

Chapter One

THE 1821 CONCEPT OF RELIGION

Introduction

Hegel commences his philosophical conceptualization of religion by identifying God as the *object* of his thought. Because philosophy and theology have this object of thought in common, they also share a certain reflective tone insofar as both philosophy and theology have as their aim and purpose to explicate knowledge of God. Indeed, both Hegel's philosophy and theology do not attempt to entice their audience into religious feeling or to convert them to a certain belief system. Therefore, in the Introduction to the 1821 manuscript, *Concept of Religion*, Hegel deliberately and self-consciously states:

First of all, the most definite consciousness regarding our aim must [be] this: that the religion present and presupposed in everyone is the stuff we merely want to comprehend. It is not [for us to] seek to produce this foundation; rather this is what must be explicitly present in everyone. <It is not a question of bringing something substantially new and alien into humanity.> That would be like trying to introduce spirit into a dog by letting it see spiritual creations, or eat witty remarks, or chew on printed matter; or like trying to make a blind person see by talking to that person about colours. Those who have never enlarged their hearts <beyond the bustle of finite life,> or looked into the

pure aether of the soul with enjoyment, who have not felt the joy and peace of the eternal, <even if only dimly in the form of yearning,> do not possess the stuff that we here speak of. They may perhaps have an image of it, but the content is not their own thing; it is an alien matter they are wrestling with.¹

In this passage, it is clear that Hegel is emphasizing the importance of having religious experience as the phenomenological ground for—and to help flesh out—the philosophy of religion. Religious experience must be the starting point of a philosophical discussion of religion;² but, at the same time, it is also clear that Hegel wants to keep philosophical conceptualization of religion distinct from religion and religious experience. In effect, philosophy, in its speculative mode of mirroring, has no need to existentially recreate within itself the subjective content of religion. Thus, in formulating the *Concept of Religion*, speculative philosophy *presupposes* this content; it will acknowledge that the knowledge of God can originate only in the sphere of religious consciousness. Furthermore, philosophy will recognize that the immediacy of feeling originating within religious consciousness is mediated first by reflection, and second, this reflection on religion is itself mediated by the conceptual thinking of philosophy.

Important, then, philosophical conceptualization for Hegel means a difference in *form*. However, at the same time, it is the main concern of his speculative philosophy to have the form of the concept match the content of the religious dimension of human awareness. The difficulty inherent in this speculative task is far more important than whether individual human subjects *continually feel* the truth of religion in their lives—an issue we will see Hegel directly confront in relation to Pietism in the 1827 lectures. Religious feeling, and the devotion arising out of it, may be the originary moments that allow for the possibility for the reflective thinking about God of both theology and philosophy, but both philosophy and theology extend far beyond this primary upsurge of feeling in their discursiveness. Nevertheless, it is important for us to note that Hegel contends that the worship that was once solely heart-felt adoration of God need not be considered as totally separate from thought about God. Indeed, *intellectual worship*, that is, the contemplation of God, is the continuation and transformation of what was originally felt in the medium of systematic thinking:

For religion, in which God is for consciousness initially an external object—because we must first be taught what God is and how he has revealed himself and still does—occupies itself, it is true, with the interior, moves and inspires the community. Still the interiority of devotion limited to emotion and representation is not the highest form of interiority. It is self-determining *thinking* which has to be recognized as this purest form of knowing. It is in this that science brings the same content to consciousness and thus becomes that spiritual worship which, by systematic thinking, appropriates and comprehends what is otherwise only the content of subjective sentiment or representation.³

Thus, what was originally ‘interior’ (e.g., my particular feeling of God) becomes even more internalized by being lifted up into ‘self-determining thinking’ without losing its sense of adoration. This is possible because, as we discussed in the Introduction, religion is a complete modality of human being, embracing both feeling and thought, although in the form of representation. Philosophy, then, when it reflects on religious consciousness, retains its content while placing this content into the self-enclosed embrace of self-consciousness. This means that the worship originating in feeling and expressed in representation is now an internal determination of self-consciousness and is appreciated as such. Ultimately, as we shall see in Chapter Four, this interiority of speculative thinking’s comprehension of ‘subjective sentiments and representations’ becomes the ‘witness of Spirit’, a religious representation itself lifted up and transfigured by philosophy.

