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"God Himself Is Dead": Returning to Hegel's Doctrine of Incarnation

Mitch Thiessen

Philosophy Department, Duquesne University, 600 Forbes Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15282, USA; thiessenm@duq.edu

Abstract: This essay presents a certain defense of Hegel's doctrine of Incarnation. For Hegel, the logic of the Incarnation constitutes not only the highest insight of religion and theology but, arguably, the key to philosophy itself, as the perfected self-knowledge of the absolute. Such knowledge is what Hegel calls "absolute knowing", and marks the absolute reconciliation of the knowing subject and its object, substance, or in other words: of the domains of, as it were, historical knowledge and eternal truth. Hegel discovers in the Christian doctrine of Incarnation the logic of this very reconciliation of history and eternity: truth, or the absolute, coincides with the subject's knowledge of it, which not only includes but privileges the historical "dismemberment" involved in such knowing. Only in Christianity does God dismember himself, or become historical—sacrifice himself, die—in order to know and become himself. But this "death of God" is for Hegel the very meaning of modern subjectivity. For this reason, or if Hegel is right, the Hegelian subject constitutes the sole way in which the desire of philosophy—namely, for the other that truth is—can keep itself from becoming incoherent after the death of God. It is not merely that Hegel's doctrine of the subject remains valid despite the death of God; rather, the Hegelian subject, whose logic is incarnational and for this reason *founds itself* on the "death of God", stands as the sole coherent articulation of this event, even and especially in its Nietzschean guise.

Keywords: Hegel; Nietzsche; Kierkegaard; sacrifice; incarnation; metaphysics

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1. Introduction

Hegel's radical interpretation of the Christian doctrine of Incarnation is the keystone of not only his theology but his entire metaphysics. At the same time, this interpretation followed logically from this very metaphysics. That is, if Hegelian logic is essentially "incarnational", *kenotic*,[1]—predicated upon the self-emptying, or as Hegel wrote, "*self-sundering* or stepping-forth",[2] character of being, or the absolute—this logic or metaphysics itself forces us to reconsider the doctrinal meaning of the Incarnation or *kenosis* of God, insofar as this constitutes the central teaching and *uniqueness* of Christianity. Hegelian metaphysics in this way aspired to nothing less than a transformation of our understanding of the very kernel of both Christian doctrine and theology.

It is on the other hand rare to find theologians, much less Christians, who today even betray much less declare the influence upon their theology and belief of Hegelian logic, not least to the extent that Hegel himself believed would be necessary if Christianity were to not only survive but come into its own, as it were, in what German Idealism established as the first truly *scientific* culture. And so perhaps this doctrine, in its Hegelian form, belongs now to the "history of ideas", insofar as we may also consider Hegel's metaphysics to itself belong to such a gallery or museum of things dead and gone, now merely "on display" to be wondered at. If Hegel's metaphysics undeniably "failed", why should one bother with the consequences of this metaphysics for the doctrine of Incarnation—which perhaps stands in no need of *any* metaphysics, besides?

Such an assessment would be hasty for at least the following reason. It is indisputable that both philosophy and religion now exist in a post-Nietzschean era. "God is dead"

is not only the most famous slogan of this radically anti-Christian thinker—it is no less the formula for the nihilism in which even those who remain unaware of or uninterested in Nietzsche's diagnosis are forced to exist, to think, to believe. To paraphrase Flannery O'Connor, nihilism is today not a position; it is the very air we breathe. Anyone who does not recognize nihilism and its detrimental effects on not only knowledge and belief, but their very *possibility*, has not yet caught up with the greatest believers and theologians of the past century and a half.

Although the phrase "God is dead" is always traced back to Nietzsche as its most famous (and loudest) preacher, it is in fact Hegel—an avowedly "Christian philosopher"—who first and literally announced it, claiming it not only for philosophy, but as the latter's principle. That is to say, what this phrase indicates was already both the *presupposition* and the *aim* of Hegel's philosophy. That God is dead means, according to Nietzsche, that God has been "killed"—and not only killed, but *sacrificed*. God has died in the historical movement of what Nietzsche calls the "will to truth", which, as we shall see, is governed by a logic of sacrifice. Although originally determined as the desire for God, who alone is truth, the will to truth, in its ever more extreme sacrifice of humanity's "idols", inevitably turned itself against *all* gods with the emergence of scientific culture. Eventually, the will to truth would "run out" of idols to smash, and would, as its final act, turn its gaze upon *itself*. The will to truth would come to view not only its object, but its very desire with suspicion, and Nietzsche describes this result in terms of the emergence of the question of the *value* of this very will, or "the will to truth's becoming-conscious-of-itself . . . *as a problem*".[3]

This formulation is essentially Hegelian in both its terminology and its significance. As the *Phenomenology of Spirit* had demonstrated, the subject of knowledge, in coming to know its "other", realizes its goal only in a *self*-knowledge that results in the annulment or sacrifice of this very relation, this very "other". Science, or the knowledge of the other of the subject (i.e., substance), culminates in the sacrifice of both for the sake of their truth—that is to say, culminates in the sacrifice that the absolute makes of itself, against itself for the sake of itself. In the "Religion" section of his work, Hegel describes the negative side of this result, or the loss of the other of knowing, in theological terms:

> *God Himself is dead*. This hard saying is the expression of innermost simple self-knowledge, the return of consciousness into the depths of the night in which "I"="I", a night which no longer distinguishes or knows anything outside of it. [4]

For Hegel, the death of God, the loss of any "out-and-out Other",[5] because it returns the subject to the purest and simplest self-knowledge, plunging it into the "depths of the night" that it *is*, is the negative aspect of a knowing that has become absolute:

> This feeling is, in fact, the loss of substance [i.e., of being and truth] and of its appearance over against consciousness; but it is at the same time the pure *subjectivity* of substance, or the pure certainty of itself which it lacked when it was object, or the immediate, or pure essence. This Knowing is the inbreathing of the Spirit, whereby Substance becomes Subject, by which its abstraction and lifelessness have died, and Substance therefore has become *actual* and simple and universal Self-consciousness. [6]

The death of God is not merely the loss of substance, truth, but their *discovery*, insofar as both substance and truth mean "the pure *subjectivity* of substance [i.e., being], or the pure certainty of itself". The "loss" of substance, in other words, is the *determinate* negation in and through which that which is lost returns to and, indeed, becomes itself, or what it is. In the loss of itself, substance reveals itself to be no less subject, subjectivity, or the certainty it possesses of itself as this *self-relation*, for which certainty and relation absolute self-loss will have been both necessary and sufficient.

