an interaction between the immutable Being of God and the historical development of man. As was shown with reference to the principle of becoming in the previous chapter, this immutability lies at the heart of Hegel's criticism of Aristotle.²⁴ The natural change, which God underlies, includes both man and matter: both are striving toward their respective teleologies, both live and die, rise and fall, and the limitations are imposed by nature itself. However, this formulation, in contrast to the Hegelian telos, does not adequately accommodate historical development and the transcendent hope which would disregard the limitations imposed by natural constraints.²⁵

²³ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1323b, para. 10, 1325b, para.10.

²⁴ As noted by S. Pines: "Hegel holds Aristotle's notion of God to be unsatisfactory, because He is conceived as a self-centred entity separate from, and extraneous to the world." "Some Distinctive Metaphysical Conceptions in Themistius' Commentary on Book Lambda and their Place in the History of Philosophy," *Aristoteles Werke und Wirkung*, p. 204.

²⁵ Laurence Dickey, in a recent "history of ideas" study of the early years, *Religion, Politics and the Economics of Spirit*, traces many of Hegel's political ideas to south German Protestantism rather than to Hellenism. He particularly challenges loose comparisons between Aristotle's and Hegel's concept of telos (p. 149): "Although Hegel would agree with Aristotle that man as a member of a species had a telos, Aristotle would not agree with Hegel that telos was conditioned by history or that history itself had a telos. The difference is crucial. It means that a Christian theology of history rather than a Hellenic ideal constitutes the "motivational" situation with which the writings of the 1790s were written." While Dickey's study restricts itself to the early writings, it goes some distance toward counterbalancing entrenched assumptions concerning Hegel's Hellenic influences.

Thus, Hegel's metaphysics and the appropriation of Christianity it incorporates diverges from the Aristotelian version by the extent to which the divine is operative in and among human relations, a characteristic born of the paradigmatic self-othering in the incarnation. The liberal-conventionalist interpretation largely neglects this metaphysical standpoint which Hegel valued so highly. Rather, it treats Christianity only in ethical terms, as the subjective complement to the individual's unreflective absorption in the polis, an interpretation exemplified in the following:

As a mature philosopher he (Hegel) was certain that Christianity had passed beyond the insights of Greek humanism in its evaluation of the individual. But it was his lasting conviction that modern Christian civilisation had gone to an extreme in placing supreme value on the individual person and his subjective claims, to the serious detriment of culture as a whole and higher truth...Only by combining the new truth brought by Christianity with the older humanism revealed in Greek culture could a better synthesis be achieved.²⁶

The above passage adequately summarises the historical significance - as a more advanced form of subjectivity - assigned to Christianity. However, the larger metaphysical import and intersubjective dimension of Hegel's appropriation of Christianity is obscured by identifying the Christian heritage with the Enlightenment subjectivity towards which Hegel's overall critique is directed. Thus, the interpretation which emerges is that the rehabilitation of the Hellenic polis is designed to counter the subjectivity announced by the Christian period whose legacy extends up until the Enlightenment.²⁷ The loose identification of Christian ethical subjectivity that is, the

²⁶ J.G. Gray, *Hegel and Hellenic Thought*, pp. 92-93.

²⁷ See also, Charles Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society*, p. 100: "In putting Sittlichkeit at the apex Hegel is - consciously- following Aristotle; and in following Aristotle, the ancient Greek world. For the last time that the world saw an effortless and undivided Sittlichkeit was among the Greeks." However, then Christianity is said to inaugurate the idea that "thought can rediscover itself in being" (p. 100) which "reaches its culmination

supremacy of the individual over nature, and subjective idealism, runs dramatically counter to the Judaeo-Kantian paradigm towards which Hegel's account of intersubjectivity in the form of love first reacts. Furthermore, such an identification cannot do justice to the context of Hegel's speculative christology which is set apart from his critique of positive Christianity and which he identified with the modern world in a negative sense.

In the following section, we shall see how the incarnation thematic provides a more systematic link to Hegel's account of ethical life in the *PR* than supposed Hellenic influences. Nonetheless, in doing so, it questions the standard view that Hegel sought a reconciliation between the subjectivity of Christianity and the social harmony and humanism of the Hellenic world. Along the lines of this view, expressed by Ritter, "Hegel distinguishes ethical life from morality by historically contrasting ethical life to the Christian and modern world..."²⁸ On the contrary, the juxtaposition of the Judaeo-Kantian paradigm and Hegel's speculative appropriation of the incarnation leads to a radically different claim; namely, that the real basis of the philosophy of reconciliation

in the Enlightenment, and in its belief in the almost unlimited capacity of human reason to remake the conditions of man's life so as to assure him happiness and fulfilment. But this vision of things suffers from a fatal flaw (p. 101)." That fatal flaw, according to Taylor's interpretation of Hegel, is that the restricted reliance on human reason leads to an arbitrary or individualistic understanding of man's relation to the community, i.e. the realm of morality. To overcome this problem, then, Hegel brings back the Greek *Sittlichkeit*. As a result a full circle is achieved: the self-awareness of humanity which was inaugurated by Christianity and Kant has led to a fragmentation that leads Hegel, however, innovatively to revive the hellenic polis. Although Taylor emphasises that Hegel understood and sought, through his own philosophy of spirit, to correct the flaws of Greek ethical life, he cannot accommodate the speculative and intersubjective Christian aspects of that corrective.

²⁸ J. Ritter, "Morality and Ethical Life," in *Hegel and the French Revolution*, p. 162.

lies not in the ethical humanism of Hellenism but in the intersubjectivity derived from the speculative incarnate God. Such a claim is made possible in the simplest sense through Hegel's strict distinction between a true Christian principle, which is the unity of substance and subject, and positive Christianity where God is relegated to a beyond, as in the Judaeo-Kantian realm,²⁹ in the context of a strict dichotomy between this and the other world.

Nonetheless, it should be said that the incarnation in no sense provides a concrete political model for the type of intersubjectivity central to Hegel's political thought. It is more a systematic premise concerning the context and conditions necessary for the appropriate self-realisation of humanity. Equally, however, any attempt to reconcile the grander ontological premises derived from the incarnation thematic with the structural model of the Hellenic polis must then ignore, or suppress, the evidence that suggests that Hegel had already found such a model in the Prussian state, one which also conformed better to modern realities. Thus, the possibility of a Christo-Hellenic synthesis in Hegel, which some commentators considered the main impulse of his project, comes into direct conflict with the more plausible speculative accommodation of the incarnation thematic to Prussia, which in theory also incorporates Aristotelian fixtures such as the priority of the whole over the part. Thus, one is led to question how the polis can act, at all, as "the paradigm historical case" (Taylor) for Hegel's vision of *Sittlichkeit* in its mature political

²⁹ For Sklar who also sees Hegel's account of ethical life derived from Hellenism, Hegel's negative view of Christianity, which Hegel terms "positive Christianity" is of primary import (*Freedom and Independence*, p.106): "Christianity in its 'negative' aspect, as a rejection of the world, was to remain for Hegel the original model of ethical egomania." Because Sklar never accounts for Hegel's positive assessment of the Christian idea in its speculative sense, Hegel's account of positive Christianity is somewhat simplistically set against his nostalgia for the Hellenic polis.

form. In light of what will be addressed in the next chapter, namely that Prussia provides a more adequate form for Hegel's speculative thought, it is not unimportant that there are in the *Philosophy of Right* only sparse and trivial references to Aristotle's polis. References to Plato are more frequent, but even these are often concerned with minor details or, as in the case of an important reference to Plato's discussion of the "ethical substance" (§ 185), unfavourably compared with the more advanced form of individuality given in Christianity and the Roman world.³⁰ Ultimately, Hegel's relation to Hellenism is complex both in its biographical aspects, i.e. the youthful Hellenic nostalgia, and the systematic treatment it receives in the philosophies of logic, politics, aesthetics and religion. The perfunctory survey presented here has focused only on defects in an interpretive nuance that exalts Hellenic influences, based mainly on his earlier enthusiasms, to the detriment of both the Christian and Prussian thematic in Hegel's mature political thought.

II. The Philosophy of Right

In the previous section it was suggested that limiting the parameters of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* to the canon of Western political thought, particularly natural law theory and Hellenism, cannot accommodate the radicalism and novelty of his departure

³⁰ *PR*, § 185: "The principle of the self-subsistent inherently infinite personality of the individual, the principle of subjective freedom, is denied its right in the purely substantial form which Plato gave to mind in its actuality. This principle dawned in an inward form in the Christian religion and in an external form in the Roman world." For some of the other problematic aspects of Hegel's relation to Plato's political thought, see M.J. Inwood, "Hegel, Plato and Greek 'Sittlichkeit'" in Pelczynski, ed. *The State and Civil Society*, pp. 46-47.

from it. In the case of Hegel's opposition to both empirical and formal natural law, this departure concerns on the one hand, the tendency of empirical natural law to provide descriptive, and therefore unphilosophical accounts of existing institutions, or derive the principle of social order from a hypothetical state of nature and some specific faculty, such as fear of death or procreation that had instigated social bonding. On the other hand, the critique of formal or idealist natural law concerns arguments directed towards the Kantian view of morality, i.e. the separation of reason and inclination, and the contradictions involved in universalising individual maxims. To both the cases of empirical and formal law, Hegel juxtaposes the concept of ethical life which others have argued is derived from the Hellenic polis. In this sense the natural law and Hellenic interpretive frameworks are intrinsically related. It is the purpose of the following section to show that the incarnation thematic might provide a helpful complement to understanding and clarifying the metaphysical and spiritual character of Hegel's political thought.

Perhaps the ontologically richest expression of political theory, which Hegel quotes approvingly in the "Essay on Natural Law," is Aristotle's phrase in the *Politics*: "A man incapable of communal life...is no part of the state and must be either a beast or a god."³¹ Hegel's account of freedom is to a certain extent only an elaboration of the principle that the individual *qua* human being realises himself in the state. That humanity is somewhere between beast and God is a truth that can stand alone, if taken as a poetic description; but what unites Aristotle and Hegel is the sense that the concept of humanity

³¹ Aristotle *Politics*, § 14, cited by Hegel in *Natural Law*, p.113.

is so attached to, and in fact only gains its real depth and truth, within the State.³²

The individual outside the state is either a beast or a god. Crudely speaking, this accords with Hegel's distinction between the self-interested egoism that is subjected to the moral realm prior to ethical life, i.e. the beast, and the realm of absolute spirit, religion, art, philosophy beyond ethical life, i.e. God. Thus, the State in which freedom is realised is a mediating realm between beast and God, and it is there that for the mass of humanity its essence or freedom is realised. The internalisation and self-consciousness of freedom that arises with Christianity represents in Hegel's philosophy of right the important aspect that not only is the individual a part of the state, each individual is the state, an embodiment of it.³³ In this sense, the State as a mediating realm between the individual and its freedom, and as a realm whereby the individual recognises itself through the participation and integration in the Other, or the State, parallels both the systematic and early theological accounts assigned to the incarnate God.

In the following section, this hypothesis will be demonstrated in terms of a textual analysis of the *PR*. Four moments are of central importance. Firstly, the transition from morality to ethical life. Secondly, the conceptual relationship between Hegel's account

³² This unity should be qualified by a nuance. Whereas Aristotle's phrase refers to the polis, which did not distinguish between civil society and State, Hegel's use refers to the State which is something more than civil society.

³³ It was not always clear to Hegel's critics or his students what was supposed to happen to the individual outside of the State. As one of his students Richard Rothe ponders in a letter to his father (Nicolin, *Hegel in Berichten seiner Zeitgenossen*, p. 211): "You ask me what Hegel thinks of the individual outside of the State. He gives him no other right than immediate, natural appetites, and no other duty than the duty to join the State."

of the immediate unity or love given in the family, and the type of organic unity found in the state. Thirdly, the transition from civil society to state. Fourthly, Hegel's definition of the state, including some of its key components. The purpose of focusing on transitional or comparative passage, in three of these cases, is to show the almost exclusive extent to which the law/love dichotomy as a juxtaposition between Judaeo-Kantian morality and Hegel's philosophy of reconciliation recurs in a more elaborate and complex form in the philosophy of right. The purpose of focusing on the state, as an entity in itself, is to show its overall accordance with Hegel's speculative appropriation of the incarnate God as the necessary and rational context for humanisation understood as the realisation of freedom.

A. Freedom

Before these transition points and the state are examined in detail, some review of the concept of freedom will be of benefit. The relevance of the incarnation thematic not only in Hegel, but also continuing on to Marx, concerns on a very fundamental level the identity of humanisation (*Menschwerdung*) and the development of freedom. This is because humanisation implies the liberation of the species from its dependence on naturally given conditions and its creation of a social and political world best suited for the realisation of its unique potential. Thus far, Hegel's concept of freedom has been defined loosely and in passing as something other than the account of freedom given in Kantian philosophy. This has turned on an admittedly simple distinction, namely, that whereas for Kant freedom is achieved by separating the rational self from natural inclinations and social or political determinations, in Hegel freedom is achieved through

the reconciliation of these dichotomies, freedom and necessity, individual and social, in a good community.

For obvious reasons, this account cannot do full justice to both the Kantian and Hegelian versions. Particularly since, while both share the idea that the freedom of the individual depends on its capacity to be self-determining, their respective understanding of what this implies is often radically different. However, essentially it implies that for Hegel individual reason is not only not a sufficient instrument for self-realisation, but that self-realisation or freedom is found in and only in institutions that comprise the state. This is made clear in the dialectical structure of the *PR* where the ethical substance passes through a number of stages, identified first with: a) natural mind, the Family; then, b) in its division and appearance, civil society; and finally c) the state as freedom, freedom universal and objective even in the free self-subsistence of the particular will (§ 33). The state is universal and objective freedom, insofar as it realises itself through its inter-relation with its citizens who are free and self-determining. The difficulty, however, in rendering a precise definition of Hegel's account of freedom is that it is given from various standpoints depending upon what type of freedom is under consideration, the freedom of the individual, the objective freedom of the state, or freedom as a concept. As Hegel notes in the introduction (§ 30):

Every stage in the development of the Idea of freedom has its own special right, since it is the embodiment of freedom in one of its proper specific forms...Morality, ethical life, the interest of the state, each of these is a right of a special character because each of them is a specific form and embodiment of freedom.

The Idea (*Idee*) in Hegel's system is the concept as a self-actualising entity. The concept is synonymous with the essence of an entity, and so its Idea is that essence revealing

itself in concrete reality. Finally, the "Idea" of freedom is genuinely actual only in the state (§ 48). We can now provisionally summarise the main aspects of Hegel's concept of freedom: 1) that genuine freedom is found only in the state insofar as the state is the actuality or objectification of the rational, divine will. (Hegel uses God's will and the ethical will interchangeably in the *PR*, see § 26, Addition); 2) Freedom is a historically mediated process advancing through increasingly sophisticated forms of social and political life, and culminating in the state; as such, it implies its own actualisation; 3) Freedom is the substance underlying right insofar as right concretises the particular aspects of freedom linked together in the sphere of social relations; ³⁴4) Freedom is self-conscious and intersubjective. This implies that I am free only when I know myself to be free; and this knowledge is acquired through the recognition of my freedom by an equally self-conscious other (§ 48), "To be free from the point of view of others is identical with being free in my determinate existence."

B. From Morality to Ethical Life

Defining Hegel's view of freedom as intersubjective presumes an inadequacy in the concept of subjectivity as it is understood from the Kantian moral standpoint. Hegel describes subjectivity in a number of forms (§ 26, Addition). Subjectivity can refer to the aims of "one specific, individual subject," which in turn can be associated with arbitrariness or selfishness. The subjective ego "has itself alone for its object" . Thus,

³⁴ The relationship between freedom and right is summarised by Hegel as follows (§ 4): "The basis of right is, in general, mind; its precise place and point of origin is the will. The will is free, so that freedom is both the substance of right and its goal, while the system of right is the realm of freedom made actual, the world of mind brought forth out of itself like a second nature."

subjectivity can be either "idiosyncratic," that is, arbitrary, or "something with the highest of claims." Hegel explains this contradiction by the Kantian sense that the worth attributed to any object depends one's own subjective estimation of it. Hegel takes a negative view of this contradictory character, and ultimately claims that Kantian subjectivity "drowns everything in the single spring of the pure ego."

Terms such as accidental caprices, gratifications, the isolated individual, serve as referents for the type of subjectivity which Hegel associates with Kantianism, in the section on morality in the PRT (§ 207).

Morality has its proper place in this sphere where the paramount thing is the reflection on one's doings, and the quest of happiness and private wants, and where the contingency in satisfying these makes into a duty even a single and contingent act of assistance.

The abstract character of inward freedom or morality, is exposed in the closing section to the account of Morality in the PRT ("Transition from Morality to Ethical Life"). There, the transition from morality to ethical life is viewed in terms of the sublation of freedom as a substantial universal embodied in the Good (§ 141): "For the good is the substantial universal of freedom, but as something still abstract, there are therefore required determinate characteristics of some sort and the principle for determining them through a principle identical with the good itself." .

The determinate characteristics are supplied only through the objectification of the Good in the ethical realm. The moral standpoint, which Kant had appropriately fixed in the self-determining will is, in Hegel's eyes, still underdeveloped. The Judaeo-Kantian theme recurs (§ 108): "In this, its first appearance in the single will, this form (morality)

has not yet been established as identical with the concept of the will and therefore the moral point of view is that of relation, of ought-to-be, or demand ." Hegel here reiterates the association between arbitrary moral decisions and Kantian thought by pointing out the lack of coherence between the individual rational will and the supra-rational will that grounds all social relationships.³⁵ Because the universal binding law of the categorical imperative is an "empty formalism" that cannot regulate specific moral conduct, Hegel claims that the appropriate form for the realisation of the Good, as the substantial universal of freedom, can only be found in social relationships. These relationships are the content of Ethical life: "the habitual practice of ethical living appears as a second nature which, put in the place of the initial, purely natural will, is the soul of custom permeating it through and through (§ 151)." Ethical life testifies to the first real penetration of freedom into the existing world (§ 144): "the objective ethical order, which comes on the scene in place of good in the abstract, is substance made concrete by subjectivity as infinite form."

C. Immediate and Familial Love

The relevance of the family for the incarnation thematic lies in its specific treatment of love. The family creates on a more immediate level the substantial unity between individual and group which the State actualises in a mediated and rational form.

³⁵ On the distinction between Hegel's two uses of will, in terms of "Wille" and "Willkür," see D. J. Maletz, "Hegel on Right as Actualised Will," *PT*, 17/1 (February 1989): 33-50. Whereas "Willkür" refers to the arbitrary choices of the individual "Wille," "aims for a mode of life that orders and arranges impulses into a coherent unity and that brings the universally human aspect to a certain priority over the merely particular." p. 41.

Specifically, there are two aspects here: 1) the sense in which the substantial, natural unity of the family is contrasted with the formal, contractual notion of marriage assigned to it in formal natural law theory, and, particularly, in Kant; 2) the sense in which love among the family is seen as a more basic and abstract formulation of the unity, i.e. self-recognition in the other, found in the state; Hegel defines familial love as follows (§ 158):

The family, as the immediate substantiality of mind, is specifically characterised by love, which is mind's feeling of its own unity. Hence in a family, one's frame of mind is to have self-consciousness of one's individuality within this unity as the absolute essence of oneself, with the result that one is in it not as an independent person but as a member.

Love, as one's awareness of unity with the other, is the underlying principle of the family unit at its most basic stage. It is formed, at the first level, through the ethico-legal bond of marriage. Here, Hegel takes issue with the contractual form of marriage.³⁶ While the substance of these charges cannot be addressed here,³⁷ they concern the distinction between the outer formal characteristics of a contract postulated by reason to serve a certain end, and the outward expression of an inward unity grounded in the absorption of the self by a larger whole. The ethical dimension consists in "the parties' consciousness of this unity as their substantive aim, and so in their love, trust, and

³⁶ This is done in two separate instances. Firstly, in discussion of contract in the section on Abstract Rights, § 75: "To subsume marriage under the concept of contract is thus quite impossible; this subsumption...is propounded in Kant's "Philosophy of Law." Secondly, in § 161, Addition 103. Following the point that marriage is an ethical tie, and that natural law theory has generally only focused on the physical and natural side of marriage, Hegel notes: "This is crude enough, but it is no less so to think of it as only a civil contract, and even Kant does this. On this view, the parties are bound by a contract of mutual caprice (*Gegenseitiger Willkür*), and marriage is thus degraded to the level of a contract for reciprocal use."

³⁷ For a summary of Hegel's critique of the contractual model of the family, see Merold Westphal, "Hegel's Radical Idealism: family and state," in Pelczynski, *The State and Civil Society*, p.78.

common sharing of their entire existence as individuals." The family is a substance, insofar as the individuals comprising it are its accidents. Both the family and the state are built upon this the metaphysical relationship between Substance and accidents, which is the essence of ethical life. While it is a form of objectified spirit as a unity between two individuals, it is based on an inner subjectivity of love that separates it from the outward formality of the law and, in more general terms, the contractual from the ethical.

The second consideration of the family concerns its formal resemblance to Hegel's interpretation of the State. Firstly, there is the general resemblance characteristic of ethical life, namely the sense of individual fulfilment through inner unity with another, and therefore, with a greater whole. Both family and state are said to share a common substantiality in relation to their member which cannot be accommodated in the contractual relation that is, as "something embodying merely a common will and resulting from the arbitrariness of parties united into a state (§ 75)." However, the unity expressed through familial love is recreated on a higher level in the state (§ 158. Addition):

Love means in general terms the consciousness of my unity with another, so that I am not in selfish isolation but win my self-consciousness only as the renunciation of my independence and through knowing myself with another and of the other with me. Love, however, is feeling, i.e. ethical life in the form of something natural. In the state, feeling disappears; there we are conscious of unity as law; there the content must be rational and known to us.

In this important elaboration to paragraph 158 (cited above), the State is seen as the recreation of the unity of love on the higher of level of rational law. The consciousness of unity with another is in the State not emotional but rational based on the relations concretised and codified through the law. Thus, while both the family and the State are equally grounded in a substantial relationship to the individual subjects that comprise

them, the relations between substance and subject in the State are based on knowledge rather than feeling of that unity.

However, the relation between family and state is originally grounded in a tension between the private and public, inner and outer, that in the pre-Christian period finds its most tragic expression in the fate of Antigone. Antigone's resolve to bury her dishonoured brother against the laws of King Creon represents a conflict between the inner law of the heart and the outer law of the state. In the Hellenic context, these "one-sided ethical powers" both of which are to a certain extent in the right can only be reconciled in tragedy, in the sorrowful death of an individual, Antigone.³⁸ Hegel's advance lies in the attempt to reconcile the inner law of the family to the outer public law as a rational component of the state of which it is a part.³⁹

In the two aspects of the family-state relationship alluded to above, the recreation of the familial unity of love on the higher level of law in the State, and the resolution of the contradiction between the inner and outer, most tragically expressed in the Antigone

³⁸ In the *PR*, the tragedy is also seen as reflecting the affinity between the female sex and the family, on the one hand, and the male sex and the State, on the other: "This law (of Antigone) is there displayed as a law opposed to public law, to the law of the land. This is the supreme opposition in ethics and therefore in tragedy; and it is individualised in the same play in the opposing natures of man and woman. (§ 166)."

³⁹ See also Bloch, *Natural Law and Human Dignity*, pp. 120-130. He notes that while Hegel shows a promising interest in individual freedoms and the "chthonic basis of law" (p.120) reflected in the tragedy of Antigone, this is lost in a political philosophy where "the individual no longer has any place." While claiming that the full title of the *Philosophy of Right*, "Natural Law and Science of the State," suggests a power-sharing between the people and the sovereign, Bloch notes that the representative capacity of the people is only, "an organ whereby objective spirit is transmitted to subjective consciousness." As a result, "Hegel never recognises or admits to a regulative idea, a social contract that is always the fruit of a democratic accord." (p.123)

myth the incarnation thematic can be identified. Firstly, in the unity between substance and subject, the whole and its parts, which, according to Hegel's account of revealed religion in the *Phen.*, is paradigmatically revealed in the incarnation, when Substance became Subject. This occurred first on the level of immediacy; but it reconciled the interiority of the heart to the outer world, the law, by showing that what had previously been commanded by an external authority resided in the inner nature of mankind. Secondly, within this unity, there are moments which are related to each other like representations to concepts, immediate feeling to mediated reason. Thus, the immediate unity of the individual to the family (which for sake of comparison roughly applies to Hegel's characterisation of the early disciples in his early theological writings) must be elevated to the rational law-bound obligations of the individual to the state.

The relationship between family and State is important for the incarnation thematic in one final respect. It is in the depiction of the family that Hegel raises and rejects the possibility of love as the appropriate form for the reconciliation of the individual to ethical life. In the political philosophy, love is relegated to the realm of social relations, as a source of emotional fulfilment and family unity. This subjective unity, the recognition of the self in the other, must give way to a higher form of intersubjectivity found in the State through law.⁴⁰ Love, as the fulfilment or

⁴⁰ While Hegel seems to be expressing the simple fact that the emotionalism of love should not interfere in the rational administration of the spheres of political life, a more extreme view, expressed by George Bataille, detects a certain emotional sterility in Hegel's system altogether, one which sacrifices feeling for the greater goal of knowledge: "In the 'system' poetry, laughter, ecstasy are nothing. Hegel hastily gets rid of them: he knows no other aim than knowledge." Cited in Mark Taylor, *Altarity*, p. 153. It might be more accurate to say Hegel knows no other aim than reconciliation. However, he felt love with its impatient insistence on immediate reconciliation could as a political concept only lead to fanaticism, an "anarchismus aus Menschenliebe" (the anarchism of brotherly

actualisation of law in the Pauline-influenced early theology, is now replaced by law as right understood as the recreation of the intersubjective unity of love in the objective context of ethical life.

D. From Civil Society to State

The distinction Hegel draws between civil society and the State has been seen as one of his most original contributions to political thought and has, accordingly, generated a considerable amount of commentary.⁴¹ While the nature of that distinction cannot be discussed in detail here, essentially it concerns the rupture of the classical identity of state and civil society, by making a systematic division between the political and social realms. This allowed Hegel to draw a distinction between the lower realm of particular need-satisfaction, civil society, and the higher realm of universal self-realisation, given in the State.

Civil society is the realm of the subjective divorced from the substantial, insofar as it is here where the individual has particular aims as his/her object. As a form of social organisation, based on the mutual satisfaction of need, it therefore remains a superficial structure of particular persons (§ 189): "Particularity by itself, given free rein

love). This applies equally to his account of patriotism is identified with a rather unsentimental habitual trust.

⁴¹ The main concern of Riedel's chapter, "The Hegelian Transformation of Modern Political Philosophy and the Significance of History." See also the collection of essays in Pelczynski, *The State and Civil Society*, particularly, Pelczynski, "The significance of Hegel's separation of the state and civil society," pp. 1-14, Kortian, "Subjectivity and Civil Society," pp. 197-210, and K.H. Ilting, "The dialectic of civil society," pp. 211-227.

in every direction to satisfy its needs, accidental caprices and subjective desires, destroys itself and its substantive concept in the process of gratification." While civil society, as the realm of labour, private property, and economic exchange, forges a type of freedom for the abstract individual by means of the social roles he/she assumes therein, these are limited by the extent to which they are guided by particular ends.