It is important for our present discussion to recognize that it is also possible that just as religious feeling and faith fade and are either forgotten or renewed in feeling or in thought or in both, thought and contemplation of God may allow faith to evaporate as unimportant and inessential to activity. Therefore, intellectual worship achieves its thought-filled ‘adoration’ of God only when it holds its thought of God within itself by articulating its knowledge of God to itself. Thus, as articulation of what is “held within,” intellectual worship reaches its consummation in a philosophy of religion that is both self-conscious and conscious of the knowledge of God that has been expressed in religion through ritual and doctrine.

For the most part, theology would agree with Hegel. Hegel’s task is to articulate conceptually what is already experienced in reli-

gion and, therefore, self-consciously construct this articulation into a philosophy of religion. Although theology does not emphasize conceptualization in the philosophically self-conscious sense that we find in Hegel's speculative philosophy, it does attempt to articulate a certain understanding of Christian religious experience.

Articulation in both the philosophical sense of Hegel and the theological sense predominant in Christianity should be distinguished from religious articulation that attempts to *edify*. Religious articulation that attempts to edify its readers has to be *indirect*, employing a hermeneutic that takes into account the reader-text relationship. In edifying works, like Kierkegaard's pseudonymous writings, for example, the author does not simply present 'truth'. Rather, the author forges a style and tone that will induce the reader into an existential encounter with the text. On the other hand, Christian theology and Hegel's philosophy of religion are more concerned with displaying a cogent, systematic picture of their subject matter. Therefore, the tension between the style and tone of writing and the reader inherent in a work of edification is not a concern for the theologian or for Hegel.

Paul Tillich summed up the purpose of Christian theology in this way: "Theology, as a function of the Christian church, must serve the needs of the church. A theological system is supposed to satisfy two basic needs: the statement of the truth of the Christian message and the interpretation of this truth for every new generation."⁴

For Hegel, the relation of philosophical conceptualization of religion to the religious feeling of the individual subject is to be comprehended in a similar manner:

It may happen that religion is awakened in the soul through the philosophical cognition of it, and that religious feeling arise in a person thus; but this is not necessary, and it is not itself the aim of philosophy—<not what is called edification, which is the aim of preaching, directed to the heart, to the singularity of the subject, as this one person>. Philosophy does, of course, have to develop and represent the necessity of religion in and for itself, to comprehend that spirit advances and must advance from the other modes of its willing, imagining, and feeling to this its absolute mode. <[Its] necessity [is] that it is the destiny and the truth of spirit.> But it is a different task to raise the individual subject to this height.⁵

As we can see, Hegel's tone is the same as that of theology insofar as he, too, will present eternal truth directly, but in *philosophical form*. However, unlike theology and in keeping with the main motif of Enlightenment thinkers like Spinoza and Kant, Hegel delineates the difference between his mode of reflection and religious thinking. Indeed, Hegel asserts, his philosophical stance is that of reason, but unlike the Enlightenment philosophies and theologians in general, his use of reason is comprehensive reason [*Vernunft*] and as such, grasps religion as total unity unto itself. In this way, Hegel does not set reason over and against faith.

Moreover, as we noted in the Introduction, in this region or modality of human consciousness, we find that all thinking is grounded in and centered around thought about God. Hence, God is the horizon of meaning in which *all* world-views, not just the Christian world-view, are constructed. Hence, against the backdrop of this absolute horizon, the self enters into the existential modality of worship and passes over its finitude, finding “eternal rest” in a “perpetual Sunday”: “In this intuition and feeling, we are not concerned with ourselves, our vanity, our pride of knowledge and of conduct, but with only the content of it—proclaiming the honour of God and manifesting his glory.”⁶

By focusing the attention of the finite human subject away from the concerns and cares about self in the everyday world, consciousness of God engenders a relation of the finite human subject with an object present to human consciousness as infinite and divine or absolutely “Other”; that is, a transcendent, objectively real and eternal being, whose presence is made known to us but whose ways are ultimately inscrutable. (As such, in no way can this ‘Other’ be confused with the world or with other human beings or creatures.) Insofar as this relation appears *within* the awareness of the finite human subject, it presents itself to the human subject as the copresencing of the human subject with the absolute Other. This awareness is the core event on which *all* human religions are grounded. As we will see presently, Hegel treats the experiential aspect of this relation in terms of ‘religious sensibility’ (*Empfindung*) and ‘devotion’ (*Andacht*).