As is the case for Nietzsche, the death of God for Hegel exposes, then, the true relation between knowing and its "other", or the real situation of the subject in relation to its highest object, namely: that this object is nothing other than its own activity. As Nietzsche put it, the will to truth has become *conscious of itself*, has made *itself* its own object. And as he

might say, what it has discovered, in truly looking at itself for the first time, is that truth and its desire are nothing at all "divine", but *human*, all too human. On the other hand, the death of the other of knowledge at the hands of science, at the hands of knowledge itself, was the principle of Hegel's thought *because* this death is, according to Hegel, already the essential revelation of Christianity itself; the becoming-self-conscious of the "will to truth" is thus, for Hegel, not only divine, but absolute reconciliation with the Divine as such. That God is dead means, for Hegel, that Christianity, as the consummate religion of reconciliation, *is the truth*.

Hegel is a self-consciously Christian philosopher, and it is because he is so that his philosophy in fact possesses more power than Nietzsche's to expose the true significance of the death of God. For Hegel, this exposition coincides with the exposition of the subject itself. If Nietzsche essentially closes the case on the Incarnation as the event that (as Christianity teaches) is most indispensable for understanding *ourselves*—because he essentially treats this "event" as one among several of the most serious religious "fabrications"—Hegel paradoxically discovers in the Incarnation, explicated philosophically and with a far greater subtlety than Nietzsche was ever capable of, the event that was itself *necessary* for the development and certainty of modern subjectivity, which alone makes possible the ultimate overcoming of religious delusion and, indeed, of religion as such.

In pairing these thinkers along the axis of the question and place of the subject, we will not simply oppose Hegel to Nietzsche in defending the former's thinking over the latter's; rather, we will attempt to show, if only in outline, how Nietzsche's construal of the death of God, considered in terms of its relevance for *philosophy*, not only is dependent upon the Hegelian logic of Christianity as that which pre-eminently "overcomes" itself, but proves lacking by comparison with his predecessor when it comes to the question of maintaining a coherent and, indeed, *honest* theory of the relationship between self-consciousness and truth.

2. The Sacrifice of God

Nietzsche perceived in the death of God the death of "man" himself. Primarily, the death of God marked the transference of the possibility and power of creation—or what Nietzsche calls the willing not merely of values, but of value as such—from the divine to the earthly realm. Indeed, the death of God meant in the first instance the imperative and, as it were, a certain *necessity* to create, to *will*, that which would be beyond both God *and* "man", or the being who had always defined himself as religious, as moral. What lay beyond both God and man would be nothing but the possibility of a new evaluation of the "meaning of the earth", namely: the overman: "*Dead are all gods: now we want the overman to live!*"[7] Despite Zarathustra's subsequent equivocation (in the second and third parts of Nietzsche's *magnum opus*) on the meaning or even the possibility of the overman, it is nevertheless certain that the doctrine emerges and persists (in, e.g., the figures of the "free spirit" or the "philosopher commander") for Nietzsche as the possibility of creation—or of the will to power in its affirmative truth—and, moreover, *as* this possibility and truth only *relative* to the double-sacrifice of God and man; or, otherwise said, relative to the radical alteration that has taken place in humanity's relation to the divine, and therefore to itself. The overman, which constitutes an immanent and atheistic doctrine of creation, as it were, can even be said to represent, figuratively, *nothing other than* a new relation of man to the divine—Nietzsche calls this "atheism"—and *for this reason* to himself.[8] The human becomes a creator, or discovers himself as will to power—"and nothing besides!"[9] —when he finds in *himself* the power of ultimate evaluation that he hitherto ascribed to God; and, as *On the Genealogy of Morality* shows, he discovers himself as this power through his sacrifice of God in and through his will to truth.

The sacrifice of both God and man—of God at the hands of man, through the latter's will to truth, and of man at the hands of himself, as the *consequence* of this "killing" of God—constitutes for Nietzsche, as it does for Hegel himself, the *end* of religion in two senses, namely, as both the annihilation and the aim of religion. This sacrifice must therefore

be experienced (indeed suffered) as this end in the sense that it is as much (1) the abolishing of what Hegel called "religious consciousness" as it is (2) the aim or final desire of this very consciousness. This dialectic is, indeed, Hegelian, but it is Kierkegaard who expresses it most exquisitely. Religion is *desire*, the practice and discipline of the most passionate longing; indeed, it is passion itself, in the literal sense of suffering before and on account of the other. "But the highest power of every passion", as Kierkegaard remarked, "is always to will its own annihilation."[10] That is, especially religious passion aspires to the annihilation of this passion in a perfect union with and *knowledge of* its "other", its "object". This is why, for Hegel, Christianity is the *consummate* religion: it reveals the truth of religion as such, inasmuch as religious consciousness desires to know both its other and—what this in fact means—*itself in relation to* this other, *absolutely*. But to *know* the relation of oneself to the other is to know oneself *as* this relation, and the other as the same. This means, then, to know oneself *as* the other, and the other *as* oneself, in the sacrifice of both—or better said, of their opposition—which sacrifice alone makes this coincidence, or ultimate reconciliation, both possible and necessary. Christianity, and it alone, entails not only the sacrifice of humanity for the sake of the other (Nietzsche calls this the "will to truth"), but in and through this very sacrifice, this very will to truth or passion, the sacrifice of God and the gods, in and through humanity.

Nietzsche as much as Hegel discerned this essential characteristic of Christianity, namely, that it would *itself* be the site and source of its own "overcoming". As he asks in his *Genealogy*:

> *What*, strictly speaking, has actually *conquered* the Christian God? The answer is in my *Gay Science* . . .: "Christian morality itself, the concept of truthfulness that was taken more and more seriously, the confessional punctiliousness of Christian conscience, translated and sublimated into scientific consciousness, into intellectual rigour at any price. Regarding nature as though it were a proof of God's goodness and providence; interpreting history in honour of divine reason, as a constant testimonial to an ethical world order and ethical ultimate purpose; explaining all one's own experiences in the way pious folk have done for long enough, as though everything were providence, a sign, intended, and sent for the salvation of the soul: now all that is *over*, it has conscience *against* it, every sensitive conscience sees it as indecent, dishonest, as a pack of lies, feminism, weakness, cowardice,—this severity makes us *good Europeans* if anything does, and heirs to Europe's most protracted and bravest self-overcoming!" [11]

That is to say, as men of *science*, who *now know* the truth of our relation to both the other and to ourselves, we are precisely the heirs of Christianity, or of its *truth*, which lies in the "bravest" self-overcoming yet accomplished by human beings. But how, or rather *why*, does—must—Christianity "overcome" itself? Why *specifically* does this most extreme of human passions, Christian existence, ultimately *will*, to again quote Kierkegaard, "its own annihilation"? According to Nietzsche, the Christian God, and the consciousness that stood in relation to this god, constituted the very being of European man, and always necessitated the most extreme sacrifices—indeed, the most severe cruelty: a cruelty toward *oneself* for the sake of truth. Christianity first *revealed* the meaning of humanity *as sacrifice for the truth*. But this sacrifice, which is without limits, inevitably turns on itself, resulting in the question of its very "reason for being". That is, the imperative to honesty, to truthfulness, to "intellectual rigour at any price", *itself* asks: Why honesty? Why truthfulness? Why intellectual rigor? But, for Nietzsche, this means: What *value* do truth and the will to truth in general *really possess*?