Civil society is also the sphere reserved for natural law, guided by the "particularity of nature, arbitrariness, or in other words the state of nature (§ 200)." Natural law theory is confined to civil society because the state of nature it hypothesises is grounded on the mutual satisfaction of need. This is an incomplete condition insofar as the human essence, the mind, is not applied to liberate itself from these confines. In the "state of nature" (§ 194): "the mental is plunged in the natural and so would be one of savagery and unfreedom, while freedom itself is to be found only in the reflection of mind into itself, in mind's distinction from nature, and in the reflex of mind in nature." While the actual content of Hegel's discussion of civil society is more complex than can be treated here, the emphasis has been on its status as the social correlate to the realm of morality. In this sense, civil society formulated as an egoistic, atomistic, realm of need-satisfaction shares characteristics of the Judaeo-Kantian paradigm identified in Chapter 2. Moreover, similar to the Kantian law in Hegel's early essay, "The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate," it acts as an anticipatory launchpoint towards the ethical life expressed in the State.

III. The State

A. The Speculative Theological Dimension

The State both recreates the immediate unity of love found in the family and reconciles the antagonisms of civil society from which it necessarily emerges:

The State is the actuality of the ethical Idea. It is the ethical mind qua the substantial will manifest and revealed to itself, knowing and thinking itself, accomplishing what it knows and in so far as it knows it. The State exists immediately in custom, mediately in individual self-consciousness, knowledge, and activity, while self-consciousness in virtue of its sentiment towards the state finds in the State, as its essence and the end and product of its activity, its substantive freedom.

The speculative elevation of the incarnate God from a representation to a concept is in Hegel's system completed in that the divine, or ethical Idea, recognises itself in the State. To merely substitute "incarnate God" for "State" and "the divine" for "ethical Idea" in the passage above would not by itself demonstrate the intrinsic relationship between the incarnation thematic and political thought. However, if one were to do so, one would recognise Hegel's characterisation of the incarnation given in the *Phenomenology* and the *Philosophy of Religion*. This corresponds to the metaphysical dimension in the *Philosophy of Right*. The ethical is the fulfilment of Judaeo-Kantian morality by the higher-order unity of particular and universal which Hegel associated with love in the early theology.

These two points can be complemented by a third, namely the foundational or ontological dimension of this characterisation. This is arrived at, firstly, by restricting the possibility and necessity of freedom to the state. Outside the state, to paraphrase Hegel's use of the Aristotelian phrase, man is either a beast or a God. Freedom as opposed to

necessity, mind as opposed to nature, self-realisation as opposed to self-satisfaction can only be achieved when mediated via the state. While Hegel mitigates the mystical implications of this formulation by detailing the rational components and instruments that govern this mediation in real, empirical life, nonetheless, his departure from previous forms of political theorising reflects speculatively theological orientation to the problem of modernity. This problem, the condition of the Unhappy Consciousness of Judaism which Hegel seems to deliberately project onto the realm of Kantian Enlightenment, stems from the fragmentation, subjectivity, and individualism of a humanity uprooted from its essence. As Hegel notes in the preface, this world is "God-forsaken" to the extent that mind is "left to the mercy of chance and caprice,"⁴² and not allowed to find the truth, the rationality embedded in being, in the historically mediated forms in which freedom can be realised. It follows that the consequence of this condition is, "if the ethical world is Godless, truth lies outside it."⁴³ With this simple proposition, Hegel challenges both the positive religious consciousness that seeks truth in the beyond and hereafter, and Kantian philosophy that seeks it in terms of rarefied postulates (freedom, God, immortality) divorced from the empirical world. Thus, what Hegel laments is not the absence of the concept of God, for the term itself is meaningless if taken in abstract, but rather the absence of an incarnate God, understood as the interpenetration of the finite and infinite, logic and history, truth and the ethical world.

Hegel's speculative theological orientation lies therefore not in any effort to create heaven on earth or legitimate a reactionary Christian monarch, but rather in the

⁴² *PRT*, Preface, p.4.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

foundational and revolutionary level in which he seeks to reconcile the contradictions of modernity. Because this is a philosophical project, religion is of secondary importance in the political thought. The speculative incarnate God in the form of the state reveals itself not as an application of Christian ethics to an ideal State, but rather in and through the contradictions and needs that give rise to a reconciliation so fundamental that outside of it man is inhuman - either a beast or a God. Thus, the difference between the incarnate God as the metaphysical Substance that becomes Subject (in the discussion of revealed religion in the *Phenomenology*) and the State is that this Becoming-Man, once elevated to reason, can only be actualised in the political and historical realm. The unity of Substance and Subject, represented in the incarnation as the revealed truth of humanity, achieves a political form because Hegel seems to feel that this truth can only be actualised in the State which mediates between the isolated individual and his/her potential freedom.

The truth revealed in the original incarnation, according to Hegel, was that it was the essence of the divine to be self-othering and human, and conversely for the human to be divine. The need for the divine to enter the form of Jesus Christ and reveal his engagement with humanity's historical destiny, is reformulated by Hegel in terms of the need for reason to be seen actualised in the state where, and only where, the freedom and self-realisation of the individual is possible. Hegel's appropriation of the incarnate God is therefore more structural and formulaic than mystical, as shown in the following passage:

We should desire to have in the state nothing except what is an expression of rationality. The state is the world which mind has made for itself; its march, therefore, is on lines that are fixed and absolute. How often we talk of the wisdom of God in nature! But we are not to assume for that reason that the physical world of nature is a loftier thing than the world of mind. As high as mind stands above nature, so high does the state stand above physical life. Man must therefore venerate the state as a secular deity and observe that if it is difficult to comprehend nature, it is infinitely harder to understand the state (§ 272, Addition).

Hegel's oft-disparaged deification of the state amounts to the simple observation that the rationality attributed to the divine, operative in the laws of nature, should equally be applied, and venerated, in the ethical world of the state. This application is all the more necessary because it concerns not nature, but the realisation of humanity in and through its interaction with history, the speculative *Menschwerdung*. What Hegel proposes is to appropriate speculatively the incarnate God of love as a rational principle of intersubjectivity operative in the social and political realm, in the same manner in which the abstract God of law operative in nature was speculatively appropriated by the physical sciences. This was not so much a process of de-mystification as a discovery that the laws of nature were rational and followed fixed patterns. Hegel is saying that, from a speculative Christian standpoint, it is in the essence of the divine not only to be operative in nature, but also in the ethical realm of the mind, in humanity proper. The speculative appropriation of the incarnate God, as opposed to the abstract God of scholastic metaphysics, implies the recognition of rationality in the sphere of human, i.e. political, relations. It is for this reason, that Hegel's reference to the State as an earthly God (Irdisch-Göttliches) is not so much a "façon de parler," ⁴⁴ as a systematic part of

⁴⁴ Knox, in a footnote to the term "secular deity" (§ 272, Addition) , provides the somewhat defensive and misleading suggestion that "Hegel here follows Kant who, e.g. at the end of his essay on "Theory and Practice", refers to the nation state as Erden-Götter." Since Hegel's use of the term is as far removed from Kant's as is his concept of the State, it is less than helpful to mute the important implications of this term by

Hegel's philosophical project. As stated in the Preface: "What Luther initiated as faith in feeling and in the witness of the spirit, is precisely what spirit, since become more mature, has striven to apprehend in the concept in order to free, and so to find, itself in the world as it exists today."⁴⁵ More than the French Revolution, Hegel held the Protestant reformation to be the key defining moment for the modern self-consciousness of freedom. However, it is misleading to conceive of the transformation underlying the common object of both the Protestant faith and Hegelian reason in terms of a paradigm of secularisation as it is normally conceived.⁴⁶ Although Hegel claims that the state rests on the Christian principle, this principle is not one derived from specific institutional practices or doctrinal interpretations of the Church, but rather from a speculative interpretation centred on the "self-consciousness of freedom." Development through self-negation, the interpenetration of substance and subject, unity in difference, a political philosophy based on self-sacrifice and community grounded in the shared allegiance of all subjects to a greater ^{whole}, these, rather than the biography of Jesus Christ, are the components of Hegel's speculative christology.⁴⁷ Some observations are now required

placing it in a familiar Kantian context.

⁴⁵ *PR*, Preface, p. 12.

⁴⁶ See W. Jaeschke, "It (Hegel's State) is neither secularized nor secularizable because it was never part of a revelation or merely religious 'belief' but constitutes the rational content of Christianity, that is, the self-consciousness of freedom." "Christianity and Secularity in Hegel's Concept of the State," *JR*, 61, 1981, p. 142.

⁴⁷ The contradiction between the incarnation thematic underlying the *PR* and the absence of references to the Christian incarnate God is confronted by H. Küng as follows: "Even though the background of his thought (in the *PR*) is manifestly Christian and christological, the concrete Christ is frankly missing." According to Küng, that background lies chiefly in the speculative formulation of the incarnate God, the fact that God's essence is "self-humiliation and self limitation," the fact that the Concept "contains its opposite from the very outset and is obliged to externalise itself into its opposite," in the idea of freedom as "self-restriction," and the idea of "development through self-

to show how Hegel specifically understands this relationship. Central to this demonstration is paragraph 270 which undertakes to explain the substantiality of the State and the parallel this invokes to the concept of religion.

B. Religion and the State: Paragraph 270

The speculative theological basis of paragraph 270, or more specifically the close resemblance the description of the substantiality of the State bears to religion, is such that Hegel feels compelled to embark on an extensive excursus examining the relationship between religion and state. The substantiality of the state consists in three basic components: 1) that its end "is the universal interest as such," which is the substance or aggregate of particular interests; 2) that this universal interest is also its necessity in that the particular interests comprise of spheres or powers that determine it; 3) that this universal interest or substantiality, is "mind knowing and willing itself," based on "consciously adopted ends." While the excursus on the relationship between religion and the State does not follow the order of these points, it does reiterate the general argument that though religion also has a universal and absolute content, the State mediates between particular and universal interests by virtue of rationally dictated laws and institutions, rather than the particular doctrine of faith.

In the excursus Hegel draws an important distinction between the relationship between religion and State, and Church and State. While the latter is generally seen as the fundamental paradigm for any investigation of the relationship between political

renunciation." *The Incarnation of God*, pp. 304-305.

thought and theology, in Hegel it is relatively insignificant; "an external organisation" of religion, a corporate entity mediating between the state and civil society.⁴⁸ Instead, Hegel approaches the relationship between politics and theology not by the traditional path of the Church/State conflict, but rather through a review of the concept of religion.

According to Hegel, a common misinterpretation of religion sees it as providing spiritual consolation in times of calamity and distress and primarily concerned with other-worldly affairs, while assigning to politics and the state a mechanistic role of need-satisfaction. Thus, the split between the other-worldly and worldly deprives the State of its relation to the divine, to the substance of ethical life, an identity phrased succinctly in the preface, "if the ethical world is Godless, truth lies outside it."⁴⁹ Religion is the absolute truth, and the "groundwork which includes the ethical realm in general, and the state's fundamental nature- the divine will- in particular."⁵⁰ But it is only a groundwork and, as such, is to a certain extent both more basic and grander than the State. On the one hand, it achieves through "feeling and representative thinking" a relationship to the Absolute which the State actualises. On the other hand, it provides a sanctuary "of the highest freedom and satisfaction, even within all the mutability of the world and despite

⁴⁸ Hegel also accuses the Church of laying claims to the Kingdom of God which, in turn, reduces the State to a mechanism satisfying external ends: "The Church bases this claim on the wide ground that the whole domain of Geist is its property... Because the church monopolises Geist; the State, as the laity pure and simple is confined to paying its respects to this element and so is entirely deprived of any ethical character." (§ 270, Addition.)

⁴⁹ Preface, p. 4.

⁵⁰ § 270, Addition (p. 166).

the frustration of his aims and the loss of his interests and possessions."⁵¹ In other words, religion provides an illusion of freedom transcending the trials and tribulations in which freedom is actualised in the State. The fact that religion is in this sense only a groundwork is the point where it leaves off and the state takes over. Hegel clarifies this transition as follows:

The State is the divine will, in the sense that it is mind present on earth, unfolding itself to be the actual shape, a foundation of a world. Those who insist on stopping at the form of religion, as opposed to the State, are acting like those logicians who think they are right if they continually stop at the essence and refuse to advance beyond that abstraction to existence, or like those moralists (see remark to § 140 ⁵²) who will only good in the abstract and leave it to caprice to decide what is good.⁵³

The essence of the relationship between religion and the State which this passage discloses is founded on a common relation to the Absolute which the State happens to actualise on a more advanced level. Firstly, it advances beyond the abstraction to existence, and to where the truth intuited immediately in religion is worked out through a laborious dialectical and historical struggle.⁵⁴ Secondly, the State's relation to the

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² The remark refers to the various accounts of subjectivity, and is particularly directed towards Kantian morality and its distorted inheritance by the Romantic movement.

⁵³ § 270, (p. 166).

⁵⁴ Also *PR, Homeyer*, § 76: "The religious spirit is a representation, an intuition. The ethical spirit is a reality, an existent (*Daseindes*);" and *PR, (Wannemann)* § 71: "Religion can be called the *form* of the basis of ethical life; but this first principle must pass over into *existence*. God would not be God if he did not negate himself and recognise himself in this negation. True reality (*Wirklichkeit*) is the knowledge of oneself in reality (*Realität*)." The movement from Grund to Existenz, central to Hegel thought and the incarnational thematic, is also reflected in his affinity for the ontological proof. The ontological proof states that a Being beyond that which no greater being can be conceived is one that exists in reality rather than in thought. On Hegel's use of the ontological proof see particularly the *LPR*; for commentary, see Jaeschke, *Vernunft in der*

absolute is founded on an objective rather than subjective character, by which it assures that the good is willed through the rational authority given in the laws. Thus, in the above passage, Hegel reiterates his critique both of Kantian morality and metaphysics, and the Romantics, to show that the truth lies not in subjective ideas but rather in the "prodigious transfer of the inner into the outer, the building of reason into the real world."⁵⁵ What religion reveals in a flash, philosophy must contemplate and political philosophy must actualise. All three have a common object in the Christian principle, understood as the "self-consciousness of freedom." In the context of Hegel's political thought this self-consciousness implies that the Substance, the political order, which was once seen as a transcendent authority, finds and recognises itself in the self-consciousness of its citizens. The laws of the State are the laws of the individual and, in this sense, "civilized man has actually given reason an embodiment in law and government and achieved consciousness of the fact."⁵⁶ This freedom is a restricted one insofar as the subject acquires it through association with the State, and the State only has legitimacy to the extent that its universal interests coincide with the particular interests of its citizens. Just as God is only God in its relation to humanity mediated by the incarnate God, so is freedom only a true freedom in its relation to individual mediated through the State.⁵⁷

Religion, pp. 311-314, Holzleitner, *Gotteslogik- Logik Gottes?*, pp. 240-248. The most thorough treatment is provided in Henrich's *Der Ontologische Gottesbeweis*.

⁵⁵ Ibid., § 270 (p. 167).

⁵⁶ Ibid., § 270 (p. 167).

⁵⁷ The principle distinction is again one of self-consciousness. As Hegel remarks in § 211, Addition: "The sun and the planets have their laws too, but they do not know them. Savages are governed by impulses, customs, and feelings, but they are unconscious of this."

C. The Universal Class

We need now only take a brief look at the manner in which the component parts of the State are said to rationally *actualise* the idea which the incarnate God *reveals*.

In Hegel's political thought, the individual is subordinated to the final end which is the state as the incarnation of the divine will. However, the State is not possible unless the particular consciousness has risen to the universal and comprehends and legitimates this unity. On the one hand, while the citizens are subordinated to the state:

On the other hand, it (the State) is the end *immanent* within them, and its strength lies in the unity of its own universal end and aim with the particular interest of individuals, is the fact that individuals have duties to the state in proportion as they have rights against it (§ 261).

However, the specific rights of the citizen "against" the State, are nowhere clearly elaborated. While the rights are formulated as products of self-legislating wills, the actual input of the citizens in the legislative process is suspect. Most commentators concur that the treatment of representation in the *PR* is problematic⁵⁸ and detect the flaw in the formal transposition of freedom from the realm of civil society to the State. Duties are demanded of the citizen in the name of freedom, yet at the same time the State's monopoly on rights to freedom usurps any supplementary entitlement claims individual citizens might make under that label. These supplementary claims can therefore be rejected as egoistical, subjective, capricious, etc. The conservative, if not reactionary, implications of such a view are clear to see, but they are consistent with the earliest

⁵⁸ See K.H. Ilting, "Hegel's Concept of the State and Marx's early Critique," K. Hartman, "Towards a new systematic reading of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," and E. Bloch *Natural Law and Human Dignity*, pp. 122-123.

contrasts between law and love where the individual recognises his inner self, not in an externally or internally imposed law, but in the mutual love, or bond, of humanity and the incarnate God, or the state. Voluntary acceptance of the authority of the law is therefore only the conscious acknowledgement that that law accords with one's own inner destiny and freedom.

Thus, Hegel argues, that those who do not have access to reason to articulate their universal interests should submit to the State that embodies them. Specifically, the task of mediating the universal interest to the particular individuals is delegated to the universal class: "The universal class, or, more precisely, the class of civil servants, must, purely in virtue of its character as universal, have the universal as the end of its essential activity (§ 303)." Unlike the parliamentarians who represent the interests of the particular classes, business and agrarian, to the state, the bureaucrats represent and implement the universal for the benefit of the particular. While one need not draw precise analogies with the Church or disciples, the universality which Hegel attributes to the bureaucrats stems from the fact that they theoretically have no personal interests allied with their function; they represent only reason, just as the early Christians were supposed to represent only love of God. Hegel's contemporary and theoretician of the bureaucracy, Freiherr von Stein, provides a description of the civil servant oddly in accord with their spiritualised representative mission: "they are allied with none of the classes of citizens that constitute the State, they are a caste in their own right, the caste of clerks, without property, and therefore unaffected by its fluctuations."⁵⁹ The equation of the universal class with a

⁵⁹ Freiherr von Stein, "Die Briefe des Freiherrn von Stein an den Freiherrn von Gagern, 1813-1831," p. 90, cited in Albrow, *Bureaucracy*, p. 19.

rational elite is based on a perception of universality, not as the all embracing whole, but rather as the embodiment of this whole in a select body. The state of office-holders objectifies and actualises what is only formally existent in the abstract rights guaranteed the citizenry. As such, the redemptive significance expressed by the incarnate God is carried over to the bureaucratic responsibilities of the "divine idea on earth."

D. The Monarch

The formulation of the monarch, as the "truth of the subjectivity of the State" is of importance primarily for the underlying christological thematic which some commentators have identified. The analogy between the monarch and the incarnate God, in the sense that both represent the unification of the universal and particular in a symbolic individual, has bearing on the argument presented here in both a positive and negative sense. In the positive sense, it demonstrates the incarnation thematic's bearing on an important motif in Hegel's political thought, the constitutional monarchy. This has been recognised by Hegel critics and scholars alike ranging from Marx to Theunissen and Scheit.⁶⁰ In the negative sense, it restricts the speculative christological dimension to the figure-head role of the monarch thereby not allowing for its greater bearing on the State as a whole. In the following, it will be useful to concentrate on the negative sense of the monarch-incarnation identity with particular emphasis on the arguments put forward by Theunissen and Scheit.

⁶⁰ K. Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law," *MECW*, Vol.3, pp. 24, 39; Theunissen, *Hegel's Lehre*, pp. 444-445; Scheit, *Geist und Gemeinde*, pp. 262-263.

The distinction between a unity, and the individual and singular expression of that unity, is what Hegel has in mind when he notes that

(§ 279):

the truth of subjectivity, however, is attained only in a subject, and the truth of personality only in a person...hence this absolutely decisive moment of the whole is not individuality in general, but a single individual, the monarch.

This formulation parallels the account of the incarnate God given in the *Phenomenology*, where the unity between the human and divine could not be concretised in an abstract individuality but rather in a singular, living human being, in order to set it apart from all other individuals. The singularity of the monarch and Jesus Christ sets them apart as the concentration of the divine will. This singularity or personality expressed in the monarch actualises the personality of the State by embellishing its objective actions with the subjective "I will." As Hegel is sensitive to the arbitrariness such decision-making could lead to, he argues that the "I will" of the monarch is restricted by the counsellors and the constitution, and the formality of the monarch's role in general. The monarch's responsibilities are to "sign his name," to "say yes and dot the 'i'," in other words, to play a symbolic unitary role that is little influenced by his personality or subjective whims. Hegel seems to find the true advantage of the monarch in that it, on the one hand, symbolises the unity and the particular objective character of a State and, at the same time, transcends the particular and competing interests that govern political life. Thereby, the monarch is able to make decisions that will the universal whole.

This cursory overview suggesting a less than central role for the monarch confirms what is implicit in the structure of Hegel's discussion of the State. The Crown or monarch is only one of the three parts that make up the constitution or organisation

of the State, the others being the Legislature and the Executive. In turn, the Constitution is one of three parts that make up the Idea of the state, the others being International Law and World History. Given that the state mediates between the individual of civil society and Absolute Spirit, the abstract Father God, it is difficult to see how this mediating role could be assigned to the monarch as a Christ figure without trivialising the centrality Hegel attaches to the incarnate God. Nonetheless, for the sake of argument, it is worth citing the evidence that commentators have assembled to support the monarch-incarnate God analogy.

A useful entry into this debate is provided by Scheit's elaboration on cursory remarks made by Theunissen that suggest such an analogy: "On the whole the State reflects the fatherly God, and the Monarch the Son."⁶¹ Along the lines of this argument, the Father is only an abstract subjectivity that like the State cannot convey its universality and sovereignty without realising it in an individual and personal form, the monarch or Jesus Christ. Scheit then cites two points of textual correspondence that are meant to suggest that Hegel formulates the monarch along the lines of the incarnate God. Firstly, he notes that the most important element for both God and the State is not that they are embodied in individuality in general, but in a particular individual. This is the point made in paragraph 279 cited above and corresponds with Hegel's discussion of the incarnate God in the Philosophy of Religion.⁶² Secondly, he detects a correspondence between Hegel's reference to the incarnation (*Menschwerdung Gottes*) as the "most difficult

⁶¹ Scheit, p. 262 (citing Theunissen, *Hegel's Lehre*, p. 444).

⁶² Most notably *LPR*, p. 455. "The unity in question must appear for others as a singular human being set apart; it is not present in the others, but only in one from whom all the others are excluded."

moment in religion," and (§ 279) "the conception of the monarch is therefore of all conceptions the hardest for ratiocination."⁶³ This common difficulty evidently consists in the fact that both the monarch and the incarnate God are not deduced but self-originating. Following these two points, Scheit then concurs with Theunissen that the monarch is constructed after the model of the incarnation.⁶⁴

In spite of superficial similarities, the evidence for such a correspondence between the monarch and the speculative incarnate God is not convincing. In fact, it is far outweighed by the greater parallels between the incarnation and the State as a whole. These, as has been outlined above, concern both the systematic parallels between the early theology and the *PR*, including particularly the dichotomies of morality and ethical life, and civil society and state, and the speculative formulation of the State as the subjectified Substance. Furthermore, if one were to restrict the incarnation relevance to the political thought by making it a model for the monarch, one would not be able to accommodate the fact that it is the State as a whole which is the divine on earth, the actualisation of the ethical Idea. It is the State that mediates between the divine as the rational world spirit, and the individual of civil society. Seeking a rigid correspondence between the incarnate God and the monarch trivialises the speculative christological dimension underlying Hegel's State wherein the monarch plays a relatively formal, representative role.

⁶³ Scheit, p. 262.

⁶⁴ The full passage reads: "Such a striking similarity strongly suggests that Hegel 'must have been certain that the monarch is constructed upon the model of the Incarnation.'" p. 263 (citing Theunissen, p. 445).

However, the analogy is misguided for another reason. If the monarch is analogous to the Son then one is forced to project the trinitarian relationship onto the internal structure of the State itself. However, the State cannot represent an abstraction such as the Father, and the Monarch the Son in Hegel's system, as Theunissen and Scheit suggest, if the State is the actuality of the ethical idea and of concrete freedom. How can the State, as the abstract Father, be a starting point when Hegel's political thought begins with abstract right, passes through Morality, and then only at a later and more concrete stage arrives at ethical life and eventually the State, as the realisation of freedom? The association with the Father is tempting, given the paternalistic character of the State's relation to its citizens. However, the State must be seen in its larger context. It is not the divine itself, for that is spirit, the concept or, within the more restricted parameters of political thought, freedom. Freedom is the most suitable referent for Hegel's concept of God as an abstract because it, like truth, is an essence that realises itself only in its development (§ 4): "The system of right, is the realm of freedom made actual, the world of mind brought forth out of itself like a second nature." Freedom is the essence of right, and like God, is a meaningless term if not given a concrete content. It cannot simply be assumed, it must be actualised and revealed through the dialectical development of history and the institutions of the State.

If one were to draw an analogy between the incarnate God and the monarch, it would be restricted to the following, relatively insignificant, observations; namely, in Hegel's interpretation, Jesus Christ as a pictorial representation of the divine/human unity, and the monarch as a symbolic figure-head for the state both represent partial but necessary embodiments of a philosophical concept. Just as the monarch is only a

subjective image of the concept of subjectivity in the state, an individual arbitrarily raised "to the dignity of monarchy in an immediate, natural fashion, i.e. through his birth in the course of nature,"⁶⁵ so too is Jesus of Nazareth a finite representation of the incarnate God, the God that differentiates itself, and mediates to humanity its love and freedom. For the purposes of this chapter, it should only be noted that Hegel's account of the monarch cannot be a reformulation of the incarnate God, as Marx would later claim in his *Contribution to a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*,⁶⁶ but is rather a subjective representation of the larger objective whole, the State. The State is the speculative incarnate God, insofar as it provides the proper context and conditions to mediate and actualise freedom for the individual. It would be an arbitrary intellectual exercise to seek further analogues between all the different component parts of religion and the state. Perhaps the monarch is more like the Pope than Jesus Christ, perhaps the bureaucrats are priests, the constitution a creed, the national anthem a hymn, patriotism a form of prayer, etc. The point has simply been to show the systematic, rather than the analogical or rhetorical, character in which Hegel applies the speculative incarnation to the State as a *concept* rather than, if at all, to the monarch as a *representation*.

E. World History and the Christo-Germanic Realm

That this speculative project underlies much of the sober dissection of political behaviour characteristic of the *PR* is equally evident towards the end of the work when Hegel provides a dense summary of his philosophy of history. World history is one of

⁶⁵ *PR*, § 280.

⁶⁶ See fn. 60 above.

the three components that make up the idea of the State. Freedom, the central theme of Hegel's political thought, appears here as the unfolding of Spirit in history.