The Inner Dialectic of the Religious Relationship

What we have just described—the primogenial awareness of the absolute Other, or God, within human subjectivity—is similar to

what Rudolph Otto, a century after Hegel, describes as *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*: “The feeling of it may at times come sweeping like a gentle tide, pervading the mind with a tranquil mood of deepest worship. It may pass over into a more set and lasting attitude, continuing, as it were, thrillingly vibrant and resonant, until at last it dies away and the soul resumes its ‘profane’, nonreligious mood of everyday experience.”⁷ Indeed, both Otto and Hegel agree that this primogenial awareness of God is the source and center of all religion; but, as we will detail in Chapter Five, Christianity gains its special status as consummate religion, for Hegel, because it is the only religion that understands this relationship as a dialectical relationship, first present in the person of Christ, and then articulated in the community through doctrine and ritual.

In the section “The Concept of Religion in General,” Hegel is interested in articulating only the formal structures of this dialectical relationship. He does so by observing that when we are “considering...religion itself...we immediately encounter these two moments (α) the *object* [that is] *in* religion, and (β) consciousness, i.e., *the subject*, the human that comports itself toward that object, religious sensibility, intuition, etc.”⁸

Of course, one could take a number of alternative paths in relation to these two ‘moments’ or sides of religion. The first path, Hegel observes, is to “treat merely the objects as such, God” and ignore or forget the subject side as did Enlightenment natural theology.⁹ Indeed, it is this one-sidedness of Enlightenment natural theology that makes it unspiritual and ultimately unsuitable as a model for the philosophy of religion. The second path possible is “to consider and comprehend religion *only* as something *subjective*.”¹⁰ This “equally one-sided” path does “not arrive at a destination” because it only directs its thinking “toward God” but never arrives at knowledge of God, knowledge which is possible when God is contemplated as an object of consciousness.¹¹ For Hegel, then, the best possible path to take is that which recognizes that the two sides are united together in a dialectical relationship that is the ‘totality of religion’ and this two-sided path is the path to be undertaken in this philosophy of religion. Therefore, Hegel defines the concept of religion in such a way as to directly mirror both sides: “religion [is] the consciousness of *the true* in and for itself.”¹² The one side is the human side, ‘consciousness’, which has as its object, God, who is ‘the true in and for itself’ and the other side, of course, is God “the

absolutely self-determining true.”¹³ In this way, this definition attempts to mirror speculatively the dialectical correlation of the finite human subject and the infinite divine object that takes place in and through religious consciousness.

However, as we will further elaborate in our discussion of the Introduction to the 1824 lectures, the 1824 definition of the concept of religion moves beyond this dialectical phrasing by using *self-consciousness* as its pivotal term. In 1824, Hegel redefines the concept of religion as “*the self-consciousness of absolute spirit.*”¹⁴ The advantage of this formulation is that Hegel, after his dispute with Schleiermacher, no longer sees the need to articulate the two sides of the religious correlation in a strict two-sided symmetry of the subject, ‘consciousness’, and its object, ‘God’. Instead, Hegel will emphasize *self-consciousness itself as all-embracing totality of both these sides*: “Within this its *self-consciousness*, there falls also its *consciousness*, which was previously defined as relationship. Thus in the highest idea, religion is not the affair of the single human being; rather, it is essentially the highest determination of the absolute idea itself.”¹⁵ Important to our present considerations, the 1824 definition of the concept of religion expresses the dialectical relationship of God and human, not in terms of a subject-object relationship, as does the 1821 definition, but in terms of the comprehensive grasp of self-consciousness. As we will see in our discussion in Chapter Three, Spirit is finite, singular human subjectivity raised to the level of inclusive, intersubjective subjectivity inasmuch as nothing can be thought outside the totality of the religious community. As such, Spirit is self-consciousness. Therefore, Hegel elaborates further in the 1824 *Concept of Religion*: “religion is *the self-knowing of divine spirit through the mediation of finite spirit.*”¹⁶ Even though both definitions are speculative insofar as they mirror effectively the relation of subject and object inherent in religion, the 1824 definition will show itself as being more adequate to the philosophical comprehension of religion precisely because the term *self-consciousness* unites within itself both consciousness of God and the self-consciousness of Spirit that comes through the thinking-through of what is contained within the life of the community.