> *Who* is it really that questions us here? *What* in us really wills the truth? In fact, we paused for a long time before the question of the cause of this will—until we finally came to a complete standstill in front of an even more fundamental question. We asked about the *value* of this will. Granted, we will truth: *why not untruth instead?* And uncertainty? Even ignorance? The problem of the value of

> truth came before us—or was it we who came before the problem? Which of us is Oedipus? Which one is the Sphinx? It seems we have a rendezvous of questions and question-marks—And, believe it or not, it ultimately looks to us as if the problem has never been raised until now—as if we were the first to ever see it, fix our gaze on it, *risk it*. Because this involves risk and perhaps no risk has ever been greater. [12]

In a passage that recalls the Hegelian logic of sublation, Nietzsche explains how it is that the *Christian "will to truth"* resulted, then, not only in the self-overcoming and sacrifice of Christianity as a "dogma" and as a "morality", but in the question—which is the meaning of "*our* being"—of the very value of this will to truth, this will to and *for the other*, through which Christianity both *was* and *overcame* itself. Humanity now stands on the brink of its final sacrifice: the sacrifice of the will to truth—which is not only a figure of morality but its very essence—as the culmination of this very will:

> All great things bring about their own demise through an act of self-sublimation: that is the law of life, the law of *necessary* "self-overcoming" in the essence of life—the lawgiver himself is always ultimately exposed to the cry: "*patere legem*, *quam ipse tulisti* [submit to the law you yourself have made]". In this way, Christianity *as a dogma* was destroyed by its own morality, in the same way Christianity *as a morality* must also be destroyed,—we stand on the threshold of *this* occurrence. After Christian truthfulness has drawn one conclusion after another, it will finally draw the *strongest conclusion*, that *against* itself; this will, however, happen when it asks itself, "*What does all will to truth mean?*" . . . and here I touch on my problem again, on our problem, my *unknown* friends (—because I don't *know* of any friend as yet): what meaning does *our* being have, if it were not that the will to truth has become conscious of itself *as a problem* in us? . . . Without a doubt, from now on, morality will be *destroyed* by the will to truth's becoming-conscious-of-itself: that great drama in a hundred acts reserved for Europe in the next two centuries, the most terrible, most questionable drama but perhaps also the one most rich in hope . . . [13]

In the final sentence of this passage, Nietzsche suggests that the result of the will to truth's becoming-conscious-of-itself, or questioning its very reason for being, is essentially *historical*, and indeed constitutes the inauguration of a new era or "drama". The final result of Christianity—nihilism—is, therefore, not the end of history but a *turning point*—or perhaps even its beginning. It indicates in any case a crisis, in the literal sense of a moment of *decision*, i.e., of will. And this is at least a great part of the meaning of the human being's new possibility as a creator and as will to power—as the willing of itself as "overman" and, indeed, of this man as the meaning of the earth.

And yet one might well ask: How is history supposed to be possible absent the *irreducible* integrity of its very condition? In other words, what would history *be* without both the will or desire for the other, and—as the condition of this will—a *belief* that this will, this desire, this other, means something, *absolutely*? As Derrida correctly observed, history is inextricably tied "to religious *faith* through a form of involvement with or relation to the other . . .".[14] Without a belief in the other, without "faith", history becomes something impossible, without meaning. Or, as Hegel had already demonstrated, when the desire to know becomes conscious of itself as this desire—when knowing realizes that its relation to its other is nothing other than its relation to *itself*—and knowing therein becomes its own "object", the sacrifice of the other "in itself" that takes place in this realization is, in the first place, the sacrifice of history itself. This is for no other reason than that, in achieving what Hegel calls absolute knowing, spirit—or knowing, insofar as it is historical—can no longer permit itself the belief in, or relation to, the being or other "in itself" that alone makes history as the will to knowledge or truth possible. *This other no longer "means" anything, and this is why the will to truth has become conscious of itself as a problem*, or why the very meaning

of our being brings us to question: *What does all will to truth mean?* We shall return to the question of history in this connection further on.

Sacrifice, and especially the most extreme sacrifice that the will to truth *is*, depends essentially upon a relation to an other. Would the other, insofar as the will to truth means something, not then be irreducible? In a passage from *Daybreak*, Nietzsche recognized that this was so, and that *truth* was, irreducibly, the *other* to and for which alone humanity could achieve its very being as sacrifice:

> Of all the means of producing exaltation, it has been human sacrifice which has at all times most exalted and elevated man. And perhaps every other endeavour could still be thrown down by *one* tremendous idea, so that it would achieve victory over the most victorious—the idea of *humanity sacrificing itself*. But to whom should humanity sacrifice itself? One could already take one's oath that, if ever the constellation of this idea appears over the horizon, *the knowledge of truth* would remain as the one tremendous goal commensurate with such a sacrifice, because for this goal no sacrifice is too great. [15]

Again, it is of particular importance that Nietzsche recognizes that every sacrifice is a sacrifice *for* and *to* something—or someone. To an "other". And that as such, the other remains both the "goal" and thereby the condition of every sacrifice. But given that what is at stake in this passage, i.e., in "the idea of *humanity sacrificing itself*"—reading it through the "lens" of the *Genealogy*—is the sacrifice of *sacrifice itself*, of the will to truth itself or the most extreme sacrificial mode of being, one might rephrase Nietzsche's question in the following, paradoxical terms: But to whom *can* humanity sacrifice its very being as sacrifice, i.e., its very *relation* to the "other" in and through which alone sacrifice is possible? *To which other is it possible to sacrifice the other as such?*

In fact, Nietzsche did not reach further than—and in fact he fell, as we shall see, rather short of—the Kierkegaardian paradox of a knowledge or will to truth that, in willing its own annihilation, depended upon itself for this very annihilation, or as Nietzsche put it, for the *radical* placing into question of itself. On the question of the relation between knowledge and its other, Kierkegaard had stated that

> the understanding [i.e., the "will to truth", to knowledge] cannot absolutely negate itself, but uses *itself* in order to do this and thus thinks this difference [between itself and its own absolute negation, its own annihilation] in its own terms, that it thinks via itself; it cannot go beyond itself absolutely and thus conceives this thing which transcends itself [that is, its own annihilation] by means of itself. ... It would appear we have arrived at a paradox. ... The understanding cannot think it, could not hit upon it, and when it is asserted, cannot understand it, but senses only that it must be its ruin. To this extent, the understanding has much to object to in the paradox, and yet, on the other hand the paradoxical passion of the understanding is to will its own annihilation. [16]