In world history, the Absolute Spirit, exists as the (§ 341) "actuality of Spirit in its whole compass of internality and externality alike." World history is the (§ 342) "necessary development...of the moments of reason and so of the self-consciousness and freedom of mind. This development is the interpretation and actualisation of the universal mind." It occurs in four stages: 1) immediate revelation or abstract substantiality, the Oriental Realm; 2) ethical individuality as beauty, the Greek Realm; 3) the conflict between individual self-awareness and abstract universality, the Roman realm; 4) the reconciliation of the inner life of the individual and the objective sphere, the Germanic realm. We need not review these principles nor question why Hegel feels compelled to review them in a work on political theory. The easiest answer is that he is simply drawing attention to the developmental character of world spirit which culminates when it finds a national and political form adequate to its content. Whereas political forms are absorbed or surpassed by the progressive self-realisation of freedom in history, the Christo-Germanic State seems to represent a culminating point in the development of world history insofar as the latter has found therein a form adequate to its content. The incarnation thematic underlies this coincidence, reintroduced by Hegel through an odd but, in the context of our argument, fitting reference to the Jewish people.

Although Hegel refers only once to Judaism prior to the section on world history,⁶⁷ in the fourth and final section of the Germanic realm, he introduces Judaism as the realm of alienation which the Christo-Germanic State is to reconcile. The full passage reads as follows (§ 358):

As worlds are thus both alike lost and plunged in the infinite grief of the fate for which a people, the Jewish people, was held in readiness; Mind is here pressed back upon itself in the extreme of its absolute negativity. This is the absolute turning point; mind rises out of this situation and grasps the infinite positivity of this its inward character, i.e. it grasps the unity of the divine nature and the human, the reconciliation of objective truth and freedom as the truth and freedom appearing within self-consciousness and subjectivity, a reconciliation with the fulfilment of which the principle of the north, the principle of the Germanic peoples, has been entrusted.

The alienation of the Jewish people gives way to the Germanic realm which has been delegated to fulfil a principle of reconciliation expressed in the Incarnation. In subsequent paragraphs (§§ 359-360), the three stages of reconciliation are outlined. They proceed from the immediate, and pictorial, unity expressed in the original act of the incarnate God, towards the Germanic state which is designated to fulfil the principle of reconciliation. Fulfilment, or *pleroma* as we recall from the early theology, implies to sublate or actualise the reconciliation only implicit in earlier forms. The three forms are:

- 1) the immediate unity expressed through love, both in the family and, as noted in the

⁶⁷ The other instance is a footnote to § 270 discussing the relationship between religion and State. In it, Hegel argues for the recognition of the civil rights of the Jews, despite the fact that many regard them as a foreign race. This latter view, "ignores the fact that they are, above all, humans." Excluding the Jews from civil society, only "confirms the isolation with which they have been reproached- a result for which the state refusing them rights would be blamable and reproachable." The argument used here is derived from a type of Christian universalism which the State should responsibly embody. Hegel refers explicitly to his remarks to § 209: "A human counts as human by virtue of his humanity alone, not because he is a Jew, Catholic, Protestant, German, Italian, etc." Since this would seem to contradict Hegel's professed affinity for the Germanic realm, the remark is qualified by the following critique of Enlightenment cosmopolitanism: "It (this universalism) is defective only when crystallized, e.g. as a cosmopolitanism in opposition to the concrete life of the State."

early theology, among the early disciples of Jesus Christ; 2) the diremption represented by the split between this and the other world given in positive Christianity, or the Church, and the split between the individual and the whole represented by morality and civil society; 3) reconciliation represented in ethical life, and the elevation of immediate unity of love, to the mediated unity of legal relations embodied in the State.⁶⁸

Conclusion

As presented in this chapter, Hegel's State speculatively appropriates the incarnate God most fundamentally in that the reconciliation, paradigmatically revealed in Jesus Christ, is transposed on to the ethical realm not rhetorically or metaphorically but systematically. The elevation of the representation to the concept of the incarnation implies that the intersubjectivity metaphysically expressed in the self-othering of the divine is rationalised and modernised in the State. The State is the proper context for the collective, ontological self-realisation of humanity, insofar as it contextualises the freedom or divinity central to that self-realisation. There is no other realm; outside it, man is either a beast or a god. That is, outside it, man is either bound to nature pursuing his own subjectively determined goals and satisfying basic needs or has the capacity to contemplate God philosophically.⁶⁹ Secondly, the incarnation showed the rational to be

⁶⁸ These three stages of reconciliation are repeated at the end of the *LPR*, pp. 482-489: 1) immediacy and love; 2) diremption, the split between this and the other world; 3) the State or ethical community.

⁶⁹ This corresponds with Hegel's view of the highest form of freedom found in the realm of Absolute Spirit, i.e. religion, art and philosophy. Hegel defines the relationship between the state and this realm in the closing sentence of the *PR* (§ 360): "In the state,

real in that it revealed the divinity, i.e. rationality, in humanity that sets it apart from nature. The rationality of the real once revealed, is expressed in the process of history. World history takes on a meaningful form insofar as it is no longer a mechanical natural cycle but rather the unfolding of a rational and divine plan. Similarly, the State fulfils what the incarnation promises by showing that reality is rational, that history has a purpose, and that this purpose is revealed through the prodigious transfer from inner to outer, from abstract to concrete.

Still, in spite of the speculative appropriation examined here, it will not go unnoticed that, "Hegel's program for the reconciliation of state, religion, and philosophy rests upon an extremely vulnerable view of Christianity."⁷⁰ This is because, in simplest terms, there is only room for one form of salvation, one true freedom, and if, as the Christian believes, the road to salvation lies in and through the concrete personhood of Christ or the community of faith built up around it, then Hegel's speculative appropriation can only redirect that road through the rational institutions of the State. Thus, Hegel does not so much transpose the Christian religion onto the political realm as reinterpret the Idea upon which the Christian religion is based and claim that Idea to be more truthfully actualised in the State. In this context, what is of primary importance is not the sin and redemption of the individual, but rather humanity *qua* humanity, its

self-consciousness finds in an organic development the actuality of its substantive knowing and willing; in religion, it finds the feeling and representation of this its own truth as an ideal essentiality; while in philosophic science, it finds the free comprehension and knowledge of this truth as one and the same in its mutually complementary manifestations, i.e. in the state, in nature, and in the ideal world."

⁷⁰ Jaeschke, "Christianity and Secularity in Hegel's Concept of the State," p. 143.

collective self-realisation based on a conviction that freedom, its essence and divine nature, has a specific content.

Those who identified and elaborated on the incarnation thematic in Hegel's thought, such as the Young Hegelians, would preoccupy themselves with a fundamental problem: how to reconcile the self-consciously revolutionary character of Spirit with the specific content it found in the Prussian State. The following chapter will address the legacy of Hegel's political thought in the context of Young Hegelian speculative christological discourse, particularly that of Strauss, Cieszkowski and Hess. Although it is rarely recognised, it will be argued that this context is a necessary link for understanding fully the sense in which Marx inherited the theoretical baggage of Hegelian metaphysics and political thought.

Chapter 5

Prussia, Humanity and Praxis: The Incarnation Thematic among the Young Hegelians

It is Humanity that dies, rises, and ascends to heaven. D.F. Strauss

Introduction

At the heart of speculative christology lies the idea that the incarnate God says something important about human nature which would otherwise not have been said. While Jesus Christ is only the empirical testimony of its "having-been-saidness," nonetheless, one must question why and in particular in Germany did the understanding of what man is have to pass through a critique of a religious form? Arguably, the metaphysical pretensions of Hegel's system had much to do with this state of affairs. The self-consciousness of freedom, i.e. Spirit, grounded in the one metaphysical moment of the incarnation, implies that there is a necessary relationship between the loftiest idea that humanity can imagine and the reality it inhabits. This is a distinctly positive freedom, a "freedom for" that is not naturally given but constructed, that only has its objective content in a certain political context, outside of which the individual remains without significance.

The speculative christological legacy left to Hegel's followers upon his death in 1831 consisted of the historicised Absolute and the State as a spiritual and supra-

individual entity. The subsequent efforts of these followers to elaborate on, proselytise, challenge and improve or reject the political implications of this formulation can be characterised as a process of concretisation. Throughout the 1830s, the transition from abstract to concrete, that is, the application of the theoretical conclusions of Hegel's system to the "real world" would be the central guiding force of the Young Hegelian movement which leads, in certain respects, to the materialist and socio-economic categories of the young Marx. Thus, the incarnation of the Spirit of Hegel could be seen as actualising in praxis what Hegel, as a philosopher-God, had only theoretically achieved. As noted by the young Hegelian publicist Ruge: "From his Olympian repose, he (Hegel) looked at everything that reason had made, and he saw it was good, for reason can be demonstrated in all of its products or existences."¹

In the annals of German philosophy, the Young Hegelians are not taken very seriously²; a mediocre prelude to Marxism or, for those dismissive of Marx entirely, an irrelevant cul-de-sac compared to the more systematic or at least, provocative advances of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. In terms of their 20th century reception, they represent a flat plain between the twin peaks of Hegel and Marx, a necessary but transitional passage. A number of studies have challenged this view. In particular, a recent and richly argued study by Toews, takes issue with the "teleological straitjacket" of the "Hegel to Marx" or "Hegel to Nietzsche" variety which neglect the Hegelians as an autonomous

¹ The original version in Genesis 1:31 reads: "And God saw everything he had made, and behold, it was very good." "Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* and the Politics of Our Time," in L. Stepelevich, *The Young Hegelians: an Anthology* (hereafter, *Anthology*) p.223.

² see Löwith, *Hegelsche Linke*, pp.9-10; G. Lichtheim, "From Marx to Hegel," in *From Marx to Hegel and Other Essays*, p. 7.

development in German philosophy.³ Yet, while the Hegelianisation of Marx and the Marxianisation of Hegel has sometimes owed more to ideological premises than historical truths, it is difficult to see the Young Hegelian movement in anything but anti-climactic and transitional terms. Such an appraisal is reinforced not only by the unsystematic and polemical character of much of the writings, but also by the lack of continuity among the Young Hegelians themselves. Often the radical positions adopted in their early age were disavowed with some of the major contributors, such as Bruno Bauer or David Strauss, reverting to conservatism or academic calm. Furthermore, it was Marxism, rather than Stirnerianism, or the Carovéist movement, which was most successful, for better or worse, in converting some of the core motifs of Hegel's systems into a theory of praxis, and creating one of the most influential social movements of modern history. As such, there still seem to be good grounds for staying within the strait-jacket along the lines of the standard works,⁴ although raising the autonomous status of the Young Hegelians slightly in light of our speculative theological emphasis.

Whichever position one adopts, the achievements of Hegel's disciples cannot be measured in terms of new philosophical systems which were, in any case, contrary to their principles. Academic philosophy and abstract system-building, following Hegel's

³ Toews, *Hegelianism*. On his criticism of the "Hegel – Marx" framework see p. 2. Earlier studies which argue for an autonomous treatment of the Young Hegelians include Stuke, *Philosophie der Tat* and Gebhardt, *Politik und Eschatologie*. A characteristic statement of this trend is given by L. Stepelevich, *Anthology*, preface, p. xi: "It is perhaps time to understand this circle as more than a mere link between Hegel and the present or as simply the matrix in which Marxism was formed, but as an authentic school in its own right."

⁴ e.g. Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche*, McClellan, *The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx*.

death and the widespread belief that his system had exhausted itself, was to be confronted now by a "worldly philosophy" of "dismissed privatdozents, journalists, and private literary men."⁵ These characters were the Young Hegelians, whose lofty declarations and penchant for pithy maxims give, at times, the impression of charlatanism. However, given their sound philosophical and theological education, their marginality appears largely self-imposed, one based on a disdain for the aridity of academic theorising. The mood is captured neatly by Marx in a letter to Ruge:

Up to now philosophers had the solution of all riddles lying in their lecterns, and the ignorant world of the present had but to gape in order that the roasted dove of Absolute Knowledge fly directly into its mouth. Philosophy has made itself worldly, and the most striking proof of this is that the philosophic consciousness has not only externally, but internally as well, been pulled into the torment of the worldly struggle.⁶

The decision to turn away from abstract system building, and toward praxis and the construction of freedom in the social order also implied a critique of the synthesis of the transcendent Absolute and the historical State, so central to the incarnation thematic in Hegel's political thought.

In this context, the relationship between religion and politics centred on the ambiguity of the rationality of the real in Hegel's system. For the right Hegelian the real was also rational. This implied that the Prussia of Hegel's time corresponded in large degree to the criteria of rationality assigned to the State in his political thought. For the left Hegelians, only the rational was real. This set out from the standpoint that the current reality did not match the criteria of rationality. Given that the Hegelian realisation of

⁵ J. Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, p. 52.

⁶ K. Marx, "letter to Ruge," (September, 1843) *MECW*, Vol. 3, p. 142.

reason presupposes the Incarnation, it is not surprising that the origin of the division between right and left was based on "divergent views on the question of christology."⁷ While the content of these divergent views, based on Strauss' seminal and divisive work, *The Life of Jesus*, will be discussed later in the chapter, it is only necessary here to hint at the importance of the incarnation thematic among the Young Hegelians of the 1830s. On which side would Hegel have stood? Based on his favourable reviews of the right Hegelians Göschel's and Hinrichs, it has been assumed that Hegel himself would have been a right, or old Hegelian had he lived to be his own disciple. Indeed, insofar as he settled into a complacent reconciliation with the present although the dialectic of negation left important ambiguities his system heralded the "conclusion of thought," rather than "a premise for future action."⁸ There are few reasons to dispute this formulation, except for the conviction of the young Hegelians that the conclusion of thought was itself a premise for future action along Hegelian lines.

These Hegelian lines however are not the dialectic, the philosophy of history, alienation, the epistemology of labour or praxis, which have generally preoccupied students of this period. The following chapter proposes an alternative route; one, however, which it is hoped more adequately illustrates the extent to which the incarnation thematic is inherited and transformed into humanistic, materialistic, and even atheistic, concepts by the time it arrives at the world-view of the early Marx. Such a project not only provides a systematic framework for incorporating the speculative christological discourse of the 1830s into the Hegel Marx lineage, but it also hints at a second, and

⁷ K. Löwith, "Einleitung," *Die Hegelsche Linke*, p. 53.

⁸ Stepelevich, *Anthology*, Introduction, p. 4.

arguably more profound, role of religion, beyond its clichéd status as the opium of the masses. In the development, the split between positive and true Christianity, between the institutionalised representation of Christ in the Church and its speculative appropriation, inaugurated in Hegel's early theology is preserved through the young Hegelians to Marx. The validity of this hypothesis will be defended in the next two chapters.

Firstly, however, some historical background is required to contextualise the debate. This is divided into two parts. The first and shorter part sketches out the aura of discipleship, heavily imbued with Christian symbolism, which welled up upon the death of Hegel and captured the imaginations of the younger generation. The second part has a more ambitious and speculative task. That is, to shed a corrective light on one of the most irritating, and still inadequately resolved aspects of the Hegel problematic, namely the question of Prussia. Whether Hegel was or was not referring to Prussia in his *Philosophy of Right* appears to be a rather moot and exhausted point in present scholarship.⁹ However, from the standpoint of the themes presented here, some revision is required to illuminate and justify the extent to which Hegel identified the incarnation thematic with a concrete political model, i.e. the Prussia of his time. The second section of this chapter will trace the incarnation thematic through the "second tier" Young Hegelians Strauss, Cieszkowski, and Hess. The purpose is to identify both the derivations and the development of the Hegelian incarnation thematic, which will be taken up in more detail in the writings of Feuerbach and the early Marx in the next chapter.

⁹ Informative surveys of this debate are provided in Ilting's introduction to *Rechtsphilosophie*, pp. 94-111, Ottmann's *Individuum and Gesellschaft bei Hegel*, and Hefnerich, *Hegel*, pp. 159-162.

I. The Historical Ingredients

A. The Discipleship of the Philosophical Christ

Insofar as the relevance of the incarnation thematic in Hegel's system and political thought has been demonstrated in the previous chapters, and is confirmed by the writings of the Young Hegelians, the continuity of this thematic is based on the premise that the christological discourse of the Young Hegelians is not metaphorical or analogical, but systematic. In other words, it is not a matter of theologically-educated pamphleteers operating for stylistic purposes in a realm of Christian symbolism. Rather, their real concern remained the unity of the human and divine, the speculative God-Man (*Gott-Mensch*) either collectively or individualistically formulated, and how it could be actualised in the social and political realms.

The most obvious historical, as opposed to philosophical, manifestation of such a concern is the mystical aura of discipleship which welled up following Hegel's death. Ironically, the conviction that Hegel had achieved in terms of the concept what Jesus Christ had achieved as a representation was itself transformed into an idolisation of Hegel as a representational form. While this sounds far-fetched, Hegel, during the latter period of his life and particularly immediately following his death, exercised a spiritual force on his students pervaded with Christian symbolism. One student, Kapp likened the Hegelian rebirth to the transformation of human nature represented by the incarnation.¹⁰ Engels described the immediate aftermath of Hegel's death in the Christian imagery of

¹⁰ J. Toews, *Hegelianism*, p. 91. For a detailed description of the aura of spiritualism surrounding converts to the Hegelian philosophical faith, see pp. 71-94.

discipleship ("when...the dying Hegel left the legacy of his system to his disciples, their number was still relatively small..."), resurrection ("it was only after Hegel had died that his philosophy really began to live,") and exclusivity (Engels refers to those opposed to the Young Hegelians as "laymen").¹¹ While some commentators have dismissed these ecstatic confessions as "flowery language...excessive even by the baroque standards of the period,"¹² the religious imagery gains a much more systematic foothold when considered in its proper historical and philosophical context. The language of conversion and self-abandonment to the system, to Hegel, or to the State, derived from the combination of mysticism and rationalism that characterised the new philosophical faith. As Feuerbach later remarked in a critical vein: "The Hegelian logic is the theology brought to reason and brought up to date, theology rendered as logic."¹³

These few allusions to the theological colouring of the immediate Hegelian *rezeptionsgeschichte* suggest far more than a rhetorical device. They define the extent to which the perceived absoluteness of Hegel's system re-created on the level of philosophy what Christianity could only achieve in religion. From a political standpoint, the application of this philosophy to its immediate Prussian context provoked equal doses of satire as reflected in a play of the period depicting Hegel as Absolutus in a "Prussianised Utopia," surrounded by bureaucrats and his Jewish disciples Arroganz, Absalom and

¹¹ Friedrich Engels, "Schelling and Revelation," (originally published 1842), *MECW*, Vol. 2, p. 195.

¹² S. Avineri, "Hegel Revisited," in *Hegel: A Collection of Critical Essays*, A. MacIntyre, ed., pp. 331-332

¹³ L. Feuerbach, *Provisional Theses for the Reformation of Philosophy*, in *Anthology*, p. 158.

Israel.¹⁴ Just as the religious imagery of the Young Hegelians has been misunderstood, Hegel's reconciliation to the Prussian State has been a subject of controversy from its earliest reception to the modern day. The importance of now providing a cursory overview of Prussia as it was perceived in Hegel's time is to show how the incarnation thematic could find a form adequate to its content in a particular political model.

B. Normalising Prussia: i. Interpretive Problems

The cultivation of humanity in accordance with God or rationality incarnate gains a more concrete historical definition in the notion that Hegel "identified the Prussian state of his time with the ideal of the rational State (Vernunftstaat)." ¹⁵ Unfortunately, because the deification of the Prussian State has invoked so much totalitarian imagery in the 20th century, there has been a tendency to impose a perspective from hindsight on the far more benign and provincial attributes of the 19th century version.¹⁶

¹⁴ O.H. Gruppe, "The Winds, or, A Wholly Absolute Construction of World History by Oberon's Horn," discussed in Avineri, "Hegel Revisited," pp. 334-335.

¹⁵ G. Mayer, "Die Junghegelianer und der preussische Staat," *HZ*, 25/3 (1920): 418.

¹⁶ While Avineri (*Hegel's Theory of the Modern State*) also criticises the tendency to make "backward projections of the meaning of 'Prussia' and 'Prussianism,'" (p. 115) he is guilty of an altogether different distortion, namely to dissociate Hegel from Prussia entirely. After sketching out what might be called Prussia's progressive aspects, he nonetheless notes that "to represent it (*PR*) as Hegel's apotheosis of Prussia is nonsense, for philosophical and biographical reasons" (p. 116). However, neither the philosophical ("No state as Hegel would point out, could ever be adequate to the philosophical idea of the state expounded in the work,") nor the biographical ("Hegel prepared the *Philosophy of Right* while he was lecturing on the subject at Heidelberg, in Baden, before he moved to Berlin and even became associated with Prussia") are convincing enough to override the fact that Hegel's contemporaries as well as his followers assumed he was referring to Prussia (among the many examples, see the letter from Von Thaden to Hegel, *Briefe*, Vol. 3, p. 279, and Hegels' letters to the Prussian State Chancellor Hardenberg with which he encloses a copy of the *PR*, and to Niethammer where he includes himself

The two schools identified at the beginning of the previous chapter with general reference to Hegel's political thought, mystical totalitarian and liberal-conventionalist, are also suitable for distinguishing among the interpretive frameworks in which the Hegelian-Prussian relationship is normally discussed. The mystical totalitarian variant assumes that when Hegel speaks of the divine on earth, he is referring to the Prussian state and, given that state's reputation in the 20th century, is necessarily an arch conservative ideologue. Such discussions, found in the works of Popper and Butler¹⁷, are right to affirm Hegel's close relationship to Prussia but wrong in the consequences they draw. The conventionalist view argues that Hegel was a south German liberal who arrived in Prussia late in his career with a political philosophy in hand.¹⁸ His high regard for the State

among the "Prussian patriots" *Briefe*, Vol. 2, pp. 241-242, 270)

However, the real problem with Avineri's interpretation (also shared by J.N. Findlay, *Hegel: A Reexamination*, p. 28, and in a different sense Z. Pelczynski, "Hegel Again," in W. Kaufmann, *Hegel's Political Philosophy*, pp. 80-86, and "Hegel as a Political Writer," in Pelczynski, *Hegel's Political Writings*) is its determination to downplay Hegel's relation to Prussia prejudiced upon an unsympathetic view of that state. Furthermore, because this relation is expressed most clearly in the *PR* the objective of Avineri and Pelczynski is to dilute Hegel's political thought by extending their interpretation to the entire corpus of his political writings. Of particular value in this project is Hegel's essay on the "German Constitution," written between 1799-1802, which portrays Prussia as sterile and mechanistic thereby affirming Hegel's distance from it. However, that early essay has little or nothing to do with the later and more systematic political thought in which the affinity to Prussia is more clearly expressed. It is this type of a denial of Hegel's relation to Prussia by the liberal-conventionalist schools which prompted Sidney Hook to note: "It was to be expected that in time the harsh and unjust judgment of Popper and others would be challenged. As is usual in such matters, the reaction has swung to the opposite extreme." see "Hegel Rehabilitated" in Kaufmann, p. 5.

¹⁷ Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, pp. 244-273; R. Butler, *The Roots of National Socialism*, pp. 73-78.

¹⁸ see Avineri, Pelczynski, and Findlay also Walsh (*Hegelian Ethics*, p.1): "Hegel is often thought of as a Prussian apologist, but in fact he was a south German who spent most of his life in that part of the country, and only one of his major works was written during the Berlin period." While that Berlin work is the *PRT*, Walsh argues that most of its main themes are already expressed in the *Enc.* and the early essays on "Natural Law"

must therefore be seen in the more abstract context of his system as a whole. In this light, Hegel's political thought is seen as mildly conservative or even liberal, and far removed from the authoritarian premises of the Prussian State. While the conventionalists are right to portray Hegel as mildly conservative, or liberal, they are wrong to dissociate him from Prussia. In both interpretations, Hegel's relationship to Prussia is coloured by a perception, not of Hegel's thought itself but rather of the Prussian State.

A third and, in my view, proper approach, is to accept Hegel's affinity, even glorification of the Prussian State at its face value, yet reassess the values on which the Prussia of Hegel's time was based. This can be called the Prussian model, as opposed to the alternative Hellenic or South German models. While previous studies have associated Hegel with the Prussian model in a sense which was not intended to imply proto-fascist tendencies,¹⁹ what seems necessary at this stage is to affirm more forcefully how the Prussia of Hegel's time provided a *positive* historical paradigm for his political thought but one which is not necessarily liberal. The question can thus be formulated as follows: Which aspects of Prussia validate Hegel's speculative formulations assuming that it is Prussia to which Hegel refers in the *Philosophy of Right*?

In the most general sense, the particularities of the Prussian context - poor landed aristocracy, sparsely inhabited territory, lack of natural riches, poorly-developed industry,

and the "System of Ethical Life." Other studies such as Taylor's, *Hegel and Modern Society*, discuss Hegel's views on the State in a purely abstract context with little or no mention of its Prussian overtones.

¹⁹ Mayer, "Die Junghegelianer und der preussische Staat," and E. Weil, *Hegel et L'État*. For a criticism of Weil, see Ottmann, pp. 262-266.

and overall cultural and intellectual isolation help explain how the idea of a State in the form of a rational *creatio ex nihilo* could have taken root there. "Germany is a child of nature, but Prussia was made by man" ²⁰ is certainly applicable to Prussia's origins. As a kingdom it did not emerge from the traditions of a sacred and remote past. Quite simply, on January 18, 1701, the elector of Brandenburg became King of Prussia at a ceremony in Königsberg. Unlike Bavaria or Swabia, Prussia had, except for the minor Pruzzen tribe²¹ no coherent ethnic traditions to fall back on. As such, the idea of the Prussian State and its administrative institutions as a rationally developing self-correcting organicism provided the cohesion and object of spiritual devotion necessary to sustain the community. ²²

Yet although the primary characteristic of the Prussian State, as an agent and embodiment of rational will and the common good, accords with Hegel's speculative political thought, he was not alone in such sentiments (although he may have influenced the language used to express them). As the historian Ranke noted with reference to the unification of the Prussian provinces in one State: "The divine Right is that-which has Historically- become (das Historisch-geworden-sein)...The Idea created the provinces, the

²⁰ E. Lavissee, cited in Gerhard Oestreich, "Fundamente Preussischer Geistesgeschichte, Religion und Weltanschauung in Brandenburg im 17. Jahrhundert." *Jahrbuch Preussischer Kulturbesitz* 1969.

²¹ Related to the Baltic Latvians and Lithuanians, the Pruzzen were the original inhabitants of what became Prussia. Through a series of military crusades, sanctioned by the Pope and carried out by the Teutonic order, they were subjugated by 1283.

²² U. Scheuner, *Der Staatsgedanke Preussens*, p. 13; H. J. Puhle, "Preussen: Entwicklung und Fehlentwicklung," in *Preussen in Rückblick*, H.J. Puhle, ed. p. 14.

provinces did not give rise to the Idea."²³ The right Hegelian Gans *In Beitragen zur Revision der Preussischer Gesetzgebung*, characterised Prussia as "an artificial State of thought and intelligence, a concept which still needs to be realised." And one academic Sietze changed Hegel's four world historical period to a mystical trinity so that the "self-consciousness of Spirit" would directly end up in Prussia; this prompted the writer Wilhelm Grimm to joke: "this 'student' of Hegel's need no longer pray 'thy kingdom come' because Prussia has already fulfilled it."²⁴ In spite of Grimm's sarcasm, the Christian rhetoric informing Prussian self-understanding acquires authenticity in terms of a genuine "victim status" associated with Napoleonic occupation and the War of Liberation. In the midst of, and following, this collective trauma, the Hardenberg-Stein reform era inaugurates a period of national regeneration and energetic state-led reforms. These ingredients provide, on a preliminary level, the main pillars of the Hegelian affinity for Prussia even though it would wane, particularly among the left, by the mid to late 1830s.

ii. Bildung, Bureaucracy, and Monarchy

Three specific aspects can be identified that broadly constitute the Prussian idea from a Hegelian perspective: 1) Bildung, or cultivation, a broad term that implied both the State's self-creation and the creative self-development of the individual within the State; 2) Bureaucracy, a disinterested intellectual elite that represented the universal

²³ Leopold Ranke, *Tagebücher*, p. 256.