Nevertheless, Hegel’s 1821 manuscript will keep to the dialectical balance articulated in the 1821 definition of the concept of religion as the structure of all the determinations of the *Concept of Religion*.¹⁷ Therefore, we find that, in the section “Distinction Between

External and Internal Necessity,” Hegel shows that the religious standpoint could and has been justified in terms of external factors, for example, in the claim that “religion is useful for the purpose of individuals, governments, and states, etc.,” and, indeed, Hegel notes, “it is quite correct that the purposes and intentions of individuals, governments, and states [gain] subsistence and solidity only when based on religion.”¹⁸ But, such ‘external’ reasoning, Hegel also comments, is not relevant to philosophy and its concerns, for it treats religion only as a “means,” as “something contingent.”¹⁹ Of course, if this is how Spirit uses religion—and “spirit has the freedom of its own aims or purposes”²⁰—then it would be “*hypocrisy*” on the part of Spirit, “for religion should be what exists in and for itself.”²¹ Instead, the *Concept of Religion*, as we have already discerned, *abstracts* from *particular* religious experience as found in the determinate moments of human history. Indeed, as concept, it need only display the *inner* necessity of religion encapsulated within it. Hegel acknowledges this when he writes: “This scientific conception means nothing else than the <portrayal> of the *necessity* of the religious standpoint—and that not as a *conditioned, external* necessity but as an *absolute* necessity. Hence we need to become aware of what spiritual process or movement it is that is advancing in that which is internal [*das Innere*] while it lifts itself up to religion.”²²

Thus, the demonstration of the external necessity of the religious standpoint is in itself superfluous to the overall unfolding of the concept of religion. Indeed, Hegel does not follow up this external demonstration with the expected internal demonstration until Section C, “The Necessity of This Standpoint.”²³ In its place, we find Part Three, “The Religious Relationship as the Unity of Absolute Universality and Absolute Singularity.”²⁴

In Part Three, “The Religious Relationship as the Unity of Absolute Universality and Absolute Singularity,” we can discover Hegel reinforcing the dialectic structure of the 1821 definition of the concept of religion when he identifies ‘absolute universality’ and ‘absolute singularity’ as the two sides of the concept of religion. Religion, Hegel reiterates, is ‘consciousness of the true in and for itself’ but adds that this consciousness stands “opposed to sensible, finite truth, sense perception, <etc.>.”²⁵ Indeed, religious consciousness moves beyond the limits of finite sensibility because it is a “consciousness of the true that has being in and for itself *without limit* and *wholly universally*.”²⁶ Thus, the limitless universality of the reli-

gious object, God, as ‘the true in and for itself’, transforms human consciousness from a natural awareness of things within its immediate sense world into an “*elevation, a rising above, a reflecting on, a passing over* from what is immediate, sensible, singular (for the immediate is what is first and not therefore the elevation); and thus it is a *going out and on to an other.*”²⁷

In these passages, we can see that Hegel is referring to an understanding of consciousness that parallels Husserl’s notion of the intentionality of consciousness with its two-sided structure of consciousness and object. It is also evident in Hegel’s bracketed reference to ‘the immediate’ as ‘what is first’ in the last passage we quoted that there is, prior to religious consciousness, intentionality as a natural two-sided relation between consciousness imbedded within the immediacy of sensible being in the world and the object made thematic by consciousness. As such, Husserl reinforces Hegel’s already developed position that consciousness always and automatically posits an ‘other’ as object for itself in order to be consciousness. Therefore, we can characterize this prior two-sided relation as both natural and immediate; indeed, for Hegel, what consciousness isolates in its thematizing gaze is, as we already indicated in the previous paragraph, some *thing* within its immediate horizon of its natural being in the world. But, this prior activity of consciousness is not yet the dialectical corelation between absolute singularity and absolute universality that will arise within religious consciousness. It is, however, the *precondition* for the conjoining of universality and singularity into a particular unique modality of unification that is the religious relationship.