This "paradox", in which Kierkegaard perceived the ruin and self-annihilation of knowledge—the complete despair of reason—is also as far as Nietzsche's thinking reaches. This is evidenced by the fact that the most severe contradiction characterizes especially his mature work, which contradiction nearly renders his thinking incoherent, and which can be described as follows: *at the same time* that Nietzsche's thought only means anything insofar as we are able to encounter it as the most severe attempt yet by any philosopher to be as *honest* and as *truthful* as possible, this very thought no longer possesses the resources—indeed it destroys them—to be capable of justifying the "value" of truth, or of even *saying* what honesty, what truthfulness, *positively* mean. That is, Nietzsche's thought is incapable of separating or justifying absolutely the value of the "imperative" of, or the desire for, honesty or truthfulness from its opposite, namely, the value of lying, of deceiving oneself—which deception is, in fact, more valuable for *life*. As a unique negation of life (or as Socrates famously said of philosophy, as the practice of death), the will to truth remains a "moral" imperative, or as Nietzsche states in his *Genealogy*, the very "kernel" of the "ascetic ideal".

And yet, insofar as the origins of this ideal have been exposed—have been reduced, in the most severe rejection of "idealism" imaginable, to a mere contingency within a godless cosmos defined exclusively in terms of relations of power—the result is that the will to truth must itself, in the final analysis, be defined solely in terms of such relations. But if this is so, then the "value" of truth becomes itself contingent upon the aims of power, and hence entirely "instrumental" for *a certain mode of life*—and for this reason not only relative but, on account of its "slavish" origins, uniquely suspect. *What does all will to truth mean?* We must hear in this question that unspoken and yet presupposed ground to which all "meaning" is relative for Nietzsche, namely, "life", or the will to power that defines it. What does all will to truth mean relative to the will to power that defines all life?[17]

Essentially, it *can* mean neither more nor less than anything else: the will to truth is at bottom a mere peculiarity of "natural" existence; more specifically, it is merely the result of contingent relations of vital power, or of a style of racial and psychological breeding that was developed for the sake of altering these relations, of turning the ancient world upside-down. Having exposed the psychological and racial meaning of the will to truth as the mere invention or "power play", as it were, of a particular form of life, Nietzsche is unable to justify his *own* "preference" for truth qua truth, and his own "honesty" and "truthfulness" fall prey to that which such have revealed, namely, a cosmos within which "being honest" and "desiring truth" at bottom mean nothing more than their opposite, namely, the merely *useful* intensification, for an animal that has been bred in a particular way, of certain *quanta* of force.

To his credit, Nietzsche recognized this problem repeatedly, as already evinced in the question he raises near the end of the *Genealogy*, and which we have quoted a number of times now. And yet the paradox—which Kierkegaard had already confronted in order to courageously and *honestly* refer it to the realm of faith, *belief*—is that *the very question concerning the "truth of truth" presupposes that truth and the will to truth "mean" something, irreducibly*, and perhaps everything. The question is posed to an other that not only does not exist, but perhaps much more problematically, no longer *means* anything. And yet Nietzsche would not even have been able to raise the question of the "truth of truth" without *believing* in the other who would alone render such a question meaningful:

> The question, the request, and the appeal *must* indeed have begun, since the eve of their awakening, by receiving accreditation from the other: by being believed. Nietzsche must indeed believe he knows what believing means, unless he means it to make-believe. [18]

In *annihilating* the other in the name of truthfulness, Nietzsche, unlike Kierkegaard, forgot that he still believed in this very other. He no less forgot—or rather, and again quite unlike Kierkegaard, he likely did not know—what the culminating philosophy of German Idealism had in fact achieved and demonstrated, namely, that the genuine overcoming of the abstract other—the other of religion, of morality, of the historical desire for truth—occurs not in its equally abstract annihilation, which can only ever be make-believe, but in its *sublation*.

Outside the Kierkegaardian self-conscious assignment of the paradox that knowledge results in its own annihilation to the domain of religion—where *belief* in the other of knowing becomes necessary, becomes the highest realization of the subject who, beyond the subject of mere reason, is the subject of *faith*—the only possibility here was, in fact, already demonstrated by Hegel. One can only sacrifice the other of knowledge, or the other "in itself", to and for an other that has itself become "in and for itself", or, in Nietzsche's own words, *to a "will to truth" that "has become conscious of itself"*. And yet in order that this sacrifice not result in the *annihilation* of knowledge—which would no less be the annihilation of itself, or the becoming-meaningless of the will to truth and knowing, whereafter the will to truth must become a matter of mere "belief" and "faith"—the will to truth must be asserted and demonstrated to be *irreducible*: that is to say, primitive in its *self*-relation, radically *self*-founding. As such, this will, this desire, cannot itself be "located" by a genealogical method that, at the same time that its sole materialist

principle is the contingent variations of racial and psychological "power", nevertheless and incoherently insists upon—*believes in*—this very will to truth, or its own absolute difference from mere rhetoric.

To sacrifice the other, God, *to the other that oneself is*, i.e., to and for the sake of a knowledge that has become *absolutely self-conscious* and therefore *absolutely other to itself*, is to affirm the *fact of subjectivity* as irreducible. The subject "knows" its other "absolutely"—and therefore has "killed" this other—but this murder does not for this reason result in the abstract "annihilation" of the other. Rather, because knowledge knows *itself* to be the truth of its relation to the other, the other is sublated in a relation of identity between knowledge and its other, wherein both have become in and for themselves, or *absolute*. The subject is *nothing other than* this movement of negation, of sacrifice, in and through which, in both annulling *and* actualizing its relation to the other, reveals the irreducible and *self-relating* otherness that the subject (and therefore the other) is to itself. Only in this way can the sacrifice or death of God, of truth itself in the accomplishment of knowledge, be considered at the same time to be the *attainment of truth*, of knowledge. For truth is nothing but this absolute self-relation, wherein the subject establishes itself as the irreducible identity of truth and its own knowledge.

In his polemic against Christian and especially German philosophers, Nietzsche forgot about the subject, because he forgot about, or passed too swiftly over, Hegel. Or as Bataille remarked, Nietzsche "knew of Hegel only the usual vulgarization".[19]

3. The Subject of Incarnation

The logic of the subject—defined as the sacrifice of its other for the sake of the other, and which sacrifice coincides with the sacrifice of itself for the sake of itself—and what this logic *means* for the relation between knowledge and truth, which is to say *science*, can be presented most acutely by investigating Hegel's most provocative doctrine, *absolute knowing*, in terms of its significance in relation to history and to time itself, which, as intimated above, constitutes the horizon of the human being's "spiritual" existence as the being that *realizes* this existence, or the truth of spirit, by sacrificing itself.