²⁴ Cited in Pöggeler, "Hegels Begegnung mit Preussen," *Hegels Rechtsphilosophie*, pp. 330, 332.

interests of the State to the particular individuals of civil society; 3) a constitutional monarchy whereby the king is bound by duty and service to the State.

The concept of Bildung which was an influential component of Prussian life in the first half of the 19th century concerns the development of the individual along the lines of some higher good:

Bildung, as being raised to the universal, is a task for man. It requires the sacrifice of particularity for the sake of the universal. But sacrifice of particularity means, in negative terms, the restraint of desire and hence freedom from the object of desire and freedom for its objectivity."²⁵

The root of Bildung, Bild, means picture or image, both in a literal sense and in terms of a model, as used by Luther in his translation of the Bible (Gen. 1:27) "in the image of God created he him." Further theological origins have been noted in medieval and Baroque mysticism, ²⁶ while secular versions, such as Rousseau's *Émile* and the Bildungsromane of Goethe and Novalis, abounded in Enlightenment educational thinking. In Prussia, Bildungsbürgertum was at its height at the beginning of the 19th century, with Berlin's romantic literati gathering for concerts, poetry readings, and highbrow chatter in French-style salons.

However, the largely cultural and aesthetic phenomenon of Bildung also had important political off-shoots, particularly during the Reform era of Karl August von Hardenberg and Freiherr Karl vom und zum Stein, which began in 1807, under French

²⁵ H.G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 13

²⁶ Ibid., p. 11.

occupation, and lasted until the former's death in 1822. With "Reform from above"²⁷ as the guiding motif, first Hardenberg, then Stein, then Hardenberg again set into motion a number of laws on taxation, local governance, bureaucratic administration, and Jewish and peasant rights. Not all of them were successful or fully implemented, such as the Jewish Emancipation edict, and the free humanistic spirit of the *Bildungszeit* began to fade with the Christian nationalist upsurge following the defeat of Napoleon. Nonetheless, the inspiration to integrate the citizens into the public life of the State, to follow in the path of the French Revolution from the top down rather than the bottom up, is a tradition which Hegel incorporated, albeit more abstractly, into his political thought. While Hegel criticised the romanticist enthusiasm for *Bildung*, either in its aesthetic or religious forms because of its overly subjective and whimsical character,²⁸ the idea of the State as cultivating both itself and its members, through the sacrifice of the public servants for the greater good and the more authoritarian negation of individuality are both visible in his formulation.

²⁷ Such as noted by the Prussian minister Struensee to the French ambassador in Berlin in 1799: "The salutary Revolution which you have made from the bottom up will develop gradually in Prussian from the top down. The King is a democrat in his own way...In a few years there will no longer be a privileged class in Prussia." cited in H. Dollinger, *Preussen*, p. 167.

²⁸ Hegel's treatment of *Bildung* is given in the *Phen.* para. 526, where he associates it with the spirit of the Enlightenment. While *Bildung* can be a vain form of empty witticisms which makes a mockery of all that is held to be true, but not really true in universal terms, it finds greater meaning within the institutions of the state: "it (*Bildung*) knows that through renunciation and sacrifice it forms itself into the universal, attains to possession of it, and in this possession is universally recognised and accepted: state power and wealth are the real and acknowledged powers para. 526." One could conceive of the difference in terms of a universality understood as unlimited self-development towards selfish goals, or unlimited self-development within the infinite structured progress of the state bureaucracy or civil society, i.e. economic life.

How authentically the ideals of cosmopolitan cultural awareness and creative expression permeated Prussian society in the early 19th century is a matter of some dispute. It is clear, however, that a social split was formed based on the degree to which these ideals were pursued. Some historians have contended that the split between *Besitzbürger* (Property Citizens) and *Bildungsbürger* (Cultured Citizens) was defined along these lines.²⁹ The *Besitzbürger* included merchants, businessmen and craftsmen; the *Bildungsbürger*, bureaucrats, academics, intellectuals and clerics. The *Bildungsbürger*, as a socio-economic category, cut across class divisions in that differences of background were reconciled by a shared cultural knowledge which was the sole criterion of membership. This unity between intellectuals and bureaucrats as part of the overall *Bildungsbürgertum* made bureaucratic authority universalisable, and at the same time, incorporated intellectuals and academics into the fabric of the State. Unlike the *Besitzbürger*, who pursued individual economic interests for the sake of their family, the *Bildungsbürger* at least theoretically subordinated his personal interests to the goals of the collective whole or universals. He found self-fulfilment and expression in his contribution to human cultural and moral progress.

In this context, it is not surprising that the moral responsibility for *Bildung* of the citizenry fell, in Hegel's system, not to the individual but to the State, although it was emphasised that the citizen should have "self-consciousness" of his/her legal position.³⁰ Ideally, the bureaucrats were universal disinterested *Bildungsbürger* imbued with a higher

²⁹ See Blackbourn, D. "The German Bourgeoisie: an Introduction," in *The German Bourgeoisie in Crisis*, pp. 2-6.

³⁰ *PR* § 215: "If laws are to have binding force, it follows that, in view of the right of self-consciousness...they must be universally known."

understanding of the rational and divine, and their authority was legitimated on these premises.³¹ The self-discipline demanded of its members, and the cross-over between intellectuals and decision-makers gives some credibility to the view that Prussia was in the process of being formed by rational agents according to an organised plan.³² However, the distinction between pre- and post 1840 attitudes towards the bureaucracy is important in understanding the powers willingly delegated to them by liberals still hoping for a revival of the progressive spirit of the reform era of Hardenberg and Stein. In the words of Gillis:

Prior to the 1840s, the state official was anything but an alien oppressor; on the contrary, in contrast to the ignorant and reactionary local notable, he appeared as a pillar of enlightenment and progress.³³

The Bildungsideal, sincerely or cynically pursued, offered a degree of legitimacy to the Prussian bureaucracy's claims to represent the "general will." At the same time, because of the financial dependence of the majority of artists and academics on the State, there was not much of a context in which opposition could form. However, this situation

³¹ The specialist literature seems to reflect a more sceptical approach about the idealised autonomy of Prussia's bureaucratic apparatus from the particular interests of civil society. While this appears to undermine Hegel's thesis about the separation of civil society and State, his was, after all, an idealisation which made that separation necessary and accorded with, as well as he could see, the fundamental structure of the Prussian state. Efforts to complicate the picture would include standard works by Gillis *The Prussian Bureaucracy in Crisis*, and R. Kosselleck *Preussen zwischen Reform und Revolution*, as well as a recent discussion by H. Beck, "The Social Policies of Prussian Officials: The Bureaucracy in a New Light," *JMH*, 64 (1992): 263-298.

³² However, in spite of its universal claims, Bildung appears to have remained the property of a small elite. As noted by John: "From the early nineteenth century, the ideal of Bildung had a vital legitimizing function in that it concealed (government) recruitment practices which involved a high degree of social exclusivity behind an ideology which stressed universal access." M. John, "Between estates and profession: lawyers and the development of the legal profession in nineteenth century Germany," in Blackbourn *The German Bourgeoisie in Crisis*, p. 185.

³³ J. Gillis, p. 17.

gradually changed as an increasingly censorial and repressive State antagonised a younger generation grown tired of waiting for the promised era of reform.

If *Bildung* was an informal criterion for membership in the bureaucracy, legal education was a formal prerequisite. Following the "Instruction" of 1817, every civil servant was required to apprentice at a law court and gain a broad legal training before joining the government. As a result of this decree, the number of law students doubled from 1820 to 1830.³⁴ One can only speculate what influence Hegel had on the rising popularity of legal education. The link between his emphasis on law and his admiration for the Prussian state, though perhaps not coincidental, must be relativised in terms of his debates with Savigny and the Historical School of Law. These principally concerned the dangers of bureaucratic tutelage and the state's assumption of the redemptive responsibility Hegel *de facto* assigned to it.³⁵ On the whole, however, it can be said that the bureaucrats supported the liberals in the gradual erosion of aristocratic privileges, and gained the support of the needier classes in their innovations in social welfare. Even on the waning end of such a noble period of bureaucratic enlightenment, one

³⁴ John, p. 165.

³⁵ For Hegel's bearing on Prussian legal reform, see R. Grawert, "Verfassungsfrage und Gesetzgebung in Preussen: Ein Vergleich der Vormärzlichen Staatspraxis mit Hegels rechtsphilosophischen Konzept," in *Hegels Rechtsphilosophie im Zusammenhang der europäischen Verfassungsgeschichte*, ed. O. Pöggeler and H.C. Lucas. On Hegel/Savigny debates, see Toews, *Hegelianism*, pp. 49-51. Toews (p. 49) particularly stresses the speculatively theological dimension of this debate by distinguishing between those "who were able to connect their hopes for the historical incarnation of the absolute to the actual historical developments of the period (Hegel, Gans, etc.) and those who were unable to forge such connections, lost confidence in the historical possibility of an immanent millenium, and gradually disassociated their vision of the absolute, self-sufficient being from the limited, finite, realm of natural and historical existence (Savigny, et al.)."

administration official, Otto Camphausen, was able to write in 1843:

The king who appears to be the top functionary, invariably selects his aides from the intellectual elite of the nation, recognised as such by mean of a truly or allegedly rigorous examinations. He allows them great independence, acknowledges thereby their co-rulership and, consequently, sanctions a sort of aristocracy of experts who purport to be the true representations of the general interest.³⁶

Indeed, one of the key features of the Prussian monarchical tradition, which also explains the relatively figure-head status assigned to him in Hegel's system, is the subordination of the king to the State. It was Frederick the Great who secularised the "divine right of Kings" by claiming that absolute authority was only legitimated by the ability of the ruler to rule. Hegel sought the spiritual in Frederick the Great's achievement, calling him "the hero of Protestantism," "a philosopher king unique to modern time." Furthermore, Frederick the Great satisfied the criteria of a speculative approach in his ability to grasp Protestantism's universal aspect: "he has the consciousness of universality, which is the last depth of Spirit and the self-conscious power of thought." Friedrich William formalised a civil code in 1794, which granted privileges to the bureaucratic class and laid out in broad terms the mutual obligations of State and citizens. While progressivism of any form in Prussia generally meant progress from above, nonetheless, the precedents of the Enlightenment monarchs, who defined themselves less as patriarchs than servants of the State, explain to some degree the link between monarch and bureaucracy which Hegel made intrinsic to his theory of the state.³⁷

³⁶ Cited in Gillis, p. 22.

³⁷ Grawert, p. 307.

What can be surmised from this overview is that Hegel's philosophy of the State correlates to the Prussia of his time in certain important respects that were lost in its subsequent late 19th and early 20th century manifestations. The effect this has had on Hegel scholarship is difficult to judge without speculating. It is clear that a sympathetic, or at least objective, knowledge-base about Prussian history has not been very evident. This, in turn, has resulted in either polemical associations or defensive dissociations both which tend to miss their mark. For Prussia as a product of rationally inspired artifice, *Bildung* and a disinterested bureaucracy, most resembled the reality of Hegel's State which could be aspired to. With its pseudo-classical Schinkelbau and pompous parade grounds, Biedermeier Berlin may have been claustrophobic and not quite the *Weltstadt* it aspired to, but it was hardly proto-fascist. There is, thus, little need to deny Hegel's relation to Prussia by portraying him as a displaced Swabian, a liberal-minded Occidental waiting for the French Revolution to happen in Germany. For one can acknowledge his Swabian roots, and his appeal to Napoleonic rationalism against the romantic nationalists without rupturing his connection to the historical form that accommodated his mature political thought. Alternatively, to dismiss Hegel as a "Prussian apologist" is an argument from hindsight which does not explain, in the context of 1820s Berlin, what Hegel or his political philosophy should apologise for.

II. The Incarnation Thematic and Three Young Hegelians

The discussion so far has sought to sketch out the historical ingredients that justify Prussia as an adequate political form for the realisation of freedom. However, already in the 1830s Hegel's accommodation to Prussia was seriously questioned by the more sceptical left Hegelians. Because he had grounded his reconciliation in thought and not in practice; because he had *read into*, rather than *made of*, existing historical conditions the Incarnation of the Absolute, Hegel's system foundered on its own abstractions. The Young Hegelian departure was thus fuelled by the perceived need to re-concretise the ideals which Prussia's increasing conservatism could no longer rightfully lay claim to. To phrase this in simpler terms, the Young Hegelian movement carries over Hegel's conviction and systematic demonstration that social and political antagonisms can only be reconciled by some larger conception of the unity between the human and the divine. While that divinity might mean many things, the presupposition of its unity with humanity stems from the incarnate God. "This religion," as Hinrichs wrote to his former teacher, "is the reconciliation of God (substance) with the human race (subject), and conversely, of humanity with God."³⁸ It eventually became a call for a praxis philosophy of transformative action to realise an objective which humanity did not yet possess. The process, orientated toward freedom from alienation and oppression, implied transferring the divine/human unity from an historical process that culminates in the philosophy of the State - where historical institutions are elevated to logical entities- to subsequent formulations: an historical process embodied into Humanity itself (Strauss), the self-

³⁸ Hinrich's letter to Hegel, in E.V. der Luft, ed. *Hegel, Hinrichs Schleiermacher: the texts from the 1822 debate*, p. 8.

realisation of that Humanity through future-orientated Action (Cieszkowski), to the outlines of a socialist programme (Hess). These are the second-tier Young Hegelians who, though marginal compared to Feuerbach and Bauer, are each in their own right instrumental in the transformation of the Hegelian incarnation thematic which Marx would later inherit.

A. D.F. Strauss: Adieu to the Historical Christ

In order to stake out the broad claim that speculative christology is important to the philosophical lineage from Hegel to Marx, it is necessary to turn to David Friedrich Strauss's *Life of Jesus*. While it has been noted: "...the extent to which the origins of the Hegelian school were theological can be measured by the fact that it was the purely theological book of Strauss that had the most influence on its development,"³⁹ it has generally proved difficult to integrate Strauss into the philosophical history from Hegel to Marx. Yet, no work polarised and energised the Hegelian movement more than this exhaustive attempt to prove that the Christ narrative is but the "mythical drapery of an essentially philosophical statement."⁴⁰ Published in 1835, it set off the conservative right Hegelians such as Rosenkranz, Bauer and Hinrichs from the radical left members such as Strauss, Feuerbach, and Hess.

³⁹ D. McLellan, *The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx*, p.6.

⁴⁰ H. Küng, *Does God Exist?*, p. 197; for Strauss within the tradition of German christology, see A. Schweitzer's *Das Leben Jesu Forschung*, pp. 132-154.

Considering the previous chapters which demonstrated what the Hegelians already knew, namely, the close relation between christological and philosophical themes in Hegel, the controversy surrounding the *Life of Jesus* is not surprising. The philosophical context for Strauss' departure can be summarised as follows. Just as metaphysics and the philosophy of religion asks whether and how God can be known, christology asks how and in what form Christ can be known. Following the Enlightenment, faith was no longer a sufficient criterion of such knowledge; however, rather than a turn towards the logical acrobatics of demonstrating God's existence, the turn in the 19th century was towards the historical sciences. This involved the question as to how the gospel narratives could be validated and if they could not be, whether it was necessary for the God-man to appear in one individual in order to uphold the central tenets of the Christian faith. As noted in chapter 3, Hegel had distinguished between *Vorstellungen* (representations) and *Begriffe* (Concepts) in pointing out that in order to uncover the true essence of the Christian faith one had to elevate the *Vorstellungen* ,i.e. the popular imagery and symbols, to the level of rational philosophical *Begriffe*. While Christianity was the one true religion because of the divine/human unity it had inaugurated in the Incarnation, it had along the way become entangled in artifice, superstition and "positivity." Nonetheless, Hegel did not doubt the authenticity of the scriptures and, in speculative terms, the elevation of the representation to a concept depended on the validity of the representation, namely that God had at one point in space and time manifested himself a particular, historical individual. Finally, Hegel felt that the redemptive aspect of Christianity was not some far-off goal but philosophically accessible in the present. Following Hegel's death, those on the right such as Marheineke, Rosenkrantz, Hinrichs and the early Bruno Bauer were prone to interpret the elevation of faith to reason, as a rationalisation of Christianity

which still depended on the self-othering of the divine in one unique historical individual. Those on the left saw Hegel's rationalisation as the final victory of philosophy over religion.

Strauss' contribution to Young Hegelian speculative christology ruptured the systematic link Hegel had established between the representation and concept of the incarnate God. Strauss radicalised the elevation of representations to concepts by denying the historical accuracy of the Gospel narrative, the representation, and thereby rendering it superfluous for any understanding of the divine/human unity. Strauss does not so much present a biography as a historiography of Jesus, challenging in exhaustive detail (although Schweitzer enthuses, "over 1400 pages and not one sentence too many"⁴¹) previous interpretations, and the logical consistency of the gospel accounts. From the annunciation through to the resurrection, he sets out to show that little if any of the theological grandeur assigned to Jesus of Nazareth accord with the facts. Rather, his whole persona is built on "mythus" which Strauss defines in three senses: evangelical, pure, and historical. The evangelical myths concern the stories of his immediate followers, the pure myths concern the application of Judaic Messianic mythology to the historical figure of Jesus, and the historical concern the legends and narratives surrounding Jesus' supposed accomplishments, primarily the miracles. ⁴²

The book is divided into three sections. The first section, outlines the methodology, the need for this methodology, and its historical application. Here he

⁴¹ Schweitzer, p. 115.

⁴² Strauss, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, pp. 86-87.

particularly acknowledges the contribution of Philo's allegorical method which first considered the gospel narratives as figurative expression of ethical ideas. The second section questions the historical validity of the "life of Jesus" narratives. The third section offers a prolegomenon to a speculative christology, that is, how the incarnate God should be construed in modern terms.

While noting that allegorical and mythical reading of the gospel narratives have been a staple of biblical study since Philo and Origen, Strauss seeks to show that not only do these narratives express a higher idea, in fact, that idea is existentially rich enough to stand alone without the assistance of historical props. The concept of the God-Man could replace entirely the representation which was, anyway, only the product of a mythic imagination. This did not mean that the myths were a simple product of literary fantasy, for they were the means by which the idea of the God-Man acquired historical form. However, while his Hegelian inspiration was correct in the sense of the prioritising concepts over representations, unlike Hegel, Strauss could no longer preserve a relationship between the two. He was effectively left with a Christology without any Christ: "the results of the inquiry...have apparently annihilated the greatest and most valuable part of that which the Christian has been wont to believe concerning the Saviour Jesus."⁴³ This was not an expression of despair as his later retractions of his more extreme views would suggest. On the contrary, he felt such a critical accomplishment only better illuminated the underlying speculative idea.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 757.

The consequences of this conclusion for the incarnation thematic among the Young Hegelians are most instructively developed towards the end of the work in a section entitled "The Speculative Christology." Reiterating the Hegelian critique of Kant (that Kant restricted the incarnation to an illustration of the moral instinct present in humanity)⁴⁴ he turns to the greater spiritual import of Hegel's speculative christology: "The true and real existence of spirit..., is neither in God by himself, nor in man by himself, but in the God-man."⁴⁵ After momentarily returning to a Kantian scepticism that questions how the "divine and human natures can have constituted the distinct yet united portions of an historical person," he points to the empty formalism of Kant's christology in which the abstract moral idea lacks a corresponding reality. Strauss, assuming finally the Hegelian standpoint albeit in a special sense, claims that the idea does have a corresponding reality, but not one which corresponds with the concrete historical Jesus:

If reality is ascribed to the idea of the unity of the divine and human natures, is this equivalent to the admission that this unity must actually have been once manifested, as it never had been, and never more will be, in one individual? This is indeed not the mode in which the Idea realizes itself; it is not wont to lavish all its fullness on one exemplar, and be niggardly towards all other to express perfectly in that one individual, and imperfectly in all the rest.⁴⁶

Thus, Strauss denies the necessity of the representation while still able to maintain that the Idea of the divine/human unity has a reality. The Incarnate God which logically and

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 777: "Kant had already said that the good principle did not descend from heaven merely at a particular time, but had descended on mankind invisibly from the commencement of the human race...yet (he) understood under that expression only the moral instinct, which, with its ideal of good, and its sense of duty, has been from the beginning implanted in man."

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 777.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 779-780.

scientifically cannot be fixed in one individual in one point in space and time, must be transferred to Humanity:

This is the key to the whole of Christology, that, as subject of the predicate which the Church assigns to Christ, we place, instead of an individual, an idea; but an idea which has an existence in reality, not in mind only, like that of Kant. In an individual, a God-man, the properties and functions which the Church ascribes to Christ contradict themselves; in the idea of the race, they perfectly agree. Humanity is the union of the two natures. God become man, the infinite manifesting itself in the finite, and the finite spirit remembering its infinitude.⁴⁷

While Strauss may have shattered the historical shreds validating the biblical gospels, polarised the Young Hegelians, and helped establish the significance of myth for humanist philosophy, he does not seem to have been particularly interested in the means or institutions by which to carry his message further.⁴⁸ Basically, he assumed the standpoint of Hegel's political philosophy. The idea that in "the kindling in him of the idea of Humanity, the individual man participates in the divinely human life of the species,"⁴⁹ was analogous to the idea that the individual acquires its freedom through participation in the State. The State was not "merely an institution for the protection of person and property," but rather an agent of the "common realisation of the totality, spiritual as well as material, of mankind's interests."⁵⁰ Still, the Church was necessary to give expression to the ideal community that had yet to be realised. While not original, Strauss' political thought is not only consistent with his speculative christology, it also reinforces that same consistency in Hegel. Namely, the elevation of the pictorial God-man

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 780.

⁴⁸ In fact, he sets as his final task in the *Life of Jesus*, the bearing of biblical scepticism on the theologian's task in the pulpit.

⁴⁹ *Life of Jesus*, p. 780.

⁵⁰ From a letter of 1834, cited in Toews, p. 267.

is transformed into the operation of the Absolute in history and finds its highest form in the State where humanity can actualise its essence.

However, such a view, from the standpoint of conservative Prussian ideology belittled the significance of the monarch and thus invited a response from the right.⁵¹ The right Hegelian Göschel, egged on by the Minister of Culture Altenstein, responded with a traktat, *Über das Verhältnis der spekulativen Theologie zur Straussschen Christologie*, which argued that Strauss' formulation of Humanity (*Gattung*) could be interpreted as a single person, i.e. the monarch.⁵² Göschel argues that the true divine/human unity is achieved not by the individual abandoning himself to an abstract entity such as the State or Humanity, but rather to the personality that embodies that unity. As such, he seeks to re-establish the conservative, speculatively theocratic, analogy between the representation of Jesus Christ and the personality of the monarch.⁵³ While

⁵¹ On the right Hegelian response to Strauss, see Gebhardt, pp.97-129 and Jaeschke, "Urmenschheit und Monarchie: Eine politische Christologie der Hegelschen Rechten," *HS*, 14 (1979): 73-107. A comprehensive study of the *Life of Jesus*' political reception is provided in M. Massey, *Christ Unmasked: The Meaning of the "Life of Jesus" in German Politics*.

⁵² The relevant passage reads: "The idea of Christ gains recognition first as a historical person, then as an ideal, and lastly, as a full harmony of the two. Through his true personality humanity acquires again its genuine Master, just as the State first acquires it in the human form of the monarch." Cited in W. Jaeschke, "Urmenschheit und Monarchie," p. 97.

⁵³ Theoretically, the right Hegelians had certain legitimate grounds for objecting to the formulation of God-Manhood in the *Life of Jesus*. The essence of Hegel's spirit, it was argued, was to realise itself in a concrete entity, a particular, not a category or abstract humanity. Hegel says as much in the *LPR*. The right Hegelian Schaller, who shared a similar view to Göschel's noted in his *Der historische Christus und die Philosophie* (1838): "if we say however: the human species is the God-Manhood, then we have only identified the location in which the idea of the Gott-Manhood ought to realise itself. For if we understand by Godmanhood a determinate spiritual content, so this (content) is only in-itself and therefore not spiritually real (geistig wirklich)." Cited

Göschel is long forgotten, Marx may have been influenced by him,⁵⁴ in imposing the conservative position on Hegel, i.e. the identification of the monarch with the God-Man, to further his own critical objectives. However, as was shown in the previous chapter, any relation which the monarch might hold to the incarnation thematic would have to be restricted to the realm of representation, given the relatively insignificant symbolic status which Hegel assigns to it in the *Philosophy of Right*.⁵⁵

Other than confirming what was demonstrated in the previous chapter, these political implications are relatively insignificant compared to the new and radical formulation which Strauss gave to the incarnation thematic. Disencumbered from any systematic relation to the personhood of Jesus Christ, the left Hegelians were now freed from the conservative argumentation that tried to accommodate Hegel's thought to the Christian monarch. Furthermore, Strauss' substitution of the christological imagery assigned to Jesus with the term "Humanity" lays the basis for Cieszkowski's historiosophical adaptation.

in Gebhardt, p. 103.

⁵⁴ An argument put forth by Jaeschke in "Urmenschheit und Monarchie," p. 100.

⁵⁵ In fact, Hegel was later criticised by conservatives for giving the monarch such an insignificant 'i' dotting role in his *Philosophy of Right*. Schubart's "Über die Unvereinbarkeit der Hegelschen Staatslehre mit dem Obersten Lebens- und Entwicklungsprinzip des preussischen Staats," (Breslau, 1839), criticised Hegel for making the monarch too republican and insignificant compared to the objective relations of the State. On this, see Avineri, "Hegel Revisited," p. 337.

B. Cieszkowski: Praxis, Present and Future

Although there is no particular personal relationship between Strauss and Cieszkowski, it is generally acknowledged that the latter's historiosophy and philosophy of action first politicised Strauss' thematic by coupling the idea of the God-Manhood separated from the historical Jesus with the project of transforming the world through action.⁵⁶ Following Strauss, the Young Hegelian response to the incarnation thematic became a question of how and in what sense the reconciliation of the human and divine is to be actualised in the *future*, given that it had not been adequately accomplished in Hegel's accommodation to the State in the *present*. When the Polish Graf August von Cieszkowski published the *Prolegomena zur Historiosophie* in 1838 it received little attention, yet laid an important theoretical basis for transforming the speculative philosophy of history into practical action for the future. This project centred on the important eschatological dimension of Christianity and its purported absence in Hegel's philosophy of history.

According to Cieszkowski, when Hegel had systematised the operation of spirit in world history, he lacked a theory of the future.⁵⁷ The reconciliation to the present that announces the end of philosophy amounted to an abstract and premature self-satisfaction which historiosophy must rupture and transcend. To accomplish this, Cieszkowski's

⁵⁶ See Gebhardt, p. 130

⁵⁷ For a more thorough discussion of this problem, see R. Plant, "Is there a Future in the Philosophy of History?" in *Hegel's Philosophy of Action*, Stepelevich and Lamb ed., pp. 93-102.

presented a "far reaching correction of Hegel's philosophy of history,"⁵⁸ by reformulating its three stages (Oriental, Greco-Roman, Christo-Germanic) so that Christo-Germanic period culminated in Hegel, leaving room for a final stage in the future. The new historiosophy (in which antiquity represented the past; the period from Christ to Hegel, the present; and beyond Hegel, the future) represents the Hegelian present as having established the necessity of freedom as a process which culminates in the here and now. However, this process had only occurred in thought and it was now the responsibility of a "science of utopia", an historiosophy to create the conditions to make freedom possible.

What sensation felt, and knowledge recognised, is left over for the absolute will to realise; and this is, in one word, the new direction of the future. To realise the idea of beauty and the truth in practical life in the already conscious world of objectivity, to organically grasp and bring into active participation all the one-sided and individually self-manifesting elements of human life in the already conscious world, to finally realise the absolute Good and the absolute teleology of our world - this is the great task of the future.⁵⁹

The three principle themes of Cieszkowski's programme, will-directed action (Tätigkeit), the "absolute teleology," and the future, presupposed an unsettled reconciliation in the present. To advance and realise the "absolute teleology" Cieszkowski replaces the role played by thought in Hegel's system by the will divided into a dialectical triad:

- 1) subjective, which concerns the cultivation by the abstract will;
- 2) objective, which concerns the cultivation by the State; 3) absolute, which concerns the unity of thought and being given in "absolute activity." Effectively, the reconciliation to the State which Hegel had theoretically ushered in is demoted to a second, antithetical stage awaiting its fulfilment in the future.

⁵⁸ Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche*, p. 145.

⁵⁹ Cited in Gebhardt, p. 133.

For Cieszkowski, the discrepancy between reality and rationality remains a fact of the human condition; it can only be resolved in the future, and specifically, by activity dictated by the end of resolving it. Utopia, such as in the system of Fourier which was popular at the time, amounted to a forced and undialectical application of thought to reality. Its fault is not the thought itself, for the actual aim of Utopia is desirable. However, the thought must be projected onto the future so that reality can merge with it organically rather than abstractly: "Just as everything new never emerges into the world all at once, so also no utopia is ever realized in the world directly."⁶⁰ As such, the thought of utopia belongs constantly in the future rather than the present, as the axis which humanity is to approach asymptotically through political praxis.

By demoting Hegel's reconciliation of the rational and real into the antithetical present⁶¹ Cieszkowski provided one of the more systematic impulses for the eschatologically driven formulations of the young Hegelians. Furthermore, he is characteristic of the movement in seeking to render Hegel's system more concrete. As noted in Fackenheim's description of the Young Hegelians:

Their denial of Hegelian transcendence led these to seek an absoluteness immanent in actual humanity; yet in the process virtually each thinker accused his predecessors of dissipating concrete man into unreal abstraction.⁶²

This motif of concretisation, which is evident in Hegel's critique of Kant and stretches

⁶⁰ *Prolegomena*, p. 85

⁶¹ *Prolegomena*, p. 84: "The famed and infamous saying of Hegel's that everything rational is real and everything real rational, still demands the correction that both the rational and the real are only results of development...the real constantly makes itself more suitable to the rational and this developmental process of both only separates itself into two parts, in order to coincide again at a higher stage."

⁶² Fackenheim, *The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought*, p. 241.

through to Marx's critique of Hegel, is applied by Cieszkowski to Hegel's political thought. Whereas Hegel claimed that ethical life sublated the abstractions of the Kantian realm of morality, it was realised only in thought. Once philosophically formulated, "It (ethical life) is now destined for the first time to begin its true development and to appear in as adequate a form as is already the case for law and morality."⁶³ By uprooting ethical life from its reconciliation to the Prussian State, Cieszkowski preserves it for the future as an ideal form of human life in community. This theme would be taken up by Hess, not only in adopting Cieszkowski's critique of Hegel's philosophy of history, but by introducing the more concrete concept of socialism into the incarnation thematic.

C. Moses Hess: Socialism and Religion

In the context of our presentation thus far, Humanity or Species (*Gattung*), which explicitly replaces the incarnate God in Strauss, acquires in Cieszkowski a theoretical core in the form of future-orientated and a will-dictated philosophy of Action. Thus, both Strauss and Cieszkowski could be seen as elaborating on Hegel's incarnation thematic in two separate respects. Strauss detached the representation from the concept of the incarnate God so that Humanity became the one and true embodiment of Spirit in the process of its self-realisation. Cieszkowski reversed the Hegelian subordination of will to thought and thereby made Humanity into a self-determining category which transforms its world based on an anticipated reconciliation between rationality and the real in the future. To do this, he transposed Hegel's concept of ethical life on to the future. In turning now to Hess, it can be said that the development of the Young Hegelian theme

⁶³ *Prolegomena*, p. 87.

follows, in a thematic rather than chronological sense, a movement from abstract to concrete in terms of formulating the political programme adequate to their ideals.

Hess combined influences ranging from Spinozism to the French Utopians to provide one of the first major expressions of socialist thought in Germany. While the socialist ideal as a future realm is alluded to in his earlier historiosophical *Die Heilige Geschichte der Menschheit*, the concretisation of Cieszkowski is most explicit in the *Europäische Triarchie* which brought Hess to the attention of the Young Hegelians. In that work, published in 1840, he acknowledged and reiterated Cieszkowski's critique of Hegel in two respects ⁶⁴: 1) Hegel's system lacked a philosophy of autonomous action, that is, action determined by humanity itself and not some larger whole, such as Spirit, acting in and through Man; 2) Hegel's philosophy ended in the present, which was a forced accommodation given the lack of true freedom in the modern world. As in Cieszkowski, the idea of the future was not simply a temporal category, it had an important normative significance as expressed in a chapter heading in the *Europäische Triarchie*: "Our Future, or Social and Political Freedom."

Although the identity between future and freedom still remained a vague formulation, Hess specifically made the abolition of private property one of the key presuppositions of its realisation. This point was made in the essay "On the Essence of

⁶⁴ For further on Cieszkowski's influence upon Hess, see A. Liebich, *Between Ideology and Utopia: The Politics and Philosophy of August Cieszkowski*, pp. 54-57. The general theme of the *Europäische Triarchie* centred on a grand programme for uniting Germany, France and England (the Triarchy) against the encroachment of Russia. England would be at the head of this federation as the unity of German theory and French praxis.

Money," of interest less for its economic insights than for the manner in which the theme of economic conditions was linked to a theological thematic. Insofar as Hess believed that a spiritual crisis was at the root of social inequality and the supremacy of private property, a critique of religion was a prerequisite for further theorising. Just as money transposed human value into a material object alien to the self, so too was God a theoretical projection of alienated man. Hess saw this relationship between God and money as one of his major contribution to the debate on the essence of money, and it is generally acknowledged that it had a major influence on Marx's important essay, "On the Jewish Question."⁶⁵

In the next chapter, it will be demonstrated how this association is taken up by Marx in the essay on the "Jewish Question." For the moment, it is worthwhile to show the bearing of Hess' theologisation of money on the incarnation thematic. The ambiguity of the Young Hegelian critique of religion is clearly expressed in Moses Hess who has two entirely contradictory attitudes towards Christianity. On the one hand, Christianity expresses the egoism symptomatic of the modern world,⁶⁶ on the other hand, it is the basis of communism. This position, which has often confused commentators,⁶⁷ can be clarified with references to the constant theoretical distinction between true and positive

⁶⁵ See McLellan, *The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx*, pp. 154-158, and S. Lundgren, *Moses Hess on Religion, Judaism and the Bible*, pp. 35-37.

⁶⁶ See M. Hess, "Über das Geldwesen," in *Philosophische und Sozialistische Schriften*. p.334: "Christianity is the theory, the logic of Egoism."

⁶⁷ See Lundgren, p. 53: "It is difficult to understand Hess' attitude towards religion...On the one hand he could in the spirit of Feuerbach criticise religion in the sharpest of words, but on the other hand he used a totally religious language and claimed that communism was the expression of true Christianity."

Christianity. This distinction, originating in Hegel's early theology, is carried through to the early Marx. On the one hand, there is the Christianity characteristic of the bourgeois, liberal age, i.e. a Judaified Christian capitalist world of money. On the other hand, there is the true Christianity of love and reconciliation, the theoretical basis for socialist emancipation. Following Strauss and Cieszkowski, the God-Man reformulated as Humanity, and more specifically, the revolutionary praxis of real, living men, are the true agents of reconciliation. This formulation of true Christianity is clearly expressed in these excerpts from the 1846 pamphlet "Kommunistische Bekenntnis in Fragen und Antworten." ⁶⁸

51. What religion should we all confess? - The religion of love and humanity.
52. Where is the testimony of this religion to be found? - In the breast of all human beings.
53. Is this common human religion un-Christian? - No, it is all the more the fulfilment of the Christian religion.
54. What is the purpose of Christianity? - The supreme happiness of all human beings, through love, freedom and righteousness.
55. Why has Christianity not yet achieved its purpose? - Because it has not yet known its purpose clearly, but instead it has imagined that which it wanted, believed and hoped for in images ("bildlich").
63. What is the name of the evil being of the world which Christianity has always denounced?
-money.
64. Is the Prince of the world, the Evil one or the Devil, whose seduction Christianity warns against, essentially something other than this cursed Mammon, whom we call our treasure?
No, none other. But the Christians, who perceive everything in images, also perceived cursed money in the image of the devil.
67. Is God in heaven something other than love? - No, none other.
71. Is our God, in whom we should live and move and have our being, something other than the human species or humanity united in love? - No, none other.
72. Why have we earlier believed that the Devil is within us, in the world, and that God is not within us, not in the world, but in heaven? - Because we ourselves earlier lived not in our God, not in our species, not in love, but in separation and hostility...When we unite and live in communism, then hell will no longer be on earth and heaven no longer beyond earth, and everything that in Christianity has been prophetically and fantastically put before us will in the truly human society according to the eternal laws of love and reason be totally fulfilled.

The standpoint of Hegelian speculative christology is reiterated here in explicit and simple language; namely that what Christianity represents, philosophy and action must conceptualise and realise, that love is the central theme of Christianity and

⁶⁸ Ibid. English translation, pp. 61-63. German original in Lundgren's appendix.

socialism. Even the Pauline motif of pleroma from Hegel's early theology recurs as the fulfilment and totality of love reconciling a fragmented society, a society dominated by egoism and the worship of money, and a society identified with Judaism in the form of Mammon.⁶⁹ However, Hegel had only reconciled theoretically what must be achieved in practice. For Hess, the relationship between Christianity (and the speculative surrogates he sees in Hegel and Young Hegelians)⁷⁰ and socialism is explicitly one of theory to praxis; socialism is a concretisation of that which Christianity and philosophy can and have only theoretically achieved. Unity in communal life, and the surrendering of private gain, the major characteristics of socialism which Hess cites, are derived from presupposed reconciliation in thought achieved first by Christianity and then by Hegel's and the Young Hegelians' speculative appropriation.

⁶⁹ The Hebrew cults of Moloch (child sacrifices) and Mammon (the God of Money) were often used as polemical metaphors in cruder and more populist forms of anti-semitism at the time. While Mammon was more frequently used in radical social criticism which identified the new materialism with Judaism, the cruder Moloch references, which included horror stories of Jewish families baptising their children in Christian blood, had a disturbing amount of influence on popular imagination. In the anti-semitic disturbances in catholic Rhineland in 1834, Prussian censors had to ban further editions of Dr. Binterim's *Über den Gebrauch des Christenblutes bei den Juden* because of its inciteful effect on the mob (one case where censorship served noble ends). See Strauss, "Die Preussische Bürokratie und die Anti-Jüdischen Unruhen im Jahre 1834," in *Gegenwart im Rückblick*.

⁷⁰ M. Hess, "The Recent Philosophers," *Anthology*, p.360: "The recent philosophers will gain just as little by casting off (aufheben: sublate) this invisible Church and establishing the 'Absolute Spirit,' 'Self-consciousness', and 'Species-Being' in the place of Heaven. All of these attempts to *theoretically* resolve the difference between the particular man and the human species must miscarry, for even if the singular man does indeed comprehend the world and mankind, nature and history, he yet in actuality remains only a sundered man as long as the division of man is not *practically* overcome." The surrogates "Absolute Spirit," "Self-consciousness" and "Species-Being" refer to Hegel, Bauer, and Feuerbach respectively.

If socialism is the fulfilment of Christianity via Hegel and the Young Hegelian as Hess suggests, does it have a specific political form? The impression one receives is that it is only a concept that defines itself against the antagonisms of modern society. As such it is a "longing for a better reality" based on repeated attempts to reform society "until they suit our innermost consciousness, that consciousness derived from our lives. We now live in this reforming or revolutionary time."⁷¹ While acknowledging the incarnation thematic in Hegel (as noted in the *Philosophy of Action*: "The Absolute Spirit which celebrates its reality in the State is modelled after the Christian God"⁷²), Hess claims that this remains a purely theoretical formulation as long it coexists with the antagonisms of civil society, of materialism and egoism which the Judaeo-Christian world has also engendered. These antagonisms cannot be theoretically negated or sublated insofar as they are rooted in the empirical nature of mankind.

In the final analysis, Hess synthesised a primitive socialism with Hegelian principles by concretising Cieszkowski's historiosophical ideas of secular redemption. As such he serves as a mediating figure between Cieszkowski and Marx.⁷³ Insofar as he did not come into contact with the Hegelians until the 1830s and considered himself less Hegelian than Spinozist in his philosophical and religious ideas - His first work *The Sacred History of Mankind*, was published anonymously by a "Disciple of Spinoza" - Hess is a marginal figure in the Young Hegelian appropriation of the incarnation

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 363.

⁷² Cited in Lundgren, p. 215.

⁷³ See Toews, p. 220: "Just as Cieszkowski had revised Hegel, so Hess would revise Cieszkowski, and the resulting doctrine would be passed on to inspire Marx."

thematic. Nonetheless, he provided a few further details in the grand transformation of the metaphysics of the divine/human unity into social theory. It is therefore somewhat misleading to suggest that Hess' mixture of Christian symbolism and socialism marked: "a retrograde movement in thought in which religious *Vorstellungen* - in this instance the 'millennial myth' - conditionally replaced the *Begriffe* of reason proper to the philosopher's discipline."⁷⁴ In the context of the incarnation thematic, the movement was rather from Hegel's sublation of *Vorstellungen* by *Begriffe* to a more concrete and socially applicable formulation. It is furthermore not the "millennial myth" so much as the God-man, the reconciliation of the individual to humanity and society, which provides the underlying *systematik*.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Toews, p. 223

⁷⁵ It is worth considering here a recent distinction drawn by Toews between old left and new left Hegelians (*Hegelianism*, pp. 241-242) which has direct bearing on the theme under consideration. Under the Old Left Hegelians Toews groups Carové, Richter, Hess, and Cieszkowski who all, "interpreted the evolution of mankind as a 'sacred history,' as the self-revelation of God through the divinisation of Man, as the dramatic story of the reconciliation between divine and human." Under the New Left Hegelians, he groups Strauss, Bauer, and Feuerbach who, "no longer sought to reconcile God and man, the transcendent and immanent, but defined the problem of salvation, the actualisation of essence in existence, in totally immanent terms." He then notes: "This secular 'humanist' starting point - the rejection not only of the separation of the immanent and the transcendent, - but of the reality of the transcendent distinguished the new left Hegelians from the old left Hegelians and all other members of the Hegelians school."

While the correspondence of this schema with the isolated members he cites cannot be reviewed here, the distinction between the oxymoron "secular humanist" and the "sacred historians" is a relatively sterile one in the Young Hegelian context. Thus, to suggest that one group sought to reconcile God and man, whereas the other did not, does not grasp the speculative manner in which this dichotomy was conceptualised. Furthermore, the term "humanist" suggests an autonomy from theology which did not exist insofar as humanism, just as humanisation (*Menschwerdung*) emerges, in its Hegelian and Feuerbachian variants, from speculative christology. However, Toews' distinction is unhelpful for a simpler reason. It seems too historically restricted to accommodate the position shifts which were so characteristic of the movement. Strauss, more or less, went back to a personal God (an old left stance) whereas in Hess there is, by the late 1830s, certainly little talk of transcendence; in fact, he followed Feuerbach in giving Christian terminology, i.e. heaven and hell, purely worldly meanings.

Conclusion

Considering the developmental character of German philosophy, the transition from Hegel to Marx which these three thinkers mediate is more a ladder than a bridge. Whether the ladder is descending or ascending depends on the perspective. In terms of the theme of concretisation, it is descending from Hegel's philosophical abstractions to social theoretical programmes concerning the proper empirical context for human self-realisation. However, in terms of its future-orientated programme, the movement is ascending and doing so in two senses, normative and conceptual. In a normative sense, the process of transforming society along certain ideals is a movement from a de-humanised to a human condition, from the base, egoistic character of the Godless man to a unity with the divine in some future realm. In a conceptual sense, the movement uproots the incarnation of Hegel's Absolute in the Prussian State and returns it to a realm of abstraction in terms of "Humanity," "Future-orientated praxis," or "Socialism," which again demand concretisation.

In the next chapter, the early Marxian appropriation of the Hegelian incarnation thematic via Feuerbach will be discussed in detail. At one level, Marx's explicit atheism raises doubts as to the viability of demonstrating a christological inheritance, no matter

On the other hand, it does apply consistently to Cieszkowski who in his later writings *Gott und Palingenesie* and *Ojciec Nasz* (Our Father) does return to a personal God; on this, see Kolakowski, *Main Currents*, Vol. 1, p.87 who questions whether Cieszkowski can be called a left Hegelian because of the return to an orthodox faith. The distinction is perhaps also useful for separating off the historiosophically-orientated (Hess, Cieszkowski) from those more interested in a structural or inheritance of Christian thematic (Strauss and Feuerbach). However, in that regard the terms old and new are less helpful.

how speculative. However, the emphasis on Young Hegelian christology, owing more to Hegel than to institutional Christianity, has drawn out the broader humanistic scope of such concepts as species-being, Humanity, communal love which appear in a more systematic guise in Marxian socio-economic categories. Thus, Strauss, Cieszkowski, and Hess, although in many ways marginal philosophical figures, provide critical rungs on the ladder ascending (from alienation to freedom) and descending (from abstract to concrete) from Hegel to Marx.

Chapter 6

The Incarnation Thematic in the Early Marx

Our whole object can only be...to give religious and philosophical questions the form corresponding to man who has become conscious of himself. K. Marx¹

Introduction

The previous chapter had the dual task of rehearsing progressive aspects of the Prussian state that correspond with Hegel's idealistic formulation, and establishing the incarnation thematic among the "second tier" Young Hegelians. The motifs of Humanity (Strauss), Future-orientated praxis (Cieszkowski), and socialism, i.e. the new religion of love (Hess), were all shown to derive, some more directly than others, from a speculative engagement with Christianity. However, while these motifs are equally characteristic of Marx's early development too, his professed atheism and explicit break with the theological character of German philosophy in the *German Ideology* now pose a challenge toward tracing the incarnation thematic through his main (early) philosophical texts.

Traditionally, Marx's relation to Christianity has been approached from one of two opposing angles, positive and negative. The positive, advocated by humanist philosophers and liberation theologians, establishes speculative parallels between Marxism

¹ K. Marx, "Letters from Deutsch-Französischer Jahrbücher," (to A.Ruge, September, 1843) *MECW*: Vol. 3, p. 144.

and Christianity based on their common emancipatory mission in favour of the oppressed. This general relationship is reinforced by more specific common denominators such as redemption in some future realm, the opposition to materialism and egoism, a founding creed, and a spirit of solidarity and brotherhood allied in common cause. While there is some truth to these parallels, and they at one time unified Christianity and Marxism in the developing world, the terms in which they are formulated are generally speculative and unsystematic, and bear little relation to Marx's actual writings on Christianity.²

The negative view is based on either a review of Marx's negative attitudes toward religion's narcotic effects and its complicity with the ideological superstructure or of the religiosity of Marxism, thereby confirming its unscientific character.³ Thus, while on the one hand religion is seen as determined by a larger set of social conditions, on the other hand it is seen as part of a Christian heresy defined in terms of a secular eschatology, a salvific history, and a moral absolutism. While there are grains of truth in each of these characterisations, they do not get to the root of the relationship between Marxian philosophy and Christianity. A more suitable approach is to examine the Christian thematic in Marx in terms of its Hegelian philosophical mediation, where the incarnation

² See, for example, Erich Fromm, "Marx's Concept of Man," p. 68: "Marxist and other forms of socialism are the heirs of prophetic Messianism, Christian Chiliastic sectarianism, thirteenth-century Thomism, Renaissance Utopianism and eighteenth-century enlightenment. It is the synthesis of the prophetic-Christian idea of society as the plane of spiritual realisation, and of the idea of individual freedom." For similar efforts to contrive religious parallels to Marxism, in terms of redemptive, eschatological, or soteriological aspects, see R. Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx*, E. Olssen, "Marx and the Resurrection," *JHI*, 29 (1968): 131-140; and most explicitly, in the liberation theology writings of the likes of J. Miranda, *Marx and the Bible* and *Communism and the Bible*, 1977.

³ As in Tucker, p. 7: "What Marx claimed to be a scientific discovery was on the contrary, from beginning to end, an eschatological faith."

thematic plays an important role. This involves less vague eschatological visions, than a metaphysical inheritance of certain key dichotomies and concepts. Thus, the primary concern here is not Marx's critique of religion, but rather the early Marx's relation to the Hegelian and young Hegelian incarnation thematic.

The central objective of speculative philosophy is, as noted by Feuerbach, to rationalise the God who for religion remains otherworldly. Any study of Marx's critique of religion must therefore take into account the philosophical culture which had transformed the God of faith into a flexible metaphysical concept which from Hegel onward focused on the concretisation of freedom in historical and political forms. As described in chapter 5, the motif of concretisation manifests itself in a methodological and metaphysical sense. The methodological implies the formulation of increasingly praxis-orientated and naturalistic contexts for human self-realisation given the almost unanimous disenchantment with Hegel's chosen context, the Prussian constitutional monarchy. The metaphysical sense is the very fact that such a context was sought in the first place, that the Idea demanded a realisation, that abstract moral postulates could be historically realised, that thought had to *become* reality. In both these aspects of concretisation, intrinsically related to the incarnation thematic, the Marxian project is visible.

The following chapter examines the early Marx's speculative appropriation of the incarnate God via Hegel and the Young Hegelians. Insofar as numerous biographical and philosophical studies of the early Marx are given elsewhere, it will restrict itself to a systematic extrapolation of the incarnation thematic from texts and concepts assumed to

be familiar to the reader. Section 1 outlines Marx's attitude toward the prevalence of speculative christology among the Young Hegelians, particularly Feuerbach and Bruno Bauer. Section 2 examines Feuerbach's writings beginning with his concentration on speculative christology in the early 1840s, the *Essence of Christianity* and the *Outline for the Philosophy of the Future*. Section 3 establishes Marx' categorial acceptance of the incarnation thematic in Hegel's political thought, both derivative and independent of Feuerbachian influences. Section 4 brings the incarnation thematic to bear on Marx's treatment of the proletariat, communism, and labour.

I. Marx's Relation to Young Hegelian Speculative Christology

The Hegelianisation of Marx by Western Marxists, such as Lukács and Marcuse and other members of the Frankfurt School, was carried out in terms of the dialectic, alienation, and the concept of labour as an epistemological paradigm. However, even Marx's most direct effort to come to terms with Hegel's system as a whole, the comments on the *Phenomenology* in the Paris manuscripts reveals, following Feuerbach, a preoccupation with its theological character. In the early 1840s, Hegel's legacy in German philosophy was widely criticised in terms of a speculative theological tendency to formulate various supposedly more concrete substitutes for the Absolute. The effect of this environment is generally not accommodated in studies which seek a direct conceptual and methodological continuity between the two philosophers, thereby doing less justice to the mediated character of Marx's Hegelian inheritance, via the speculative theology of the Young Hegelians and most notably Feuerbach.

Marx's identification of speculative christology can be found in two works, one *The Holy Family* which marks his break with Bruno Bauer, the other, *The German Ideology* which, though also directed at Bauer and Stirner, is best known for its criticism of Feuerbach.⁴ Bauer, who is generally considered as the philosopher of "self-consciousness," was not strictly speaking a philosopher. His lectures and research concerned Judaism, the gospel of John, and the philosophy of religion.⁵ *His Religion of the Old Testament* (1838) sought the liberation of the self-consciousness from the chains of religion and superstition, but it nonetheless spoke of Christianity as the religion of love and freedom. The ambiguous content of Bauer's atheism comes across most clearly in Marx's attack in the *Holy Family*, co-written with Engels. There Marx criticises Bauer's efforts to replace Christ with his own form of critical criticism, to empty theological containers of their old contents and refill them with new. In the opening line, Marx attacks particularly the elitism of Bauer's attempt to arrogate to himself the power of Christ through his theory of "critical criticism":

And criticism so loved the mass that it sent its only begotten son, that all who believe in him may not be lost, but may have Critical life. Criticism was made mass and dwells amongst us and we behold its glory, the glory of the only begotten son of the father.⁶

⁴ There has been a long dispute in specialist circles over the relative influence of Bauer versus Feuerbach on Marx's development. Interestingly enough, those who tend to favour Bauer do so, not by presenting Marx's testimony to that effect, but rather by attributing to Bauer ideas traditionally associated with Feuerbach, most importantly the theories of inversion and projection. This seems to be a slightly cavalier approach insofar as whatever influence Bauer may have had on Marx in the early stages, this, as Marx himself testified, was superseded by the influence of Feuerbach at later stages. For one leading example of the Bauerian view see, Z. Rosen *Bruno Bauer and Karl Marx*, pp. 202-222. Rosen's bold claim that "there are almost no Feuerbachian motifs in Marx's conception of religion," (p. 148) leaves generous room for doubt.

⁵ See Ernst Barnikol, *Bruno Bauer Studien und Materialien*, pp. 531-533.

⁶ Marx and Engels, *The Holy Family*, MECW: Vol.4, p. 9.

Critical criticism mediates between the moral objectives of criticism, and the uncritical mass, and thereby fulfils a political task. However, "Criticism sees itself incarnate not in a mass, but exclusively in a handful of chosen men, in Herr Bauer and his disciples."⁷Bauer's elitism lies in the fact that he delegates to itself the mission of Christ, whereas those most qualified for this mission, the masses, are excluded. Marx's use of incarnation here is not purely rhetorical and sarcastic. He accepts a view which sees in the transition from God to Spirit to Criticism a relatively straightforward process of rationalising theology. His criticism only centres on how and in what form that rationalised God incarnates itself in Man. The theological constraints on Bauer's philosophy derive not from his use of the incarnation, as a paradigm of freedom, but rather in his restriction of it to intellectualist polemic.⁸ He condemns Bauer's high-mindedness and elitism, his systematic reduction of everything to one dogmatic antithesis between "his own cleverness and the stupidity of the world- the antithesis of the critical Christ and the 'rabble'." Marx satirises further: "We must reckon according to the absolute chronology from the birth of the Critical Redeemer of the world, Bauer's *Literatur-Zeitung*! The critical world redeemer was born anno 1843."⁹ While the christological phraseology appears to have polemical purposes, it is unclear whether it is directed towards Bauer's attempt to arrogate to himself the speculative mantle of Christ, or whether the incarnation thematic, i.e. the concrete context for the self-

⁷ Ibid., p.86.