The cancellation or annulment of time, qua history, which takes place in absolute knowing, means nothing less than the annulment of world as such. This is not merely the most extreme or "purest" sacrifice; it is, ultimately—and this is the point—the very notion or *concept* of sacrifice, or the point wherein sacrifice *becomes thought*, and thought realizes or perfects itself as that which it always already was: the cancellation of world. Insofar as time as much as world, as one-sided shapes through which spirit realizes itself, are ravaged by their own otherness, by spirit's relation to its other—which relation, in the act of sacrifice, realizes itself as an *immanent* or *internal* otherness, the otherness of spirit to *itself*—one might hazard the Hegelian formula that world as much as history "are" inasmuch as they are ravaged by a literally *spirit-ual* negativity that, outside the moment of absolute knowing, remains irreducibly *abstract*. Spirit and its movement, the self-sublation of the other in itself, which is no less spirit's self-sublation in relation to its other, *is* history, its meaning and *existence*. History realizes itself, *is* itself, by annulling itself, the "other" that is its essential condition. Nietzsche perceived this closure of (Christian) history clearly, and diagnosed this annulment as the death of God and the emergence of nihilism.

And yet, as stated above, Nietzsche did not see the death of God and its consequences as the end of history as such, but rather as a turning point and, indeed, a new beginning. For Nietzsche, apparently, "history" meant something other than *Christian* history, or was, as it were, the genus of which Christian history was merely a species. But such a position was only possible inasmuch as he failed to see that the death of God meant nothing other than the *fact of subjectivity*—of the subject that comes to itself precisely in the closure of historical possibility as such. History *just means* the coming to itself of the subject, i.e., for Hegel, the revelation of the (Christian) truth of God in the death of God, or the revelation of the absolute subject, which is nothing less than the completion or end of history as such. Christianity is for this reason not merely one religion among others, one "history"

among others—still less is it the result of the contingencies of racial and psychological power, which would suggest (and Nietzsche says as much) that it could be overcome and replaced through a radical and *willed* alteration of such power; on the contrary, Christianity, as that which culminates in the revelation of the truth of the relation between God and humanity—or, again, in the fact of subjectivity—is for this reason absolutely singular, and indeed *singularity as such*.[20]

The negativity—which Hegel calls "subject"—that collapses or sublates the difference between spirit and its other, the human and God, does not merely ravage the world and history, but defines them. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, being means, initially, the immediacy of substance, or the other of spirit (of subject), which develops of itself into the world and history, time; with absolute knowing, substance or the other *comes to itself*, and in coming to itself, in and through its relation to subject, sacrifices itself in a way that is final. This finality is not only the sacrifice of being, but the sacrifice of sacrifice itself—of finite and historical spirit that ultimately coincides with religion as a form of finite or one-sided consciousness. Being qua world as much as qua history, time, are, in themselves, sublated, and the true significance of being is revealed in its *absolute coincidence* with the subject of knowledge.

In the sacrifice of sacrifice, this subject, or knowing itself, becomes the ultimate meaning of sacrifice, and a *philosophical concept of sacrifice first becomes both possible and necessary*. In being itself defined as sacrifice, the subject *thinks* sacrifice, itself *as* absolute sacrifice. The result of the *concept* of sacrifice, the "becoming-thought" of sacrifice, is nothing less than the *reflection* of sacrifice into itself, its own destruction, or becoming-other to itself: everything that has been experienced or suffered to be sacrifice, historically, in relation to an *indeterminate* "other"—to an other that is not the otherness to itself of this very experience and suffering—is annulled, exposed as abstract. Being, as the essential historical experience of sacrifice in relation to the gods, now means, from the standpoint of absolute knowing, the sacrifice of itself, of its substantial and historical content, for the sake of itself as that which has transcended history, and therefore religion, absolutely: *absolute* sacrifice.

There are at least three senses in which absolute knowing can be said not only to be exemplary of sacrifice, but to expose the fact that the subject of knowledge, which is *irreducible*, means, as such, sacrifice. The subject of absolute knowing means the sacrifice

(1) of world history and time itself in the absolute self-relation of knowing;[21]
(2) of phenomenology, qua scientific method, and with it the standpoint of such a method or way, i.e., *consciousness*, in their sublation into pure thinking or "logic";[22] and
(3) of knowledge itself, in its absolving itself of the totality of the merely finite content of consciousness, of the content "in itself" of every moment of the other-inflected development of knowing.[23]

In general, these aspects of the sacrifice that constitutes absolute knowing all indicate in the first place and literally the sacrifice of a *religious way of being*. Insofar as consciousness is historical, it relates to an "other" that it considers *irreducible*—which other, whatever other name it comes to possess, always *means* "God". The term "way" (in our formula "the sacrifice of a religious way of being") must be understood here in accordance with three distinct yet identical sacrifices made in and through absolute knowing: religion is sacrificed (1) as a *mode* of being, namely, as history; (2) as a *method* of being, or phenomenology, the science of mere experience; and (3) as a *path* of and to knowledge, or the anguish of religious consciousness and desire. Thus, to translate:

(1) the sacrifice of history as a(n intrinsically) religious mode of being indicates that being qua temporal, i.e., historical being (in relation to the gods, to the other) has ended itself, has at the moment of its self-cancellation raised itself up to a higher, other-less, and *godless* mode of being; or, to be more precise, to a mode of being in which the subject of knowledge and desire is *itself* its own otherness;
(2) the sacrifice of phenomenology, or of a finite standpoint in general, as a method of being—insofar as such can be defined as that standpoint and development of knowl-

edge that always has its object "before it", as something minimally external to its knowledge, something irreducibly other that escapes (at the same time that it compels) its knowing grasp—indicates that being or substance, insofar as it is an object of knowledge for the subject (up to and including the ultimate "object", i.e., the divine being), has become *the same* as subject, or in other words: that the object of spirit is now unconditionally and only itself, i.e., thought thinking itself. Phenomenology—as that which preserves what "appears" in its allegedly rich depths and mysterious (unthinkable) origin (i.e., what appears is always simply *given*)—is an intrinsically religious approach to being, irreducibly dependent upon the interpretation or "indications" of being, which must inevitably be approached as the "other" that *gives* itself; with the sacrifice of phenomenology in and through itself, the method of thought as such becomes absolutely philosophical, i.e., logical, scientific, and *radically* irreligious;

(3) the sacrifice of knowing, insofar as spirit has always known merely "historically" and therefore "religiously", as the sacrifice of the collection of distinct and "positive" moments of consciousness's path toward its object—which distinction in and for each moment, considered in isolation or "in themselves", was at every point religiously "eternalized" or "hypostasized" (reified into an idol)—is the sacrifice of the *abstraction* that defines such moments, such idols, occupied in themselves and taken to be "the truth"; in the sacrifice of their abstraction or idolatrous being in themselves, what comes to the fore are these moments in the *truth* of their being, namely, as the mere *gallery images* of spirit's *determinate* existence, as having come to know itself in time by doing away with or overcoming every idol, every form of fixed otherness, or otherness—the "divine"—"in itself".