⁸ Ibid., p. 110: "The only struggle he knows is the struggle against the religious limitations of self-consciousness whose Critical purity and infinity is just as much a theological limitation."

⁹ Ibid., p. 107.

realisation of the Hegelian Absolute, is simply misplaced in the elitist mission of the *Literatur-Zeitung*.

This ambiguity is cleared up in the *German Ideology (GI)* . written between 1845-46 where Marx adopts a more systematic critique of the theological flavour of Young Hegelian philosophy. It may be noted that the word "ideology" had a much broader connotation in Marx's usage than it does today. It implied the realm of ideas as opposed to the realm of practical need, and not just the notion of ideas in the service of particular interests.¹⁰ This is clearly seen in both the tone of the work as a whole, which chastises German philosophy for its idealistic and theological character yet pays little direct attention to its political applications, and its subtitle "Critique of Modern German Philosophy according to its Representatives Feuerbach, Bruno Bauer and Stirner, and of German Socialism According to its Various Prophets." In this work, Marx announces a radical break with German philosophy and, though little recognised, with its overriding incarnation thematic: "In direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven."¹¹ Whereas German philosophy has deduced prescriptions for human behaviour from theological and metaphysical concepts, Marx's point of departure is to generalise from empirical observations concerning humanity's naturalistic base, i.e. its means of exchange, its satisfaction of needs, etc. However, in doing so, he must come to terms with the incarnational thematic which has pervaded German philosophy from Hegel onward.

¹⁰ "Ideologie" originally meant "Ideenlehre" and is still applied by the right Hegelian Rosenkrantz in the *Wissenschaft der Logik* (1858/59); see H. Kohn, "Political Theory and the History of Ideas," *JHI*, 25 (1964): 303-307.

¹¹ *The German Ideology*, *MECW*: Vol. 5, p. 37.

From the first page where Marx speaks of "the decomposition of Hegelian philosophy, which began with Strauss,"¹² Marx directs his attack toward this thematic. As was shown in the previous chapter, Strauss' work built on Hegelian speculative christology to separate off the speculative incarnate God (the idea of the God-Man) from the historical Jesus. Recognising that, "the entire body of German philosophical criticism from Strauss to Stirner is confined to criticism of religious conceptions,"¹³ Marx notes that this philosophical tradition involved interpreting metaphysical, moral and political concepts as if they derived from theological terms. This often involved a process of substitution whereby "secular names" such as "species," "the Unique," "Man," took the place of "Hegelian categories." The clearly christological dimension of this category substitution is not noted at this point. Marx is simply distancing himself from both Old and Young Hegelians with their common "belief in the rule of religion, of concepts, of a universal principle in the existing world."¹⁴ In this opening salvo directed at the Young Hegelians, Marx is dismissive of a project which has provided little more than "a few elucidations of Christianity from the point of view of religious history."¹⁵ Rather than trying to extrapolate reality from theological postulates, such as Feuerbach who reduces God to man, Marx claims to take an entirely different approach by connecting "German philosophy with German reality."¹⁶ The necessity of this connection lies in

¹² Ibid., p. 29.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 30.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., p.31.

the fact that "Liberation is a historical not a mental act"¹⁷ a statement which neatly sums up Marx's relation to Hegelianism.

In criticising the "mental" way in which Germany has approached liberation, Marx does not distinguish between philosophy and theology since both are components of the realm of ideas that demand realisation. Furthermore, the philosophical tradition identified is imbued with speculative christological motifs which have important consequences for understanding Marx's acknowledgement of the incarnation thematic. If the real problem is how to connect German philosophy to reality, then this concerns the unity of theory and practice, not the content of that theory itself. When Marx notes the recent German obsession with passing "from the realm of God to the realm of Man"¹⁸ with "chimeras like 'the God-Man', 'Man' etc.," the incarnation thematic is intertwined unconsciously with the Hegelian philosophical tradition.¹⁹ Rather than treating empirical reality, the Young Hegelians are preoccupied with "the mutual quarrels of 'Criticism,' 'Man' and 'the Unique'."²⁰ referring to Bauer, Feuerbach and Stirner respectively. The reduction of religious forms to arbitrary philosophical constructs must be challenged, though it is "a fight of local importance,"²¹ a peculiarity closely tied to a concrete referent, namely Germany. As Marx notes derisively: "They do not recognise the deeds of other nations

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 38.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 53.

²¹ Ibid., p. 38.

as historical: they live in Germany, to Germany, and for Germany."²²

The *German Ideology* could be renamed the *German Theology*, or more simply, the *German Idealism*, without distorting Marx's main objective, namely to criticise the reluctance of thinkers to descend from the realm of ideas to empirical reality in a philosophical culture imbued with theological themes. While the work itself has other purposes - particularly to outline the theory of historical materialism - these can be said to enter as a prolegomenon to the central theme; namely, to criticise the theological character of the philosophies of Feuerbach, Bauer, and Stirner.²³ As this survey has demonstrated, Marx identifies and takes issue with a metaphysical structure characterised, in part, by the search for increasingly concrete variants of Hegel's speculative incarnate God. Having identified the critical border area where Marx supposedly takes leave of his Young Hegelian inheritance, we turn now to the incarnation thematic in Feuerbach and Marx's early writings.

²² Ibid., p. 53.

²³ As noted already in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscript of 1844*, (EPM) "On close inspection, theological criticism genuinely progressive though it was at the inception of the movement - is seen in the final analysis to be nothing but the culmination and consequence of the old philosophical and especially the Hegelian, transcendentalism, twisted into a theological caricatures." *MECW*: Vol. 3, pp. 232-233.

II. Species-Being and Love: Feuerbach's Anthropologised God

The decomposition of Hegelian metaphysics into social theoretical forms grounds itself in increasingly materialistic concepts. It was Feuerbach, however, who decomposed the christological aspect of that metaphysics most systematically and explicitly, thereby providing, more so than Strauss, the conceptual apparatus for Marx's early social and political thought, and "a philosophical basis for socialism."¹ In assigning to Feuerbach a mediating rather than autonomous status in terms of the incarnation thematic, the central focus here lies not in his relation to Hegel, expressed in the 1828 cover letter that accompanied his doctoral thesis and the 1839 essay, "Towards a Critique of Hegelian Philosophy," but rather on his theological writings which began in earnest in the early 1840s.² In the *Essence of Christianity (EC)*, Feuerbach presented a thesis that reformulates God as a product of human consciousness. Instead of presupposing an infinite that actualises itself as Hegel does, Feuerbach proposes to begin with finite existence, the existing individual, and determine the essence contained in it. This derives from Feuerbach's central message that all the qualities which humanity has attributed to divinity are, in fact, projections of sensual human qualities. However, when Feuerbach speaks of beginning with man, he is not referring to the Kantian rational man divorced from nature, but rather a unity between reason and nature, head and heart. Furthermore, this unity is not man as an individual, but as a collective,

¹ "Letter to L. Feuerbach" August 11 1844, *MECW*: Vol. 3, p. 354.

² The starting point of Feuerbach's engagement with christology around 1841 coincides with the publication of *The Essence of Christianity* and develops further in other works. For a thorough analysis of the origins of Feuerbach's turn from philosophy to christology, see Wilson, *Feuerbach and the Search for Otherness*, pp. 393-395. Wilson attributes the turn primarily to a new reading of Luther.

a formulation which shares certain similarities with Strauss, namely that God cannot incarnate itself in one particular historical individual, but rather in humanity, or the species as a whole.²⁶ But, the re-identification of man with the essence which theology has taken away from him still implies that humanity has an "essence" or an abstraction which is grounded in its empirical nature.²⁷ Thus, Feuerbach seeks theoretically to derive the divine attributes which have been re-projected onto humanity.

Rather than denying outright the validity of the Protestant message, Feuerbach quotes liberally from Luther's writings on the faith, the incarnation, grace, and providence. He saw himself as a second Luther elevating that message to a qualitatively new level. Not only is God in Man, God is in and *only* in Man. Without Man there can be no God, a dictum that affirms Feuerbach's natural anthropotheism. Yet, importantly, the human incorporation of God does not lead to the eradication of Christianity's conceptual structure:

I, by no means say: God is nothing, the Trinity is nothing. The Word of God is nothing. I only show that they are not that which the illusion of

²⁶ The Straussian element is more pronounced in the earlier essay, "Towards a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy," (1839) : "Is it at all possible that a species realizes itself in one individual, art as such in one artist, and philosophy as such in one philosopher? And yet this is the main question; for what use to me are all the proofs that this particular person is the messiah when I do not believe at all that any messiah ever will, could, or must appear...Reason...knows nothing...of a real and absolute incarnation of the species in a particular individuality." From *Anthology*, pp. 97-98.

²⁷ See J.Y. Calvez, *La Pensée de Karl Marx*, p. 88: "Feuerbach surely returned God to earth, but he preserved a God, of a religious type. The man which he makes the center of the world is as ideal as the category of the God of the heavens; he is just as much separated from real man in spite of what Feuerbach makes of him."

theology make them- not foreign but native mysteries, the mysteries of human nature.²⁸

These native mysteries concern, above all, the meaning of the concept God for man, particularly as a source of moral perfection: "God is the moral nature of man posited as an absolute being."²⁹ Such moral perfection, not unlike the Kantian ought, severely exposes man to his limitations:

That which in our judgment derogates from our self-conceit, humiliates us. Thus, the moral law inevitably humiliates every man when he compares with it the sensuous tendency of his own nature.³⁰

But, this absolute being also represents a deification of egoism, which Feuerbach identifies with Judaic monotheism: "Egoism is essentially monotheistic, having only one thing -itself-as its objective."³¹ Thus, the sovereign God represents both the isolated, egoistic individual, and the stern judge, the moral law, "self-imposed" via a fictitious construct. At a certain point, however, in order for man to cope with his own self-debasement and blunt the severity of the moral law, God is also endowed with a subjective counterpart, love:

the law condemns; the heart has compassion even on the sinner. Law affirms me only as an abstract being love, as a real being. Love gives me the consciousness that I am a man, the law only the consciousness that I am a sinner, that I am worthless, the law holds the man in bondage...love makes him free.³²

Feuerbach here reiterates the contrast drawn by Paul, in the theological sense, and by

²⁸ Feuerbach, *Essence of Christianity*, preface, p. xxxviii.

²⁹ Ibid., p.46.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 47.

³¹ Cited in Rose, *Revolutionary Antisemitism*, p. 252.

³² *EC*, p. 47.

Hegel in an ontological sense, between the Judaeo-Kantian law that serves as an intra-authoritarian ideal juxtaposed to the natural self, and the unity of the natural and rational self through love in Christ. In Feuerbach's case, however, the emphasis is less on the rational law as a philosophical postulate we give ourselves, but rather what might be called its anthropological correlate, egoism. Egoism, Feuerbach identifies with Judaic monotheism, insofar as it is the worship of the self projected on to a solitary being.

In becoming man, God sacrifices his identity as the projection of egoism and takes the form of Jesus Christ. Through the Incarnation God , "shows himself as that which he is, as a human being." Yet not only as a rational human being, but as a finite, sensuous, and loving creature. This finitude demands interdependence and the mutual satisfaction of need, which leads Feuerbach to explain how and why love exists among men. Whereas the abstract intellect, the God alone, is self-sufficient, unneeding, fallible man needs and that need itself is love. On a purely ontological plane, Feuerbach represented the distinction as one between the Ego and the Other, the I and thou, a distinction represented in the Christian trinity:

God the Father is I, God the Son thou. I is understanding, the thou love. But love with understanding, and understanding with love is mind (Spirit), and Spirit is the totality of man as such-total man." ³³

In this formulation, the existence of the Other, the thou, is in the christological sense, for the self-realisation of God, and via Feuerbach's anthropologisation, for the self-realisation of the I. The fact that I only affirm myself in relation to Thou affirms humanity's communal nature grounded in love. In this sense, Feuerbach's philosophy "decodes the

³³ Ibid., p.67.

christological moment into a dialectical othering"³⁴ which is driven by the need for humanity to realise itself in community. "Being Human is the same as the Being of Humanity," Feuerbach stated aphoristically as early as 1835;³⁵ or, in christological terms, the *Menschwerdung (Gottes) ist das Werden des Menschens*, insofar as the essence of man is man's unrealised essence projected onto God. While for Hegel, the self-realisation finds expression in the idealised State, Feuerbach's sensuous-emotivist starting point makes such a formulation impossible. Rather it leads him towards an idealisation of private life, of personal and sexual relationships with a far greater emphasis on the psychological rather than political expressions of the I/thou principle.

In *The Principles for a Philosophy of the Future (PPF)*, Feuerbach incorporates his critique of the incarnate God into what Marx considered to be the philosophical origins of socialism, through the idea that man has become the highest being for man. Firstly, Protestant theology, Feuerbach remarks, has become christology, in that it considers God, not as a transcendent being but only in terms of what he is for man. The new man-centredness of theology means that God can become an object of a new speculative philosophy whose task is to theoretically reformulate the God of religion who remains otherworldly. This process of "substitutionalism," he identifies as part of the German idealist heritage, Feuerbach notes that the Ego (Fichte) and the Absolute spirit (Hegel), respectively, replaced the "divine being," of the old metaphysics and theology,

³⁴ Wilson, p. 394.

³⁵ Review of K. Rosenkranz's *Hegel. Sendschreiben an den Hrn. Dr. C.F. Bachmann*, 1835, *GW*: Vol. 8, p. 9.

with the "present, active, and thinking being of man."³⁶ More importantly, Feuerbach adopts an Hegelian standpoint vis à vis Kant's contribution to this tradition. Unlike Kant who "negated...the divine essence," in a will which remained abstracted from matter, Hegel in particular reconciled this dualism by making matter the self-alienation of the divine will, or Spirit. Whereas in Kant, liberation from matter is dualistically posited, in Hegel this liberation becomes part of the consistent othering found in the dialectic of Spirit. Feuerbach then asks rhetorically: "How can matter be attributed to God? ...Only in that he posits himself as matter, as non-God, that is, as his otherness."³⁷

By positing God as active in and through matter, Hegel rejects atheism via a philosophical return into the "bosom of Christian theology."³⁸ However, Hegel had not gone far enough in transposing those attributes formerly associated with the divine being to his divine thought, or Absolute Spirit. Hegel's achievement of supposed reconciliation of thought and being amounts only to a unity of thought with itself.³⁹ Reiterating the standpoint of his 1839 critique, Feuerbach therefore sets out to make being an object of being by replacing that which in Hegel remains thought, with the being of sense perception, feeling and love. The self-alienating God of Christianity, which creates a

³⁶ *PPF*, p. 19.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 34. Feuerbach's capsule summary of Hegel's achievement reads as follows: "the Hegelian philosophy is the last magnificent attempt to restore Christianity, which was lost and wrecked, through philosophy and, indeed, to restore Christianity as is generally done in the modern era- by identifying it with the negation of Christianity."

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 40: "A being that is not distinguished from thought and that is only a predicate or a determination of reason is only an ideated and abstracted being; but in truth is not a being." And further: "A Being that only thinks, and thinks abstractly, has no conception at all of being, of existence, or of reality."

being at once separate from yet a part of thought, "is himself only an abstraction of human love and an image of it."⁴⁰ In turn love represents "the true ontological proof of an existence of an object apart from our mind."⁴¹ The synthesis of the heart and the mind which the new philosophy proposes makes the sensuous being man both its ontological and epistemological focal point. Firstly, the Incarnation, the God-Man is but the abstract projection of humanity's essence: "God in Man is nothing other than the essence of man."⁴² Secondly, the synthesis of heart and mind as the essence of humanity replaces reason as the source of the "real and true," a standpoint inherited from Hegel. Feuerbach then asks rhetorically: "How can matter be attributed to God?...Only in that he posits himself as matter, as non-God, that is, as his otherness."⁴³

In preserving yet reconciling the distinction between the egoistic and the self-othering God; between the God as a projection of egoism, and God as a projection of love, Feuerbach presents a two-fold reduction of God to Man. This derives from the actual and concrete synthesis of thought and being archetypically represented in the Incarnation. Only in community, where thought arises through the loving communication of man with man, can this synthesis occur. The self-alienation of God into Being is imitated in the community by the individual's expression of a thought which another might share or dispute, the intersubjectivity of the I/thou. The condition for consciousness of truth and reality is underpinned by the necessity of objectification. Thoughts which are

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 52.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 53.

⁴² Ibid., p. 58.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 32.

not objectified in community remain abstract:

The community of man with man is the first principle and criterion of truth and generality. The certainty of the existence of other things apart from me. That which I alone perceive I doubt; only that which the other also perceives is certain.⁴⁴

The unity of thought and being occurs through the interdependence of persons in community. The individual's need for truth and self-verification are satisfied only when objectified and shared with an other. In Feuerbach's understanding of the Incarnate God, the self-alienation of Spirit as a revelation of the divine mystery imparts to man his own essence, that is, it imparts God to man. In turn, "the essence of man is contained in community, in the unity of man with man." In Feuerbach, then, God = the essence of man = the unity of man with man = community. This reformulation of God into community, far from a rhetorical analogy, becomes a starting point for the new philosophy with love and interdependence replacing reason as its central concept. Most importantly, however, this change from idealism to sensualism must derive from the "essence of Christianity;" it does not arise independently from thought. The path to human emancipation must pass through a speculative reformulation of the incarnate God for, "only the resolution of this puzzling (Christian) essence, but the thorough, germanic solution, will ultimately decide the fate of states and peoples when their existence bases itself otherwise on a heavenly utopia."⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 61.

⁴⁵ L. Feuerbach, *GW*: Vol. 18, p. 337.

Feuerbach considered himself neither an idealist or a materialist, but a communist, a *Gemeinmensch*⁴⁶, and from this philosophical formulation of communism, derived from a critique of the incarnate God, the study of the Marxian inheritance is most fruitfully begun. For Marx was not to deny the foundational priority Feuerbach assigned to an intersubjective ideal, but only that this could be actualised before the real, material impediments to the realisation of the species-being were dissolved. De-alienating man from God by showing it as a mere projection of the human essence would not in and by itself solve the problem. As stated in the first Thesis on Feuerbach, a sensualist and materialist starting point cannot simply be declared as an object of contemplation or a theoretical tool, it must be made into a vehicle of the practical, not just theoretical, negation of alienating social structures. Furthermore, some explanation must be given as to what caused religious alienation in the first place, what the empirical factors were which compelled humanity to project its essence onto an alien being, and what political means could reappropriate it. While the actual form of that vehicle is nowhere coherently elaborated, via Marx's reading of Hegel's philosophy of right, the critique of religious alienation and the incarnation thematic is transposed onto political thought.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 441.

III. Marx and the Incarnate God

According to Marx, Feuerbach provided the philosophical basis for socialism, transformed Hegel's Absolute Spirit into "real man on the basis of nature," and completed "the criticism of religion by sketching in a grand and masterly manner the basic features of the criticism of Hegel's speculation and hence of all metaphysics."⁴⁷ In the light of Marx's assessment it is important to bear in mind the very general manner in which communism is formulated in Germany in the early 1840s. In addition to Feuerbach's *Gemeinmensch*, i.e. communal being, the number of derivatives from the word "community" during this time (communitarianism, communalism, etc.),⁴⁸ and the fact that communism, democracy, and humanism were all used interchangeably⁴⁹ suggests a general concept of emancipation that defined itself vis à vis the atomistic world-view of bourgeois society. However, in a particular sense, the fact that Germany came to socialism via philosophy, which in turn, derives from speculative theological motifs, accords neatly with the abstract sense in which Marx's early "communism" is expressed. The basic principle of intersubjectivity derived from a metaphysical standpoint, that man is the highest being for man. This comes about through a critical negation of alienating concept - in Feuerbach's case the incarnate God - which are prior to any subsequent socio-economic content determining communist society. As noted by Marx

⁴⁷ *The Holy Family*, MECW, Vol. 4, p. 139.

⁴⁸ See A. Bestor, "The Evolution of the Socialist Vocabulary," *JHI*, (9) 1948: 259-302.

⁴⁹ See D. McLellan, *The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx*, p. 34.

in an uncharacteristically flattering letter to Feuerbach concerning his *Philosophy of the Future*:

In these writings you have provided - I don't know whether intentionally - a philosophical basis for socialism and the communists have immediately understood them in this way. The unity of man with man, which is based on the real difference between men, the concept of the human species brought down from the heaven of abstraction to the real earth, what is this but the concept of society!⁵⁰

Feuerbach's derivation of species-being and love from the radical critique of the incarnate God and the derivation of the philosophical basis of communism from that critique establishes a preliminary basis from which to trace the incarnation thematic in the writings of the early Marx.

A. Substance and Sovereignty: The State, Monarch, and Bureaucracy

The Feuerbachian legacy in the early Marx is both methodological and conceptual. The methodological concerns the inversion of subject and predicate which Feuerbach

⁵⁰ "Letter to Ludwig Feuerbach," August 11, 1844, in *MECW*, Vol. 3, p. 354. Insofar as the letter follows the alleged composition of the *EPM*, it upholds the centrality of humanism, "the unity of man with man," in Marx's debt to Feuerbach. Marx makes little mention here of Feuerbach's critique of religion. Yet, while some commentators such as McLellan have therefore separated Feuerbach's critique of religion from his humanistic anthropology and then claimed that the latter was the more significant influence on Marx, such a distinction seems difficult to make. See McLellan, *The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx*, p. 107: "Previously, Feuerbach's influence has been attributed almost exclusively to religion...But Feuerbach was not the only, and in Marx's eyes probably not the chief, critic of alienation. Where Feuerbach was unique was in his anthropology - his picture of man as a being whose essence is communal, whose knowledge comes via sense-perception and who lives in constant interchange with nature." Such a sharp distinction between Feuerbach's religion and anthropology appears to obscure the fact that the affirmation of man's communal essence derives from his critical appropriation of the incarnate God.

initially applies to Christianity and Hegelian metaphysics. Exemplified in such notions as "being determines thought," and "man makes his God" it lies at the heart of the materialist ontology. The conceptual legacy concerns the content of that inversion, namely the essence or species-being which man has alienated in God, and which must be reappropriated for humanity to realise itself. In the "Contribution to a Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*" (CPR) Marx applies Feuerbachian methodology in claiming that the determining political structures are alienated projections of man's social essence, just as God is a projection of his human qualities. Feuerbach's influence conveys itself more in terms of the language and expressions used than any expressed acknowledgement on Marx's part. This accords with the nature of the work, which is primarily a collection of meticulous reading notes on paragraphs 261 - 313 which encompass Hegel's treatment of the State. Since the content of Marx's analysis has been fully documented elsewhere,⁵¹ the following presentation considers the commentaries on paragraphs 262 and 270 (the logical definition of the State), 279 - 280 (on the monarch) and 294 - 297 (on the bureaucracy) to show how Marx comes to terms with the logical-mystical or, in the current reading, speculative christological element in Hegel's political thought. Then Marx's own inheritance of some of these elements will be investigated.

Paragraph 262, in which "the entire mystery of the philosophy of law and of Hegel's philosophy as a whole is set out," formulates the family and civil society as "finite phases" of the state, "so as to emerge from their ideality as explicitly infinite

⁵¹ e.g. Ilting, "Hegel's Concept of the State and Marx's early Critique," S. Avineri, "The Hegelian Origins of Marx's Political Thought" Pelczynski, Ed. *State and Civil Society*;; J. Hyppolite, "Marx's Critique of the Hegelian Concept of the State," in Hyppolite, Ed. *Studies on Marx and Hegel* and Theunissen's chapter in *Sein und Schein*, "Logik, Rechtsphilosophie, und Marxsche Kritik".

actual mind." The fact that Marx does not immediately recognise the incarnation thematic is suggested in the deliberate and sarcastic confusion he expresses concerning where this "finite actuality" is supposed to come from. The actual idea, he notes, only degrades itself into the "finiteness of the family and civil society so as by transcending them to enjoy and bring forth its infinite."⁵² Hegel's mystification lies in treating this finite actuality as part of the idea, and thereby legitimating it as rational, when it is only a "mystical result" of a preconceived logic.⁵³ Whereas Hegel turns the real subjects into predicates deriving from the Idea, Marx claims that it is the individual predicates which combine to form the Idea. Hegel's misunderstanding leads him, in turn, to formulate a State based not on reality but on "logical-metaphysical definitions."⁵⁴ That is, Hegel's basic method is not to formulate a specific and concrete idea about the operations of various political institutions, but rather a relationship between these institutions and speculative correlates drawn from his logic, most notably, the subjectification of substance.⁵⁵

The commentary on paragraph 270 reiterates these claims, i.e. that "the philosophy of law is only a parenthesis within logic,"⁵⁶ with particular emphasis on the subjectified substance which plays a central role in Hegel's formulation of the incarnation in the

⁵² *CPR, MECW*, Vol.3, p. 9.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 23: "If Hegel had set out from real subjects as the basis of the state, he would not have found it necessary to transform the state in a mystical fashion into a subject."

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

Phen. As discussed in chapter 4, § 270 describes the relation between religion and the state. In it, Hegel, notes that the substantiality of the State, once having passed through the stage of *Bildung*, is Spirit knowing and willing itself. Acting according to its "consciously adopted ends," it realises itself through its "conceptual differentiations," i.e. its institutions and authorities. Since the substantiality of the State is also its necessity, that is, its independent existence in terms of the institutions that realise it, it is also its subject. As a result, "substantiality as such is made the subject": ⁵⁷ the abstract logical categories, rather than subjects arising from empirical reality, are made to be the moments of substance. These moments take the following form in Marx's reading:

- 1) As abstract actuality or substantiality;
- 2) That the substantiality - relation passes over into the relation of necessity, of substantial actuality;
- 3) That substantial actuality is in truth concept, subjectivity.⁵⁸

One will notice that there is no considerable difference between the second and third moments. Substance others itself into differentiations or authorities which actualise through their concrete activities, as an aggregate, the general interest of the state. The relation between substance and substantial actuality that Marx identifies with the logic is central to Hegel's interpretation of the incarnate God in the *Phen.* (§ 759). Spirit, understood as the "knowledge of oneself in the externalisation of oneself," is also Substance:

in so far as Substance is, in its accidents, at the same time reflected into itself, not indifferent to them as to something unessential or present in them as in an alien element, but in them it is within itself, i.e. in so far as it is Subject of Self. Consequently in this religion the divine being is *revealed*.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 17.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 18.

The incarnation of the divine Being means that it has the shape of self-consciousness, that it actualises itself by knowing itself in its concrete differentiations which, in the case of the State, are the institutions that constitute sovereignty.