What this brief taxonomy is intended to demonstrate is how the final moment of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, i.e., absolute knowing, accomplishes the *absolute sacrifice* of the intrinsically religious existence of merely historical humanity to and for the philosophical, i.e., *scientific* truth of this existence, namely, its being as subjectivity. The beginning of the *Science of Logic*, wherein the "result" of absolute knowing is "presupposed,"[24] therefore marks the beginning and *actuality* of *philosophy*, which is no longer the mere "love of wisdom", or a pagan (or Christian) reverence for the gods, but "wisdom" or knowledge—science—itself: the revelation of the *certainty* of the truth of the relation between humanity and its other.

And yet such certainty by no means indicates, as should be evident at this point, the mere annihilation of the other or, for this reason, the sterility of desire. Being in its *determinate truth* is as much the *aim* or "desire" as it is the presupposition or "certainty" of the *Logic*; and in the first place (at the beginning of science), being means the pure emptiness or *nothing* of pure *thought*, or the emptiness of a knowledge that has sacrificed the totality of its substantial content—all of which depended upon the subject's relation to an abstract other—and, in this sacrifice, become absolutely free. Because thinking has shown itself to be, and indeed *is*, nothing other than its own sacrifice, its own *self-emptying*, thinking has become its own other—namely, being itself, or indeed God *in himself*, prior even to his act of Creation[25] —and for this reason *moves itself*, not in relation to the abstract other of history but, like God himself, *freely* or solely on the basis of its *own* negativity, which has become in and for itself: absolute subject. The self-movement of thought—its essential movement with direction in and through itself—has as its "end" nothing other than its own *determinate* freedom, or the point at which it freely realizes or *actualizes* its own otherness, or itself as other, namely: its self-releasement or self-emptying (*kenosis*) into nature. Being comes to itself in the moment in which, qua completed Idea (absolute concept), it releases itself *as and for the sake of (being) itself*, and therefore into its "real" being, or existence, as *sacrificed* in nature and as spirit. Unlike spirit in its historical sojourn, the Idea, or pure thinking, *freely* sacrifices itself, empties itself of its own nothingness (being), and in this negation of negation, thinking, which is the same as being, externalizes and therefore realizes itself in the "real" domains of nature and spirit.

This is the philosophical or scientific truth of what religion, as Hegel put it, merely pictured to itself, dramatized, as the Incarnation of God: the subject of knowing and desire consists in the going-beyond of its mere being "in itself", in order to achieve its being in *and for itself*, its existence *as* the free sacrifice of itself and the *knowledge of itself as this sacrifice*, which transfigures its death into the very meaning of freedom. Freedom—which is to say, the freedom to know and to desire, i.e., to actualize the *truth* of oneself, and indeed of selfhood as such—therefore coincides with the sacrifice of the subject as it exists, qua sacrifice or externalization of itself, in nature and as a finite spirit, insofar as these *are it*. The subject is the concrete or *determinate* existence of nature *as* spirit, which realizes nature as both history and its sublation.

To sacrifice oneself in this way, to make absolute sacrifice the very "meaning of being", is to sacrifice the abstract and "fixed" other of a merely finite knowing and desire—wherein the subject remains equally abstract and fixed, *objectified*—in order to unconditionally affirm the loss and the discovery of oneself through the other that one is *to oneself*, or what might also simply be called love. Only a being that is essentially other to itself, that finds itself only in its "dismemberment"[26], in and through such otherness, is capable of love.

In the Incarnation, God dismembers himself in and for himself, which is to say, in and through the other(ness) of himself. In sacrificing himself in and through the other, by *becoming other to himself*, God realizes himself as perfect love: as subject. Such love, or subjectivity, essentially consists, as stated, in the movement of loss and discovery, "crucifixion" and "resurrection", or the realization of the truth of oneself only in such movement. In realizing oneself in and through the loss of oneself, one *becomes who one is*.

In Christianity, God "becomes" himself principally in two acts: Creation and Incarnation. What Hegel shows is that, from the standpoint of philosophy or science, Creation and Incarnation, because they constitute God as *subject*, are *logically* the same act, the same realization of the truth of the subject as love, or as that *existence* which, in and through its being "dismembered" by its relation to its other, finds its truth.

The act of Creation for this reason already implies the death of God, or his dismemberment and sacrifice at the hands of humanity, insofar as Creation already consists in God's going beyond or outside himself *irreversibly.* Creation already reveals God's being *as sacrifice*. Consequently, God's creation of the world, "of nature and of a finite spirit,"[27] is already his Incarnation, the revelation of his being as perfect love: his desire to be himself *solely* in and for the other, or by becoming other to himself. Creation is already God's eternal going-beyond of Godself in and for the world, his eternal *affirmation* of himself in and through his dismembering involvement in the world, or, in other words: his ultimate sacrifice.

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Notes

[1] See: e.g., Hegel (1977b, p. 492). For Hegel, *kenosis* means, philosophically or logically, the self-emptying of the absolute; or, more technically stated, the absolutely negative movement through which the subject sacrifices its immediate self (cf. note following, below) and, in negating this loss, realizes or becomes *itself*, becomes "actual", as this loss constitutes its very self-consciousness. *Kenosis*, as this determinate negation of the "pure" (abstract) subject, is for this reason the very logic of the concrete self, insofar as self means, ultimately, absolute self-consciousness. As such, the logic of *kenosis*—the historical formulation of which is the death of God (God's own becoming-self-conscious, or God's realizing the truth of himself in time, in the historical negation of himself)—is for Hegel "thought's essential requirement", because it is, indeed, "the truth of human subjectivity". Which is no less under the requirement to come about or become itself historically. See Malabou (2005, pp. 105, 103). See pp. 103–14 of this volume for a comprehensive reading of the "death of God" in Hegel, which treats this topic as it appears throughout Hegel's *corpus*, and with which reading the present essay substantively concurs. For a recent volume on the significance of Hegel's interpretation of the Incarnation—which volume treats the Hegelian death of God both on its own terms and in terms of its continued and paramount relevance for philosophy, and which moreover, in the author's opinion, summarizes the contemporary stakes of Hegel's interpretation of Christianity *in toto*—see the remarkable "dialogue" between Slavoj Žižek and John Milbank

The Monstrosity of Christ: Paradox or Dialectic? (Žižek and Milbank 2009). Even as it remains the case that both authors certainly reveal their own, as it were, "extra-Hegelian" prejudices, what makes this volume decisive is already revealed in its subtitle; and as we shall, it is through this very difference—namely, between dialectical and paradoxical logics—that the stakes of Hegel's theory of the subject, and therefore of the relation between knowledge and truth, become evident in our post-Nietzschean (and post-Kierkegaardian) era.