Sovereignty contains two aspects, subjective and objective, that correspond to the monarch and the executive, or bureaucracy (§§ 279-280). As this account was already discussed in chapter 4, we need only draw attention to Marx's important discussion of the monarch, the subjective aspect of sovereignty. Marx's preoccupation with the monarch is foreshadowed in a letter to Ruge in 1843, where he strongly criticises the personalisation of the Prussian state in the form of the monarch.⁵⁹ This makes its mark in his commentary on Hegel. In depositing the substance of the State in one individual, "Hegel is concerned to present the *monarch* as the true "God-man," as the actual incarnation of the Idea."⁶⁰ Marx then notes "Sovereignty of the monarch or sovereignty of the people that is the question." Marx thus juxtaposes the monarch to democracy, the latter being the "truth" of the former, ⁶¹ insofar as democracy, as the whole, represents the truth of the whole which cannot be abstractly fixed in one part, no matter how much it may claim in idealistic terms to adequately represent the whole. Because Hegel does not begin with the people, but rather from a logically mystified concept of the State, he can only view the constituent part of democracy as a "formless mass" (§ 279) that acquires and realises its purpose through the 'internally organised whole,' i.e. the rational institutions of the State. Marx phrases the distinction succinctly:

⁵⁹ "Letter to Ruge," *MECW*: Vol. 3, p. 139.

⁶⁰ *CPR*, p. 24.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

"Hegel starts from the state and makes man the subjectified state; democracy starts from man and makes the state objectified man."⁶² In a clear allusion to Feuerbach, Marx affirms democracy as the political structure which, at this stage in the development of his thought, seems to best embody the ideal of humanity empowering and liberating itself from alienating structures. Furthermore, a Straussian component is evident in the expressed claim that the Idea, the Substance, or the rational divine will, cannot incarnate itself in one unique individual but only in humanity as a whole.

Yet, while accurately recognising the incarnation thematic operative in Hegel's account of sovereignty, he misses the point that Hegel elevates the representation of the incarnate God reformulated as the monarch, the subjective expression of sovereignty, into a concept that is accountable to reason,⁶³ reformulated in terms of the institutions of the State as a whole, and the bureaucracy, in particular. A partial explanation for this misinterpretation can be found in the more authoritative role which Frederick IV delegated to himself after his enthronement in 1840. As Marx acknowledged in the Ruge

⁶² Ibid., p. 29. The Feuerbachian influence in this formulation is confirmed by the sentence which immediately follows: "Just as it is not religion which creates man, so it is not the constitution which creates the people but the people which create the constitution."

⁶³ As in § 280: "This, the ultimate self of the state's will, is in its abstraction a single self and therefore immediate individuality. Its very concept thus implies its attribute of being something natural: the essential nature of the monarch is therefore to be this individual, in abstraction from any other content, and this individual is destined for the dignity of the monarch directly and naturally, by birth in the course of nature." This characterisation corresponds precisely to the account of Jesus Christ as a representation, i.e. as the necessity of the divine being to appear originally in one unique individual. This is not missed by Marx, albeit in a satirical sense: "Hegel has proved that the monarch has to be born, which no one doubts; but he has not proved that birth makes a monarch. That man becomes a monarch by birth can no more be made a metaphysical truth than can the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary." Successfully or not, this is precisely where Hegel text defied his youthful critic.

letter: "The young king (Frederick IV) was more alert and brighter and had a much higher opinion of the omnipotence of the monarch...The old ossified state of servants and slaves disgusted him."⁶⁴ Marx's acknowledgement that "in Prussia, the king is the system...his personality determines the system..." is an observation which accords with the reign of Frederick IV, but not to the monarch of Hegel's time, Frederick III, to whom the *PR* delegates a far more representational "i dotting" role.

As a result, by isolating Hegel's transfiguration of the God-Man in the monarch, by conflating the objective and subjective aspects of sovereignty, Marx's critique of the incarnation thematic cannot accommodate the objective aspect of sovereignty situated in the bureaucracy and the institution of the State as a whole, and where, in Hegel, it finds its proper place. Instead, the bureaucracy is assigned a supporting role. According to Marx, its claim to represent the universal interest is illusory; the so-called general interest is its particular interest as a member of civil society. "The bureaucracy has the State, the spiritual essence of society, in its possession, as its private property."⁶⁵ The general objective of the State is, in the eyes of the bureaucrat, only a context for the "chasing after higher posts, the making of a career." As a result, the bureaucracy presents itself as part of the State, while in fact it merely represents the antagonisms of State and civil society, of public and private interests. In order to disguise this fact, the bureaucracy couches its objectives in lofty ideals that purport to represent the general interest: "the bureaucratic spirit is a jesuitical, theological spirit through and through. The bureaucrats

⁶⁴ "Letter to Ruge," *MECW*, Vol. 3, p. 139.

⁶⁵ *CPR*, p. 47.

are the jesuits and theologians of the state. The bureaucracy is la république prêtre."⁶⁶

Applying Marx's commentary as a valid assessment in its own right, the logical mystical aspects of Hegel's political thought in general, and the monarch and bureaucracy in particular, have been confirmed. Given Marx's rather pedantic objective of self-clarification, there is no reason to suspect any particular ideological motives that may have led him to deliberately "mystify" Hegel.⁶⁷ While Marx attributes the ambiguities he identifies in Hegel to the logic rather than to a specific incarnation thematic, the former, in the shape of the subjectified substance, is already imprinted with the latter. Furthermore, he *does* acknowledge this thematic directly with reference to the monarch, thereby accounting only for its subjective, *representative* aspect of sovereignty (although it is conflated with the objective in Marx's perception of Frederick IV). As a result, he is compelled to juxtapose the democracy as a truer reading of the actualisation of sovereignty in the people, rather than one sole individual. On the other hand, the bureaucracy and the institutions of the State as a whole, which more accurately renders Hegel's objective, *conceptual* appropriation of the incarnation thematic, can only be seen as instruments of private interest and corporate entities that present their particular interest as if it were the universal interest.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 46.

⁶⁷ For this reason, I would disagree with Ilting's expressed need to rise in Hegel's defence against Marx's charges of logical pantheistic mysticism. Ilting dismisses, unnecessarily, Hegel's metaphysical rhetoric, such as the "actual Idea," or the "divine on earth," as a mere "façon de parler." "Hegel's Concept of the State and Marx's early critique" p. 106.

B. The Proletariat and Communism in their Christo-Germanic Context

Having shown Marx's critical affirmation of the thesis presented in chapter 4, i.e. that Hegel's speculative philosophy of right appropriates the incarnate God as the subjectified Substance and as a mediating category, we can now consider how Marx assumes the Hegelian criteria for universality and applies them to a socio-economic category. The Preface to the "Contribution to a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," was written with the intent of preparing the commentary for publication which, however, never happened. Unlike the thorough paragraph by paragraph analysis of the commentary, the preface treats a broad theme, the relation between religion, emancipation, and Germany.⁶⁸ To summarise the thesis: The criticism of religion, the premise of all criticism, turns into a criticism of right or law, because religion owes its existence to a defective social and political environment. This environment, unique to Germany, has generated an overly-philosophical and theological approach to political theory. Germany's history of emancipation that is, its revolutionary past, is theoretical as represented by the Reformation, which internalised the "priest" outside the church and

⁶⁸ K. Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law. Introduction," (hereafter, *CPRI MECW*, Vol. 3, pp. 175 - 187. Few commentators, if any, have noted the manic frequency (close to 100 times in 12 1/2 type written pages, MECW edition) with which the word Germany and German (and variations such as Christian-Germanic, Germanomaniacs) appears in this essay, a stylistic idiosyncrasy that defies simple explanation. While at times, the reference is made by way of contrast with the situation in France, Russia, or ancient Greece, at other times it has a life of its own: "If the speculative philosophy of law...was possible only in Germany, inversely the German thought image which disregards real man was possible only because and insofar as the modern state itself disregards real man or satisfies the whole of man only in imagination. In politics the Germans thought what other nations did. Germany was their theoretical consciousness...If therefore the status quo of German statehood expresses the perfection of the ancien regime, the status quo of German political theory expresses the imperfection of the modern state..."p. 181.

made German laymen into theoreticians. Now, "the philosophical transformation of priestly Germans into men will emancipate the people."⁶⁹ German emancipation, however, cannot come about without a material, passive base, that is, a collective agent to bear it. Neither the middle class, the aristocracy, or any other particular group of civil society can fulfil such a role. It falls to the proletariat, "a class with radical chains," to assume it and become the material counterpart to philosophy⁷⁰:

As philosophy finds its material weapons in the proletariat, so the proletariat finds its spiritual weapons in philosophy. And once the lightning of thought has squarely struck this ingenuous soil of the people the emancipation of the Germans into human beings will take place.⁷¹

While this essay is generally considered of importance for revealing Marx's first reference to the proletariat as agents of emancipation, it contains a number of important motifs of relevance to the incarnation thematic and the arguments advanced in this thesis. We will first discuss these, and then follow with a few observations on Marx's use of the proletariat.

The most important starting point for this discussion is the fact that Germany's history of emancipation, i.e. its revolutionary past, is firstly, theoretical and secondly, Protestant. The identification of the theoretical and religious, which as noted above was repeated in the German ideology, explains Marx's famous, but somewhat cryptic opening remark, that the criticism of religion is the basis of all criticism. For, insofar as religion is the illusory realisation of the human essence, it is, in its German context, the

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 182.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 186.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 187.

theoretical basis of what must be achieved in practice. Protestantism had affirmed the dignity of God within man via a christology unmediated by clerical institutions. This resulted, however, in a split between man and God. The internalisation of the ideal, of the "priestly," resembles Hegel's critique of Kant whereby man is denied the mediator and subjected to a rational moral law he gives himself or, in a Feuerbachian vain, projects a God to give it to him. In response, Hegel sought to transform philosophically the priestly nature by grounding it in the State, by showing God to be incarnate in a political environment which reason constructs. However, "it is not enough for thought to strive for realisation, reality must itself strive towards thought."⁷² This requires the proletariat, a group born of the antagonisms of modern society, a group of universal stature due to its isolation and suffering, a group that, in the creation of a new world, will humanise the Germans. And, "the emancipation of the German is the emancipation of the human being."⁷³ Viewed in this light, both the Germano-specific and speculative christology character of Marx' formulation of emancipation become more evident. The universality of the proletariat depends on their bearing the sorrows of (Ger)mankind who shall redeem the world through a revolutionary act which is simultaneously its own death *qua* proletariat.

Such a perspective gains a more systematic foothold when viewed in terms of Marx's Feuerbachian and Hegelian inheritance, and in a more general sense, the German idealistic incorporation of Christianity. The emancipation of the German is the

⁷² Ibid., p. 183.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 187.

emancipation of the human being,⁷⁴ not because of Germany's "chosen" status, but because it has historically framed the problem in metaphysical, if not christological, terms. The embodiment, suffering, and return of universality, as a paradigm, would be meaningless if not derived from the speculative appropriation of a self-othering and suffering God. The Becoming-Man of God given in the original incarnation and reinterpreted in the Reformation, is speculatively transformed into the Becoming-Man of God who is understood as an alienation of human essence. Without this interpretive framework and philosophical culture, it is difficult to explain why the transcendence of alienated man represented in the proletariat is the key to emancipation or humanisation (Menschwerdung). In this, the proletariat is an ontological rather than sociological category, as also suggested by Hyppolite: "For Marx the proletariat is the subject that experiences to the extreme the contradiction of the human condition and is therefore capable of resolving it forever."⁷⁵

We can now summarise the inheritance of the incarnation thematic with reference to Marx's philosophical formulation of the proletariat and communism. Firstly, the abstract definition Marx supplies: "A sphere which has a universal character by its suffering and claims no particular right because no particular wrong, but wrong generally

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Hyppolite, "Marx's Critique of the Hegelian Concept of the State, " p. 106. Also Kolakowski, *Main Currents*, Vol. 1, p. 222. In contrast to the French utopians who took a more sociological approach to the proletariat, "Marx's starting point...is not poverty but de-humanisation..." And, p. 130: "It is noteworthy that the idea of the proletariat's special mission as a class...makes its first appearance in Marx's thought as a philosophical deduction rather than a product of observation."

is perpetrated against it."⁷⁶ The alienation of the proletariat from its essence, by means of its enslavement to capitalist labour, is not partial, but all-encompassing. By way of the generality of its suffering, its de-humanisation, it invokes a christological parallel; more interesting, is the means in which Marx transposes the operative category of universality from rationality, where it appears to operate in Hegel's political thought, to alienation and suffering. The level of abstraction which makes this transposition possible is reflected in the distinction Marx then makes between the proletariat which is "artificially impoverished," from the "naturally arising poor." He seems to suggest that the "sphere" of proletarianism only has legitimacy when derived from conditions of man-made social labour. This suggests a somewhat contrived dependence on a philosophical framework that is human self-alienation through labour and the economic system, which is not interested in the "naturally arising poor." This dependence manifests itself in two further instances. Firstly, property as the economic referent of particularism and bourgeois liberty is juxtaposed to the universalism of the property-less proletariat. Secondly, the full alienation of the proletariat from its human essence justifies its absolute demands for the emancipation of society. Those of the Junkers, the middle-class, etc. are based only on narrow class-interests:

Even the moral self-confidence of the German middle-class rests only on the consciousness that it is the general representative of the philistine mediocrity of all the other classes.⁷⁷

Just as in Hegel, universality is the legitimating criterion by which the bearers of German emancipation must be selected. However, in Marx instead of the rational enlightened bureaucrats, these bearers are the members of the proletariat, "a sphere which has a

⁷⁶ *CPRI, MECW*, Vol. 3, p. 186.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

universal character by its universal suffering." A central element of the incarnate God is not only love but suffering. Suffering authenticates love, in that weakness and sacrifice that call it forth. Suffering is the cry of need, and mercy, dependence and grief. All human hopes and failings which Christians have projected into the other world, and Feuerbach into abstract humanity, find in Marx their final formulation in the universal criterion that legitimate the proletarian revolution.⁷⁸ While past attempts to relate Marx to broad eschatological and soteriological motifs in the Christian tradition have been justly criticised, they acquire a more serious framework when mediated through his Hegelian philosophical inheritance.⁷⁹

If we move one final step, we find that Marx's conception of communism equally derives from the Feuerbachian model. Communism is understood "as the complete return of man to himself as a social being...This communism, as fully developed naturalism,

⁷⁸ See also, Avineri, "The Hegelian Origins of Marx's Political Thought," pp. 6-7: "But though Marx rejects Hegel's identification of the bureaucracy as a universal class, he still retains the theoretical and operational value of the term 'universal class.' Marx historicizes the term, and as a dynamic it looms very large in the evolution of his thought toward the proletariat."

⁷⁹ One example, cited and criticised by D. McLellan, appears in Wackenheim, *La Faillite de la religion d'après Karl Marx*, p. 200: "Through Hegel, the young Marx links up, no doubt unconsciously, with the soteriological schema underlying the Judaeo-Christian tradition: the idea of the collective salvation obtained by a particular group, the theme of salvific destitution, the opposition of injustice that enslaves and generosity that frees. The proletariat, bringing universal salvation, plays a role analogous to that of the Messianic community or personal saviour in biblical revelation." see McLellan, *Marx before Marxism*, p. 155-156. Also, E. A. Olssen, who speaks of a "modulated resurrection narrative in Marx's ideology," in terms of similarities between the Trinity and dialectic. "Marx and the Resurrection," *JHI*, 29 (1968): 133. While McLellan rightly questions the speculations of Wackenheim, Olssen, his own view, that the "key role of the proletariat is a contemporary application of the analysis of the French Revolution," appears to neglect the philosophical (universality) and christological (alienation and suffering) context in which that role is formulated in the *CPRI*.

equals humanism, and as fully developed humanism equals naturalism." On a static level, communism is presented merely as the opposite of particularism, a relationship that presents itself through dialectical tension. Those who represent the common interest, the proletariat, are separated from those who represent the particular interest, the capitalists. Yet, the common interest, communism, is not a utopian idea, it is the critical antithetical constant to the existing state of affairs; in turn, this constant implies a historical development springing from the social tension between the particular and common interests. Recalling now the historiosophical definition of the Incarnation as the synthesis of Thought and Being in the form of Becoming, we find in Marx the same emphasis applied to history as a critical process and development. The passage cited above continues:

it (communism) is the general resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between man and man...Communism is the riddle of history solved, and it knows itself to be this solution. The entire movement of history, just as its (communism's) real act of genesis the birth act of its empirical existence -is, therefore, also for its thinking consciousness the comprehended and known process of its becoming.⁸⁰

Even Marx's definition of communism in *The German Ideology* reflects the dialectical, critical nature of the Idea as a Becoming: "Communism is for us not a state of affairs which is to be established, an ideal to which reality will have to establish itself. We call communism the real movement which abolishes the present state of things." ⁸¹

⁸⁰ *EPM, MECW*: Vol. 3, pp. 296-297.

⁸¹ *The German Ideology, MECW*, Vol. 5, p. 49.

C. The Judaeo-Kantian Paradigm Revisited: The Critique of Liberalism

Thus far, Marx's relation to the incarnation thematic takes three principal forms: 1) as part of the acknowledged legacy of Hegelian speculative philosophy; 2) as the political form of the Idea deposited by Hegel in the State (i.e. constitutional monarch); 3) as the category of redemptive universality transposed from the bureaucracy to the proletariat. In the following analysis of the essay, "On the Jewish Question," two more forms are developed: 1) the prioritisation of human over political emancipation; 2) the role of the Judaeo-Kantian paradigm in the critique of liberalism.

It was noted in the previous section that the humanity and universal claims of the proletariat were based on their alienation from civil society, a realm of particular rights and interests. This distinction between the universal and the particular, between State and civil society, lies at the heart of Marx's political thought. However, because "the political" is only a formal expression of a deeper-rooted alienation, any discussion about proper balance between individual rights and the common good, which could serve as a definition of political theory, is a subset of larger issues. The subordination of political to human emancipation guides both Marx's critique of the French Revolution and of Bruno Bauer who retained a Hegelian faith in the political, or bureaucratic intellect, to cure social malaise. As he commented in response to Bauer's article "The King of Prussia and Social Reform":

Human nature is the true community of men. The disastrous isolation from this essential nature is incomparably more universal, more intolerable, more dreadful, and more contradictory, than isolation from the political community. Hence, too, the abolition of this isolation and even a partial reaction to it, an uprising against it is just as much more infinite as man is more infinite than the citizen,

and human life more infinite than political life.⁸²

This passage makes two points of importance to Marx's inheritance of the incarnation thematic. Firstly, it affirms the prioritisation of human (derived from Feuerbach's critique of religion) over political alienation. The isolation of humanity from its essence, that is, its collectivity, entails all other forms of alienation. Secondly, this isolation is rooted not in political but in socio-economic factors. Thus, Marx can be said to by-pass the political context - in which Hegel and the Young Hegelians felt reconciliation could occur - and orientate his critique toward civil society and material life where the fundamental alienation of humanity from its essence is rooted. He abandons faith in the political as an instrument of reconciliation between the individual and the collectivity. This, in turn, implies that the realisation of human essence, which according to Feuerbach the incarnate God represents in an alienated form, cannot come about via the state as it does in Hegel.

In the essay "On the Jewish Question" (*OJQ*) written in the summer or autumn of 1843, Marx reproaches Bauer for approaching the problem of Jewish emancipation in primarily political terms. Instead, considering the country-specific nature of the problem, that is, the Christian character of the German state, for Marx "the Jewish question is purely a theological one. The Jew finds himself in religious opposition to the state which recognises Christianity as its basis."⁸³ It follows then that the true emancipation of the Jews can only occur when the state is disburdened of its religious content and asserts

⁸² K. Marx, "Critical Margin Notes on the Article by a Prussian," *MECW*, Vol. 3, pp. 204-205.

⁸³ *OJQ*, *MECW*, Vol. 3, p. 150.

itself on its own universal, rational terms.⁸⁴ Thus, the essay has a dual purpose, the question of emancipation in general, and of the Jew in particular.

But, the State's becoming free does not imply human freedom. This is the core of Marx's attack on political forms of emancipation and, particularly, those espoused in Enlightenment liberalism. The liberal democratic State is criticised along Feuerbachian lines, that is, as an affirmation of an alienated Christian spirit. In order for the religious Christian spirit to be secularised, its corresponding historical stage must be constituted in a secular form. That form is the democratic state where each man is sovereign to himself. Importantly, "Not Christianity, but the *human basis* of Christianity is the basis of this state."⁸⁵ However, while an advance in the right direction, this does not go beyond the shortcomings of bourgeois individualism. The solo, self-interested man, "is not yet a *real species-being*."⁸⁶ Marx then argues that secularized Christianity first found its modern political expression in the form of the "Rights of Man" proclaimed with the French Revolution. Yet, these too only served to validate the egoistic individual: thus, "the practical application of man's right to liberty is man's right to private property." Likewise, equality only validates men as "self-sufficient monads."⁸⁷ In short, "none of

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 152.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 159.

⁸⁶ Ibid.: "Political democracy is Christian since in it man, not merely one man but every man, ranks as sovereign, as the highest being, but it is man in his fortuitous existence, man just as he is, man as he has been corrupted by the whole organisation of our society, who has lost himself, been alienated, and handed over to the rule of inhuman conditions and elements- in short, man who is not yet a real species being."

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 163.

the rights of man...go beyond egoistic man, beyond man as a member of civil society."⁸⁸ Still alien to species-life, the egoistic man cannot be free even when fitted out with political rights that legitimate him as free citizen. Returning to the more specific focus of the essay, Marx notes that the empowerment of Jews with legal rights will not set them free in general. Marx then concludes this section by stating the necessary conditions for freedom from "political freedom":

Only when the real, individual man re-absorbs in himself the abstract citizen, and as an individual human being has become a species-being in his everyday life..., only when man has recognised and organised his *forces propres* as social forces, and consequently no longer separates social power from himself in the shape of political power, only then will human emancipation have been accomplished.⁸⁹

After designating civil society as the battleground for the emancipatory struggle, Marx turns explicitly to the Jewish question. Looking beyond the theological context of the Jew's dilemma, he rules out conversion or rejection of Christianity as a valid prerequisite of emancipation. Rather, in an oft-cited passage, he poses the problem in terms of secular referents to Judaism: "What is the secular basis of Judaism? Practical need, self-interest. What is the worldly religion of the Jew? Huckstering. What is his worldly God. Money."⁹⁰ Because these secular referents characterise the egoistic man of civil society in general, and because of their opposition to all that represents species-being, Marx concludes that their negation implies the emancipation of all mankind:

Once society has succeeded in abolishing the empirical essence of Judaism huckstering and its preconditions- the Jew will have become impossible, because his consciousness no longer has an object, because the subjective

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 164.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 168.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 170.

basis of Judaism, practical need, has been humanised, and because the conflict between man's individual- sensuous existence and his species-existence has been abolished. The social emancipation of the Jew is the emancipation of society from Judaism.⁹¹

The fact that Marx makes no reference to empirical observations which might substantiate his negative attitude toward Jewry suggests more than simply the polemical use of metaphor. Rather, Judaism is the conceptual antithesis to the form of emancipation he proposes, a formulation which in its association to the world of liberal, bourgeois morality, finds expression in Hegel's early theological and Feuerbach's anthropological juxtaposition between law and love. As Rose commented on the Jewish emancipation debates between Bauer and Marx:

The critical mythology generated by these discussions changed the Jews from being the deniers of God's Son to being the negators of human freedom and morality, of humanity, and reason itself.⁹²

There is a contradiction from Hegel onward, as Rose points out, between professed support for Jewish emancipation (see Hegel's footnote to § 270, *PR*) and philosophical views reflective of anti-semitic prejudices. However, in fact, as much in Hegel's early theological essays as Marx's early commentary on Jewish emancipation, the image of Judaism as a bourgeois moralistic impediment to true freedom, has less to do with empirical Jewry than the speculative Christian thematic operative in their philosophical discourse.⁹³ In other words, the Jews were not alone in denying the Son of God, modern

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 174.

⁹² Rose, *Revolutionary Antisemitism*, p. 251.

⁹³ Rose recognises, though does not develop, this point, Ibid., p. 301: "Marx fluctuates constantly between Judentum, as a purely allegorical depiction of civil society and as the term for actual Jewry." For the full range of interpretation on this fundamental ambiguity, an extensive annotated bibliography is provided in J. Carlebach, *Karl Marx and the Radical Critique of Judaism*, pp. 438-449.

liberal capitalism collaborates in that denial. Thus, when Marx notes that capitalist society denies man his species-being, and this species-being is seen as Feuerbach's reformulation of the incarnate God, one can establish in a purely negative sense, the underlying incarnation thematic. As such, Marx links political liberalism to Judaism in a manner that echoes both Hegel and Feuerbach. Secondly, it reveals Marx's appropriation of Hegel's and Feuerbach's association of monotheism, egoism, and Judaism. This link between egoism and secularised Judaism further explains Marx's indictment of all of contemporary capitalist society in terms of the Jewish metaphor: "The Jews have emancipated themselves insofar as the Christians have become Jews."⁹⁴ Thus, the Judaification of Germany and civil society implies an all-pervasive Otherness, and alien-ness which can only be overcome through its transcendence.

D. From Love to Labour

The transcendence of capitalism through communism occurs through the denial of egoism, and its material and socio-economic referent, private property. In the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 (EPM)* that announce Marx's turn toward political economy, Marx replaces love, which in Feuerbach is abstractly formulated as the human essence, with labour. This process is most clearly expressed in the section on "Estranged Labour," of those manuscripts. It is both an attempt by Marx to clarify for himself key concepts of classical political economy and also show how capitalist conditions give rise to human alienation. Marx's first charge is that political economy, like theology, begins with certain facts accepted as authoritative. In the case, of political

⁹⁴ *OJQ*, p. 170.

economy that fact is "private property.": "the economist assumes in the form of a fact, of an event, what he is supposed to deduce."⁹⁵ Just as the theologian accepts the fact of God's existence uncritically, and then attempts to contemplate its nature, so too the political economist accepts the existence of private property and derives economic concepts from it. In contrast, Marx proposes to begin with "an *actual* economic fact." : "The worker becomes all the poorer the more wealth he produces, the more his production increases in power and size." Here we find the projection theory applied to political economy. In Feuerbach, as we will recall, that theory took the form: "the more of himself man attributes to God, the less he has left for himself."

Thus far in the essay, Marx has proposed the rough equation: private property = the abstract, theological God. Next, he assesses the nature of alienated labour:

The *alienation* of the worker in his product means not only that his labour becomes an object, an *external* existence, but that it *exists outside him*, independently, as something alien to him, and that it becomes a power on its own confronting him. It means that the life which he has conferred on the object confronts him as something hostile and alien.⁹⁶

While the continued outlines of the projection theory are clearly visible here, Marx like the Feuerbach he later accuses assumes what has not yet been proven. The fact that the product of labour has been embodied in an object, has been objectified, does not yet explain why this should be seen as a particularly negative fact. Marx has not yet explained why objectification implies a "loss of the object," although we assume it to be part of the overall condition of the alienated world in which that objectification takes place.