2 See Hegel (1977b, p. 484): "[The] Notion is the Self that is for itself. . . . [The] Self accomplishes the life of absolute Spirit. This shape is, as we have seen, that simple Notion which, however, surrenders its eternal *essence*, it *is there* [in the real world], or it acts. The self-sundering or stepping-forth into existence stems from the purity of the Notion, for this is absolute abstraction or negativity". In absolute knowing, self and being coincide absolutely in the "Notion", which coincidence "accomplishes the life of absolute Spirit"; being reveals itself to have the structure of self—and vice versa—and is *for this reason* absolute, concrete, *living*. As this passage demonstrates, the logic of the absolute, of the negative coincidence of self and being, is *kenotic* or, what is the same for Hegel, *incarnational*, which is to say: in this negative coincidence, the absolute empties itself of itself, or cancels (sublates) its mere being-in-itself, in order to *become what it is*, i.e., to exist, to "be there", as itself (to become, therefore, "in and for itself"). In other words, its concrete being-as-self is to sublate its abstraction or "purity", which is for Hegel the real significance of the *kenotic* logic of God's Incarnation in Christ: the pure in-itself of being surrenders or sunders itself, i.e., *sacrifices* itself, in order to be it*self*, to become what it is: actual and determinate being, i.e., *subject*, being that is in *and for* itself: self-consciousness. Cf. Malabou (2005, p. 107): "[Substance] completes itself as self-consciousness . . . This development *is* precisely the speculative meaning of *kenosis*".

3 Nietzsche (2017a, p. 122 (III.27)). Emphasis is original here and elsewhere unless otherwise noted.

4 (Hegel 1977b, p. 476). A half-decade earlier, Hegel had famously described this "innermost simple self-knowledge" in terms of the "speculative Good Friday", i.e., the death of God comprehended *logically*, beyond its mere historical occurrence, and thus "speculatively re-established in the whole truth and harshness of its God-forsakenness". The "highest totality"—or what Hegel in the *Phenomenology* calls the "inbreathing of the Spirit, whereby Substance becomes Subject . . . and Substance therefore has become *actual*"—"can and must achieve", Hegel writes in his 1802 essay *Faith and Knowledge*, "its resurrection solely from this harsh consciousness of loss, encompassing everything, and ascending in all its earnestness and out of its deepest ground to the most serene freedom of its shape". The *logical* truth of the death of God, or the speculative Good Friday, because it is the simple expression of subjectivity ("I"="I"), is the loss of substance and being, out of and within which substance has become subject, i.e., *actual in and through this loss*. See Hegel (1977a, pp. 190–91). See just below for the above citations from the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

5 See Hegel (2007, p. 3): "There is simply no out-and-out Other for spirit".

6 Hegel (1977b, p. 476).

7 Nietzsche (2006b, p. 59).

8 The logic is here as Nietzschean as it is Hegelian, and in the same way that Hegelian atheism must be carefully defined, so must Nietzschean atheism be separated absolutely from what we usually understand by this term. For neither thinker does God now simply "not exist". Rather, God, who—leaving aside the inadequate (impoverished and finite, as Hegel says) predicate of existence—*held sway*, possessed authority and truth, *was himself* the source of *all* authority and all truth, the fountainhead of all meaning—: this God *has died*, or more specifically, has been killed, sacrificed. But this sacrifice or death of God is for both thinkers (albeit in different ways and for different reasons) immediately and at the same time the death of man, indeed, the end of man's whole meaning. Nietzsche's famous parable, of the madman who announces to the *atheists* of the present (he is very clear on this point) the "event" of the death of God, is unique in its description of this logic, this consequence, and remains paradigmatic for the crucial Nietzschean difference between the godlessness of the madman (and of Nietzsche himself) and the mere atheism that defines the last man (for why, one might think to ask, would people "who did not believe in God", as Nietzsche writes, need to be told that *God is dead*?). As usual, Bataille is a most perceptive guide: "This sacrifice [of God] *that we consummate* is distinguished from others in this way: the one who sacrifices is himself touched by the blow that he strikes, he succumbs and is lost with his victim". This is why, for Bataille, the madman screams with "cries of blood", which coincide with the tears of blood shed by God in his own anguish, namely, because in "seeking" God and suffering his death, his absence, his sacrifice as his own, he identifies himself with God, he *is God*: "What God himself does with an absent simplicity (in which only the madman grasps that he has time to weep), this madman does with cries of impotence. And these cries, this unleased madness in the end, what are they if not the blood of a sacrifice in which, as in the old tragedies, the whole stage, when the curtain falls, is strewn with the dead? . . . It is when I collapse that I leap. At this moment: everything up to the plausibility of the world dissipates. It was necessary, in the end, to see everything with lifeless eyes, to become God, otherwise we would not know what it is to sink, to no longer know anything. For a long time Nietzsche held himself on the incline. When it was time for him to yield, when he understood that the preparations for the sacrifice were finished, he could only say gaily: I am, myself, Dionysus, etc." For Bataille, the fact that God dies, that we kill him, that we *sacrifice* him, and in sacrificing him identify ourselves with him in the anguish of the divine nothingness ("I *am* Dionysus, the Crucified, etc."), distinguishes Nietzsche's doctrine of the death of God from mere atheism—the proposition that God does not exist, or rather that the question is irrelevant, that one no longer even grasps or feels the question—in such a way that the difference can be grasped only on the basis of a suffering born from an identification with God, an intimacy so extreme that one suffers God's death, which is the death of the world as such, in and for oneself: "Once again: the atheist is satisfied with a world complete without God, this practitioner of sacrifice is, on the contrary, in anguish before an unfinished, unfinishable world, forever unintelligible, which destroys him, tears him apart