⁹⁵ *EPM, MECW*: Vol. 3, p. 271.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 272.

Marx then finds alienated labour not only in the objectification of labour but in the labour process itself, the producing activity. As labour is the fundamental human activity, therefore, man is essentially a worker. Man works by virtue of his essence, and for this reason, Marx uses the terms "man" and "worker" interchangeably. There is, as yet, no relation between worker or non-worker, man or non-man, worker or capitalist; there is only one subject, the man who works, the worker. The importance of emphasising the purely logical derivation of the category from a definition of "what man is," cannot be overlooked. For it represents an ontological premise from which everything else will follow, i.e. the proletariat, as a universal class, and class struggle, as a conflict between worker and non-worker.

From the assumption that man is a worker, Marx moves to distinguish man from animal by their relations to their productive activity. He has thus far only implied that the object of alienated labour is external to man, insofar as it is used as a means to satisfy external as opposed to internal needs.⁹⁷ He claims now that the satisfaction of external need as a form of alienated labour corresponds to human-animal activity.⁹⁸ In an estranged state, "man (the worker) only feels himself freely active in his animal functions"⁹⁹. However, liberation from estrangement implies feeling free in his human function, his function as a species-being. Feuerbach's abstract species-consciousness now reappears in the form of the species-being. For Marx, it is not sufficient to conceive of

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 274.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 275: "Certainly eating, drinking, procreating, etc., are also genuinely human function. But taken abstractly, separated from the sphere of all other human activity and turned into sole and ultimate ends, they are animal functions."

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 275.

man as simply aware of his species, he must actively fulfil his species potential:

Man is a species-being, not only because in practice and in theory he adopts the species as his object, but...also because he treats himself as a *universal* and therefore free being.¹⁰⁰

Species-life implies that a man objectifies his labour as an end in itself in which he expresses himself freely, not as a necessary means to sustain life, i.e. animal existence.

Estranged labour, on the other hand, makes life-activity, the expression of human essence, into a mere means for existence.

This review of Marx's philosophical, rather than economic, formulation of alienated labour provides a backdrop by which to investigate parallels to Feuerbach's formulation of alienated love in the context of the incarnation thematic, particularly given the widespread consensus that this formulation, in the form of species being, is directly inherited by Marx. In Feuerbach, love means a number of things: "the essential idea," "active realisation of the unity of the species," and "key proof that God is Man,". For Marx it is labour rather than love, which is "life activity," "productive life itself," or in the words of Kolakowski, "the condition of all spiritual human activity."¹⁰¹ While, at first glance, the distance between Feuerbachian love and Marxian labour appears great, in fact they fulfil identical roles, as ontological foundations of their respective humanisms. Both represent the unity of man with man via an engagement with nature, with an object outside of man which is made his own, appropriated, thereby engendering a new object. In both cases, the engagement is the fundamental part of human self-

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ L. Kolakowski, *Main Currents*, p. 133.

creation. Marx felt, however, that a more concrete ontological foundation could be laid by showing how man *makes* his Being rather than merely participates in it. Labour, in his eyes, is such a conceptual tool to reflect the reality of human self-creation more scientifically.

In their alienated forms, both love and labour also share similar characteristics. For Feuerbach, the Incarnate God represents "the abstraction of human love,"¹⁰² "the material manifestation of the human nature of God." It is, in short, an illusory reflection of the human essence. More importantly it is a surrogate, a false substitution of species-consciousness ("Christ was the substitute for the consciousness of the species," "Christ is nothing but an image under which the unity of the species has impressed itself on consciousness"). In Marx, alienated labour is the abstraction of labour, labour removed from its true, material, natural human essence. Alienated labour, therefore, implies alienated species-being. Man no longer possesses "conscious life activity," his life is no longer an object for him when it is estranged via alienated labour. Finally, whereas in Feuerbach the transcendence of alienated love leads to true love, the unity of the species, in Marx as well the transcendence of alienated labour, of capitalist labour, leads to true species-being, where man will treat himself as a universal end. The Feuerbachian and Marxian variant coincide in their view of transcending alienation via a re-appropriation of an essence lost. That essence which was first illusorily embodied in the Christian Incarnate God, the substitute for species-consciousness, can be reappropriated in Feuerbach via theoretical postulates. In Marx, these theoretical postulates are only the framework for resolving the problem. By transposing the emancipatory discourse from

¹⁰² L. Feuerbach, *PPF*, p. 52.

speculative christology to political economy, Marx felt he had provided the appropriate modern paradigms to confront the deeper ontology of alienation.

E. Alienated and Ideal Mediation

In defining humanity's essence in terms of labour, it is worthwhile asking whether and in what sense Marx is able to retain labour as an ideal category mediating between the individual and his freedom. Particularly since it seems that Marx's view of labour is not only a "fundamental category of human existence but also an epistemological category,"¹⁰³ understood as the basic form by which man appropriates and creates his world. However, the instrumental view of labour, as an epistemological category of mediation is distinct in certain respect to social labour, that is, an ideal mediation, which roughly corresponds to the Feuerbachian formulation of love. Now, because ideal mediation is a central characteristic of the incarnation thematic, either in the form of Hegel's State or Feuerbach's community of love, a final consideration must be give to the form it takes in Marx.

There appear to be two contradictory forms in which mediation appears in Marx's early work, alienated and ideal. The alienated form is directed towards Hegel's State. Unlike Hegel, who saw in the State's mediation between man and freedom it's true and fullest function as the rationalisation of the incarnate God, Marx saw in that mediation a decisive impediment to freedom. Following Feuerbach, he argues that just as religion in providing an illusory reconciliation to freedom detours man from his true path, so too

¹⁰³ J. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interest*, p. 28.

the state by offering political emancipation instead of real emancipation, cannot fully liberate man:

The state is the intermediary between man and man's freedom. Just as Christ is the intermediary to whom man transfers the burden of all his divinity, all his religious constraint, so the state is the intermediary to whom man transfers all his non-divinity and all his human unconstraint.¹⁰⁴

In Marx's formulation, the christological motif appears, at first glance, analogical rather than systematic. However, it gains its systematic depth in the recognition that the criticism of religion is the premise of all criticism. In this case, religion presupposes a split between the finite, sinful man and some beyond which is, in turn, negatively mediated by the State's securing of the negative and limited freedom of the individual, but not of the harmonisation of alienated humanity. As such, Christ, as the Mediator between man and his essence, God, is the fundamental expression of a condition of alienation through mediation that recreates itself in political terms in the form of the (Hegelian) State.¹⁰⁵ While this formulation from "On the Jewish Question," suggests a negative attitude towards mediation in general, the prime target is the alienated mediation of the capitalist system which, in the economic writings, takes the specific form of money.

In the "Comments on James Mill", on the contrary, Marx sketches out an ideal concept of mediation as the reabsorption of alienated labour into a form of human self-

¹⁰⁴ *OJQ*, *MECW*: Vol. 3, 152.

¹⁰⁵ *OJQ* nowhere explicitly refers to Hegel's political thought. However, considering that Marx was working on his critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* in which he applies other christological references, it can safely be said that it is to Hegel's State that this mediating construct is intended to refer.

expression. Labour mediates between man and nature, but in capitalist conditions, as noted above, the worker does not own the product of his labour. As a result, mediation serves only to alienate the worker from his essence. However, under the conditions of "production as human beings," mediation refers to the mutual satisfaction of need by which the other is satisfied through one's own self-objectification. In points three and four of the consequences of such conditions, Marx outlines this form of mediation:

3) I would have been for you the mediator between you and the species, and therefore would become recognised and felt by you yourself as a completion of your own essential nature and as a necessary part of yourself, and consequently would know myself to be confirmed both in your thought and your love. 4) In the individual expression of your life, and therefore in my individual activity I would have directly confirmed and realised my true nature, my human nature, my communal nature.¹⁰⁶

Under ideal conditions of human production, the mediating category of labour is internalised since it becomes a form of individual self-expression satisfying the needs of the other.¹⁰⁷ Once internalised, the product of labour is no longer private but, "true active," property, and an expression of man's communal nature. The mediation between the other and the species, or the community, is not a single individual but a condition which emerges through the negation of private property and alienated labour. The early Marx thus preserves ideal mediation, but as an existentially defined collective condition, rather than a specific institutional form.

¹⁰⁶ K. Marx, "Comments on James Mill," *MECW*: Vol. 3, p. 228.

¹⁰⁷ This is discussed by J. Torrance in terms of a sociological concept of "complementarity": "Complementarity implies A and B both have the means of satisfying the other, or enabling the other to achieve his goals, while each lacks these means for himself." *Alienation, Exploitation, and Estrangement*, p. 142. Although the form of this complementarity depends on whether the agent is egoistically or altruistically motivated, the condition of "human production" more or less precludes egoistical motivation. Consequently, as Torrance notes, Marx is no less utopian than Feuerbach in spite of his economic emphasis.

Conclusion

In the *Holy Family* and *The German Ideology* Marx criticised the theological character of German thinking in a manner which suggests a dramatic break from the Hegelian inheritance which pervades his early writings. But in light of the previous discussion, and the considerable body of literature which denies an intellectual break between the early and mature Marx,¹⁰⁸ it does not appear that he ever deviated from the way he originally posed the question of human freedom and this owed much to his immediate philosophical environment. The emancipation is still to come about in a fundamentally ontological sense, as the coming to be of a human essence exemplified, in Marx's case, by the proletariat and the negation of self-interest. Hence, political liberalism, social amelioration, and legalistic guarantees of individual rights, can do nothing to liberate the human being. Human not political emancipation is the premise of Marx's political thought. Given the way this echoes in Hegel's early theological and later philosophical critique of Kant, and Feuerbach's anthropologisation of the incarnate God in terms of love, those interpretations which speculate on Marx's inheritance of a vague Christian eschatology, either to enhance the humanistic, or discredit the scientific,

¹⁰⁸ For a succinct review of this debate see Kolakowski, *Main Currents*, pp. 263–265. Among those who deny the break, including himself, he cites Tucker, McLellan, and Avineri, most of whom base their views on the continuity of a Hegelian inheritance. While the nuances of this debate cannot be aired here, the presentation in this chapter allies itself in a broad sense with those who deny an intellectual break by noting that Marx never deviates from the search for reappropriating humanity in a de-humanised, individualistic capitalist world. A significant difference, however, lies in the emphasis placed here on the speculative christological dimension of Marx's Hegelian inheritance.

character of Marxism, or of isolated romanticist notions such as aesthetic productivity,¹⁰⁹ do not do justice to the larger metaphysical drama in which these echoes are applied. Marx is an heir to German idealism, but in the special Hegelian sense which challenges the social ontological by-products of the liberal Kantian world-view through the humanisation (*Menschwerdung*) of man's alienated essence, or what is the same thing, God.

These subjects will be returned to briefly in the concluding remarks. For the moment, the main points of the foregoing analysis need only be summarised. The argument assumed that the incarnation thematic was an important theme in both Hegel and the Young Hegelians who, in turn, had a considerable influence on Marx. Thus, from the outset the thematic needed to be traced only in terms of philosophical concepts he inherited, rather than the religious doctrines which he rejected. Section I established Marx's proximity to and acknowledgement of the incarnation thematic among the Young Hegelians, in spite of his criticism in the *German Ideology*. Section 2 showed how the Feuerbachian concepts of species-being and love derive from his critique of the incarnate God. It also established the dichotomous nature of Feuerbach's reduction of God to man

¹⁰⁹ Habermas sees Marx' concept of humanisation in terms of a transfer of "aesthetic productivity to the 'species life actuated in work,'" and attributes it to the Romanticist legacy of "generation and self-formation" as found in the likes of Herder, Humboldt, Schiller, Schelling and Hegel. *Philosophical Discourse on Modernity*, pp. 64, 76-77; Halborn, "Der Deutsche Idealismus in Sozialgeschichtlicher Beleuchtung," *HZ*, (174) 1952: 359-384, in a succinct appraisal of Marx's relationship to German idealism, leaves greater space open for incorporating the Christian thematic, p. 387: "Above all, Marxism accords completely with the faith of German idealism in high cultural values. The absolute Ideal is the free realisation of the thinking and feeling powers of humanity in its autonomous personhood. However, of course, only through the proletarian transcendence of class can space be created for the spiritual autonomy and freedom of the individual. While the messianic expectation of Marxism is thoroughly rooted in the tradition of German idealism, it is radically different in its historical orientation."

which preserves the tension between the Judaic God of egoism and the Christian God of love. Section 3a reinforced arguments of Chapter 4 in terms of Marx's acknowledgement of the incarnation thematic in Hegel's political thought- the substantialised subject, the monarch as God-Man and the theological character of the bureaucracy. It then demonstrated (3b) Marx's critical appropriation of Hegelian categories of universality (proletariat) and the reconciliation of the private and public individual through a transcendence of alienation (first, democracy, then communism). Section 3c showed the ontological priority of human over political emancipation which corresponds to the emphasis placed on the critique of religious alienation. It then turned to Marx's critical association of liberalism and Judaism and allied it to other critical formulations of Judaeo-Kantian liberalism: Hegelian (the correspondence between the transcendence of law by love, and capitalism by communism) and Feuerbachian (the anthropologisation of the Judaic and Christian God in terms of egoism and love, the latter which, Marx inherits in terms of the communal or species-being). Section 3d established the parallels between Feuerbach's use of love and species-being and Marx's early definition of labour. Marx differs from Feuerbach only in terms of the means by which humanity is to reappropriate its essence. In the transcendence of Judaeo-Kantian egoism and the embodiment of the human essence in a historical process and political form, Marx too inherits the incarnation thematic. However, the human relation to freedom is no longer mediated by a fictitious God-Man or a rational State, but rather through the self-mediation of the individual under ideal conditions of labour, i.e. communism.

Chapter 7

Concluding Remarks

The central concern of the previous chapters has been to demonstrate the continuity of the incarnation thematic, beginning with Hegel's response to liberal Kantian scepticism that God can be known. In Marx, knowledge of "God" or the Kantian "Ding-in-sich" implies transforming reality in order to retrieve and actualise the alienated species-being. The incarnational legacy in Hegel and Marx consists, therefore, less in a redemptive history or a secularised salvation problematic than in a number of philosophical motifs and dichotomies. These motifs – the Judaeo-Kantian paradigm, mediation, becoming, subjectified substance – and dichotomies – law/love, morality/ethical life, alienation/humanisation, capitalism/communism – comprise the main characters of this study. They have also served as vehicles for a larger interpretive project designed to retrieve the speculative theological, and therefore, specifically German philosophical dimension of the Hegel- Marx lineage.

The integration of the incarnation thematic into the secular interpretive framework of political thought has removed the study of Hegel's christology from a marginalised subset of the "theologian's Hegel," and incorporated it into the larger philosophical dimension. More in-depth analysis of the individual points of conjunction between philosophy and speculative christology would be required to fully determine whether such a project could reorientate understanding of the Hegel-Marx lineage. Closer study of becoming and mediation, comparisons with the Kant critiques of

Schleiermacher, Schelling and Fichte, and of the rationalisation of love, both in their Hegelian heritage and in Western philosophy, would help to more concretely determine the speculative role of Christianity in the 19th century response to the Enlightenment.

The bearing of the incarnation thematic on some of these developments can be considered here in brief. While the motif of becoming resembles in a familiar way the progressivist and historiosophical focus of the 19th century, mediation is a less studied phenomenon. Further work would be required to systematise this pattern and trace to what extent, if at all, it conjoins with bureaucratic thinking and the rise of the modern State. Here, even outside the Prussian context, there are intriguing analogues. Among the post-Enlightenment French conservatives, such as De Bonald, the speculative incarnate God was formulated as an activation of abstract political power which he delegated to the bureaucracy. Thus, the administration of public ends mediates between the absolute power of the sovereign and the masses. Here, certain specifics of the Catholic tradition, which were not accommodated in the Hegelian framework, would have to be taken into account.

One also finds incarnational themes in Fourier and Saint Simon in terms of the rationalisation of love. In the case of Fourier, for example, we find the principle of love as a social epistemological alternative to reason and rationalism. Reason would still be required for social engineering but love, "a Divine flame, the true Spirit of God,"¹ would be the real bonding principle in the New Amorous World, a concept found in Feuerbach

¹ Cited in *The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier: Selected Texts*, Ed. J. Beecher and R. Bienvu, p. 332.

in a different form. While love for Fourier was, "a more dependable guiding light than the so-called reason that has led us astray,"² he nonetheless felt he had come to this conclusion via a quasi- scientific theory of attraction, the so-called "laws of passional harmony."³ Saint-Simon's version of Fourier's "laws of passional harmony," the "principle of association," was designed as a social derivative of the Newtonian science of gravity. The pragmatism of social engineering was subordinated to the ideal of attention for the worse-off, and an egalitarian community based on sharing and equitable administration of social production. However, while Saint-Simon could be said to have set a precedent in radically linking economic administration to moral ends, he realised that collective self-interest, the aggregate of individual production, could not in and by itself serve these ends.⁴ What was needed was a new Christianity that would broaden and intensify human solidarity by institutionalising philanthropy.

This rationalisation of love fed in to the early communist in Germany in the form of Weitling, a German tailor who early in his career had settled in Switzerland, drew direct parallels with the Christian Gospel and the radical agenda of Utopian socialism. In his *Gospel of A Poor Sinner* (1845), he appropriated Jesus, "the principle of freedom and happiness," as a revolutionary founder of communism waging war against the worship of money and the egoism and materialism of the modern day.⁵ While

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 159.

⁴ See E. Durkheim, *Socialism and Saint-Simon*, p. 164.

⁵ Cited in Rose, *Revolutionary Anti-semitism*, p. 261. In *Harmonie und Freiheit* (p. 291), Weitling attributes the emergence of Christian communism to Lamennais.

considered religiously sentimental by the more scientifically minded socialists, until a definitive split over the theoretical base and tactics of communism, Marx, and to an even larger degree Engels, held a favourable opinion of Weitling. In contrast to the arid speculations of German philosophers, Weitling represented the virtues of activity and revolutionary praxis, "the only German who has *really* achieved something."⁶

In addition to the historiosophical vision (becoming), rise of the bureaucracy (mediation), utopian thinking (rationalised love), there is a fourth dimension to the incarnation thematic in the 19th century. This is the overall response to Western natural law liberalism and rationalism, which in Germany and Russia often operated from a speculative Christian standpoint. We have already sketched out the basic elements of this perspective in Germany, in terms of the *Absonderung* thesis and Hegel's political thought (chapter 4), and its self-definition vis à vis the social ontology of the Judaeo-Kantian paradigm (chapter 2). In Russia, in the form of Rozanov, Dostoevsky, Khomiakov, and the Slavophiles, Christian spiritualism underlay its self-differentiation from the West. The West was identified with the Roman world, individualistic, legalistic and mechanistic. Russia, as the true embodiment of pure Christianity, represented the orthodox spirit, the principles of collectivism (*sobornost*) and organic relationship to larger life forces. While the fall of Soviet communism has now made possible the rehabilitation of Russia's spiritualist tradition replacing Marx and Lenin with Berdyaev, Father Sergei Bulgakov and Solovyev, it is too early to forecast the consequences of this development. One might

⁶ Engels, "A Fragment of Fourier's on Trade," *MECW*, Vol. 4, p. 615. See also the article in *The New Moral World*, March 8, 1845, where Weitling is designated as the practical arm of Feuerbach's theoretical communism. p. 236.

find a continuity to Slavophilic anti-Westernism rooted in a deeper religious and philosophical past than the anti-imperialist world-view of the communist period.

While there are important nuances, the German pre-war and Russian pre-communist philosophical tradition share a certain scepticism of Western liberalism and rationalism which, it has been argued with reference to the Hegel-Marx lineage, are informed by a speculative Christian thematic. However, to retrieve the "romantic imagination" of the German philosophical spirit requires a certain ideological courage, given that since the war the metaphysical and spiritualist dimensions, and therefore ,it seems, proto-fascist implications of Hegel's thought have been explained away. Furthermore, both the pre-war studies, and for that matter, the studies of the Hegelian period which operated within those dimensions, have been neglected. While it is a simplification, the post-war Marxianisation of Hegel contributed to this phenomenon both in the positive sense of distancing him from proto-fascist labels, and in the negative sense of over-pragmatising his philosophical agenda. Even with its other priorities, the work of the Frankfurt School made important contributions in both senses. Although early variants such as Marcuse's *Reason and Revolution* were responding directly to the proto-fascist labelling of the Popperian variety, the later studies under the rubric of "Marxian epistemology" and the guidance of Habermas and Schmidt in the 1960s,⁷ concerned the systematic epistemological shifts from the Hegelian self-reflective consciousness to labour as self-productive activity. While it is not the purpose here to challenge the rigorous interpretation of the Frankfurt school, one modest observation can be made.

⁷ Particularly the first two chapters of Habermas' *Knowledge and Human Interest*, p. 7 42.

This study's interpretive scope and sensitivity to the immediate historical and philosophical climate has revealed how alien the Habermasian discourse of "instrumentalist epistemology," and "transcendental-pragmatistic conceptions" resonates in Hegelian debates from the 1820s to 1840s. The fundamental concerns were not the self-constitutive dimension of production, or the master/slave dialectic, but rather, in what sense the speculative Idea could be realised, whether the speculative God-Man was an individual or an idea, and what was the relation between theology and philosophy. Any glance at the books and articles of the immediate post-Hegelian period, many of them long forgotten, will reveal an almost obsessive preoccupation with these obsolete concerns. They were, however, as Nietzsche well understood, central to the German philosophical tradition. It is not only that "the concretization of ideas had first been conceived by Hegel's theory of the state and history and had been further developed in Marx's theory of the proletariat as the protagonist of mankind."⁸ Rather, underlying concretisation, humanisation, realisation, and the whole set of rhetorical images grouped under "the incarnation thematic" from Hegel to Marx lies the conviction that the Absolute or Idea can and does embody itself in reality. This conviction is perhaps the political dimension of Protestantism as the "original sin," (Nietzsche) of German philosophy. By identifying and reconstructing such a dimension an attempt has been made to retrieve the "authenticity" of this particular lineage, lost in the contemporary viewpoint. Ultimately, however, as a political philosophy, the bridge constructed between the speculative Christian Hegel and the Hegelian early Marx reveals that the metaphysical "authenticity" retrieved cannot avoid a paradigm of domination.

⁸ H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 249.

Here is the truth, abide by it. The authentic conviction that God can be known has ominous political overtones in a secular world. "As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches (John 15:4-5)." This can be interpreted as either an appeal for utopian togetherness in the form of the Church, or reform from above, in the form of the State. Hegel, in opting for the latter, allies himself with that absolutist strain in German thought, i.e. because both church and state emerged from the same metaphysical womb, which ended in disaster. However, and this is an important nuance, the *Führerprinzip* of Nazi ideology was alien to both Hegel and the Prussian *Rechtstaat* for whom the State as a whole took precedent over the individual leader. Further work would be required to trace more systematically the dynamics of this transformation, particularly how the underlying religious or mythological dimension in the political developments of the Nazi period was re-personalised, and how this relates to the incarnation thematic introduced in this thesis. In the context of the that thematic it seems to suggest a "regression to representation" whereby the State in the Weimar republic had become either too wayward, fragmented, democratised, or distant to retain the allegiance of the people as a concept or idea alone. Observations which confirm an understudied speculative theological dimension to this regression to the individual leader range from Heidegger's philosophical legitimisation of the Führer in the context of a collectivist ontology,⁹ to the more bizarre substitution of Christ by Hitler - as the more optimistic and powerful variant

⁹ See Habermas' citation of Heidegger's article in the *Freiburger Studentenzeitung* of 10 November 1933, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, p. 157: "The German people is called by the Führer to an election; but the Führer asks nothing of the people. Rather he gives them the most direct possibility of the highest free choice: whether the entire people wills its *Dasein* or not...Our will to the self-responsibility of the people wills that each people find the greatness and truth of its determination...The Führer has awakened this will in the whole people and has fused it into a single decision."

- in religious education of the period.¹⁰

In this regard, Hegel had the rationalist insight to elevate the representation to a concept, thereby mitigating the arbitrariness associated with the individual subjective will and making it answerable to collectively defined dictates of reason. Nonetheless, there is a continuity there which should be retrieved, though more systematically, than studies of the Hegel to Hitler variety. Furthermore, the evidence for such continuity lies as much in the development which followed the apocalyptic embodiment of Freiheit in the Third Reich, namely, that Germany reclaimed its Enlightenment and Western heritage in the post-war period. However, it reclaimed it in a vacuum, without the Jews, and without, for obvious reasons, the metaphysical imagination:

West Germany having purged itself (or having been purged by the Allies) of its demons and having adopted the Enlightenment tenets so long and obstinately spurned by its educated elite, the metaphysical blight cast by Hegel and his successors must surely be seen by all as an aspect of the great catastrophe the country had twice suffered in this century.¹¹

This remark illuminates both some of the problems of postwar Hegel interpretation and the dramatic tension between Enlightenment bourgeois values and the collectivist metaphysical impulse underlying the secularisation thematic discussed in this study. On the first point, one need only say that both the Germans and the allies, i.e. the Anglo-

¹⁰ Note the following dictation assignment for a Munich primary school in 1934: "Just as Jesus saved people from sin and from hell, Hitler saves the German 'Volk' from ruin. Jesus and Hitler were persecuted, but while Jesus was crucified, Hitler was raised to the chancellorship. While the disciples denied their maker and deserted him, the sixteen comrades of Hitler died for their lord. We hope that Hitler will be able to complete his work himself. Jesus built for heaven; Hitler for the German earth." Cited in F. Grunfeld, *The Hitler File*, p. 165.

¹¹ G. Lichtheim, *From Marx to Hegel and Other Essays*, p.201.

American scholarly community, by presenting a kinder, gentler Hegel, an insightful liberal critic of modernity, a natural law radical with a fondness for Hellenism, have suppressed the metaphysical dimension almost by way of a collective amnesia. The Germans in this development can be excused insofar as any attempt to re-appropriate Germany's romantic dimension throws one unwillingly into the neo-fascist camp which vulgarly and superficially has already reappropriated it, not through philosophy but through xenophobia. In the Anglo-American world, untainted by the political overtones of scholarly interpretation, this phenomenon can only be explained in terms of its own heritage. Again, Lichtheim is instructive on this point: "One cannot read German authors brought up on the tradition of Kant and Hegel without becoming aware that much of this idealist metaphysics is secularised Protestantism of a kind that has no precise counterpart in the Anglo-American world."¹²

It is not only a translation problem, that English has no precise equivalent for *Geist* or, for that matter, *Menschwerdung*, but also a question of which interpretive framework one applies to a philosopher for whom philosophy is theology:

Philosophy is to this extent theology. It presents the reconciliation of God with himself and with nature, showing that nature, otherness, is implicitly divine, and that the raising of itself to reconciliation is on the one hand what finite spirit implicitly is, while on the other hand it arrives at this reconciliation...in world history.¹³

Unlike Hegel, we no longer believe that, if nature or the ethical world is Godless, truth lies outside it. However, as noted at the outset in a Hegelian vein, to call this unbelief a victory of reason over faith is to pose the question wrongly.

¹² Ibid., p. 53.

¹³ Hegel, *LPR*, 489.

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