(and this world destroys itself, tears itself apart)". The difference between mere atheism—the belief or assertion that God does not exist—and the sacrifice or death of God remains the difference between a displaced belief (onto science, reason, political progress, family, humanity, etc.) that continues to guarantee what Nietzsche called the last man's "wretched contentment", and the bitter awareness that with the sacrifice of God, man himself and the totality of his knowledge become nothing—his science and his values worthless, the world forever unintelligible, tearing itself apart *in him*. The atheist is not the madman who has grasped the gravity of humanity's fateful deed (which has "unchained the earth from its sun"), or Nietzsche himself, but those to whom the madman brings tidings of which they know not and *could not have known*, since they are "satisfied with a world complete without God": any one of those in the crowd around him who laugh at, who mock, the man "seeking God". The atheist is incapable of seeking, of belief as such, not primarily because he believes in something else (though he inevitably does, if only by default), but because he no longer understands *what it means to believe for oneself at all*, that is, to *think* at all (as Heidegger provocatively remarks in connection with Nietzsche's famous parable). And yet seeking, belief, and indeed the suffering born of such, are requisite for what alone can "redeem humanity", namely, the new breed of man who discovers himself capable of creation. Besides the famous phrases concerning the "invention" of stars, happiness, love, by the last man—which signals the last man's incapacity to believe in or *be grasped by* anything that he does not himself invent, understand, secure for himself, with his enlightened contentment—Zarathustra has this to say to the "people of the present", to contemporary unbelievers, or rather, to those who have no *right* to their "atheism" because they have *no idea what belief and unbelief mean*, and therefore no idea what it means to be capable of creation: "For you speak thus: 'We are real entirely, and without beliefs and superstitions'. Thus you stick out your chests—alas, even without chests! Indeed, how should you be *capable* of believing, you color-splattered ones—you who are paintings of everything that has ever been believed! Rambling refutations of belief itself are you, and the limb-fracturing of every thought. *Unbelievable* [or otherwise translated, *Unworthy of belief*] is what *I* call you, you so-called real ones! All ages prattle against each other in your minds; and the dreams and prattling of all ages were more real than even your waking is! You are sterile: *therefore* you lack beliefs. But whoever had to create also always had his prophetic dreams and astrological signs—and believed in believing!" See Nietzsche (2006b, p. 94). For our citations of Bataille, see Bataille (2014, p. 153). For Nietzsche's famous parable, see Nietzsche (2001, pp. 119–20).

9 Nietzsche (2017b, p. 586).

10 Kierkegaard (2009, p. 111).

11 Nietzsche (2017a, pp. 121–22 (III.27)).

12 Nietzsche (2002, p. 5).

13 Nietzsche (2017a, p. 122 (III.27)). Cf. Nietzsche (2002, p. 50): "[During] the moral epoch of humanity, people sacrificed the strongest instincts they had, their 'nature,' to their god; the joy of *this* particular festival shines in the cruel eyes of the ascetic, that enthusiastic piece of 'anti-nature'. Finally: what was left to be sacrificed? In the end, didn't people have to sacrifice all comfort and hope, everything holy or healing, any faith in a hidden harmony or a future filled with justice and bliss? Didn't people have to sacrifice God himself and worship rocks, stupidity, gravity, fate, or nothingness out of sheer cruelty to themselves? To sacrifice God for nothingness—that paradoxical mystery of the final cruelty has been reserved for the race that is now approaching: by now we all know something about this".

14 Derrida (2008, pp. 7–8).

15 Nietzsche (2006a, p. 31), translation slightly modified. Emphasis is both added and original.

16 Kierkegaard (2009, pp. 117, 119, 120).

17 Merely raising this question already reduces the significance of the difference between truth and falsity to the question of its usefulness for life, or more specifically, of the capacity of a judgment to "promote", "preserve", and "cultivate" a certain "type" of life. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche writes: "We do not consider the falsity of a judgment as itself an objection to a judgment; this is perhaps where our new language will sound most foreign. The question is how far the judgment promotes and preserves life, how well it preserves, and perhaps even cultivates, the type". See Nietzsche (2002, p. 7).

18 Derrida (2008, p. 116).

19 See Derrida (2001, p. 318): "And if Bataille considered himself closer to Nietzsche than anyone else, than to anyone else, to the point of identification with him, it was not, in this case, as a motive for simplification [and here Derrida cites Bataille's *L'experience intérieure*]: Nietzsche knew of Hegel only the usual vulgarization. The *Genealogy of morals* is the singular proof of the state of general ignorance in which remained, and remains today, the dialectic of the master and the slave, whose lucidity is blinding. . . . no one knows anything of him*self* if he has not grasped this movement which determines and limits the successive possibilities of man".

20 Cf. Derrida (2008, p. 4): "On the contrary, it seems necessary to reinforce the coherence of a way of thinking that takes into account the event of Christian mystery as an absolute singularity, a religion par excellence and an irreducible condition for a joint history of the subject, responsibility, and Europe".

21 See Hegel (1977b, p. 487): "Time is the Notion itself that *is there* and which presents itself to consciousness as empty intuition; for this reason, Spirit necessarily appears in Time, and it appears in Time just so long as it has not *grasped* its pure Notion, i.e., has not annulled Time. It is the *outer*, intuited pure Self which is *not grasped* by the Self, the merely intuited Notion; when this latter grasps itself it sets aside its Time-form, comprehends this intuiting, and is a comprehended and comprehending intuiting. Time,

therefore, appears as the destiny and necessity of Spirit that is not yet complete within itself, the necessity to enrich the share which self-consciousness has in consciousness, to set in motion the *immediacy of the in-itself*, which is the form in which substance is present in consciousness; or conversely, to realize and reveal what is at first only *inward* (the in-itself being taken as what is *inward*), i.e., to vindicate it for Spirit's certainty of itself".

[22] See Hegel (2010, p. 50): "... pure being is to be considered as the unity into which knowledge has collapsed when at the highest point of union with its objectification [i.e., in "absolute knowing"], knowledge has then disappeared into this unity, leaving behind no distinction from it and hence no determination for it". Cf. p. 47: "In the said treatise [i.e., the *Phenomenology*], immediate consciousness is also that which in the science comes first and immediately and is therefore a presupposition; but in logic the presupposition is what has proved itself to be the result of that preceding consideration, namely the idea as pure knowledge. *Logic* is the *pure science*, that is, pure knowledge in the full compass of its development. But in that result the idea has the determination of a certainty that has become truth; it is a certainty which, on the one hand, no longer stands over and against a subject matter confronting it externally but has interiorized it, is knowingly aware that the subject matter is itself; and, on the other hand, has relinquished any knowledge of itself that would oppose it to objectivity and would reduce the latter to a nothing; it has externalized this subjectivity and is at one with its externalization". Cf. pp. 28–29. See also Hegel (1977b, p. 491), where the "phenomenology of Spirit" and "Science" are distinguished precisely in the fact that the latter "does not contain this difference [of knowledge and Truth, i.e., of consciousness and objectivity] and the cancelling of it"; Science is the "pure Notion" "freed from its appearance in consciousness"; and "This release of itself from the form of its Self is the supreme freedom and assurance of its self-knowledge". Cf. p. 493: Phenomenology, in contrast to Science proper, "is the Science of Knowing in the sphere of appearance".

[23] See Hegel (1977b, p. 493): "The *goal* [of the science of phenomenology], Absolute Knowing, or Spirit that knows itself as Spirit, has for its path the recollection of the Spirits [i.e., shapes of consciousness] as they are in themselves and as they accomplish the organization of their realm. Their preservation, regarded from the side of their free appearing in the form of contingency, is History; but regarded from the side of their [scientifically] comprehended organization, it is the Science of Knowing [merely] in the sphere of appearance [i.e., phenomenology] ...".

[24] Hegel (2010, p. 47).

[25] See Hegel (2010, p. 29).

[26] Hegel (1977b, p. 19).

[27] Hegel (2010, p. 29).

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