It follows then that religious consciousness must build on this natural intentionality of immediate, sensible consciousness. However, as the previous quotations suggest, the constitution of religious consciousness occurs through a movement of thought *out* of the confines of immediate consciousness’s natural field of awareness. Although religious consciousness’s inner intentional movement works *within* the two-sided structure of intentionality, its focus is not directed toward a *thing* localized in the world, but toward a thought, that is, the ‘unlimited universal’, the ‘highest’ thought, God. As such, it effectively lifts itself out of the immediacy of being in the world to the level of absolute universality because consciousness and its object are paired and, hence, united elements of thinking. Consciousness and its object are to be understood as united because in this modality,

Hegel observes, "*thought thinks itself*."²⁸ Moreover, Hegel adds, "God and religion exist in and through *thought*—simply and solely in and for thought,"²⁹ suggesting that the *ground* for the unity of the religious relationship is *in thinking* and not in feeling or sensation.

Hegel then continues his description of religious consciousness by identifying "this thinking" as "the foundation, the substantial relation" contained within religious consciousness—a relation that may be modified later by "religious sensation," which could "[take up] this object again and the relationship to it as feeling."³⁰ Moreover, this thinking is not yet "thought in the regular or formal sense"; rather, this activity of thought is *devotion* [*Andacht*].³¹ In this sense, devotion is the preformal, preconceptual thinking or understanding of God. But, with devotion, the two-sided relation implicit in consciousness is refigured into another more explicit shape, the shape of absolute singularity of the finite human subject. Indeed the singularity of the individual human subject becomes pronounced in juxtaposition to the absolute universality of this other (God). Consequently, consciousness, once it elevates itself into thought by thinking the highest thought, is cast back or returns to itself and perceives itself as immediate and singular, as a finite 'self' or 'I': "In religion, I myself am the *relation* of the two sides as thus defined. I the *thinking* subject, and I the *immediate* subject, are one and the same I. And further, the relation of the two sides that are so sharply opposed—<of utterly finite consciousness and being and of the infinite>—is [present] in religion for me."³²

Hence, the devotion that arises as the base of religious consciousness is the thinking of the finite self as the relation of these two utterly disparate sides. At the same time, the internalized *otherness* of absolute universality that is present over and against the finite subject, is overcome by lifting up the self into 'infinite consciousness': "In thinking, I raise myself above all that is finite to the absolute and am *infinite consciousness*, while at the same time I am *finite self-consciousness*, indeed to the full extent of my empirical condition."³³ But, we can further see that the finite human subject's preconceptual holding together of the two sides within itself creates an inner dynamic of tension between these two sides. In essence, the subject experiences a simultaneous internal rupture and consociation:

I am the relation of these two sides; these two extremes are each just me, who connect them. The holding together, the connect-

ing, is itself this conflict of self within the unity, this uniting of self in conflict. In other words, *I am the conflict*, for the conflict is precisely this clash, which is not an indifference of the two <as> distinct but is their bonding together. I am not *one* of the parties caught up in the conflict but am both of the combatant and the conflict itself. I am the fire and water that touch each other, the contact (<now separated and ruptured, now reconciled and united>) and union of what utterly flies apart; and it is just this contact that is itself double clashing relation as relation.³⁴

Thus, the primal religious relation is one in which the human subject is paradoxically pulled in two directions, that is, into the divine and the human, the infinite and the finite, simultaneously, and yet paradoxically, it also pulls together in an embryonic sense of two sides touching in a healing reconciliation.³⁵ Hence, the religious relationship situates the divided self in the interstice between the contradictory poles of the “thinking subject” and the “immediate subject”; of the “finite consciousness and being and of the infinite,” it both unites and separates.³⁶ But, Hegel points out that this paradoxical relation between the finite human self and its absolute other is not yet a relationship of “I as knowing and the known object.” “All distinctions are as yet absent and annulled within it. Everything finite vanishes, everything disappears and is at the time included, in this aether of thought. But this element of the universal is not yet more exactly defined; out of this liquid element and in this transparency nothing has yet taken shape.”³⁷

Yet, because this inner conflict “exists as relation” and as “unity” and, in fact, is the grounding relation and unity of religious consciousness, it is also a ‘unity-in-difference’. As such, it will temper and inform all subsequent construction of relations within religious consciousness, including that of knowledge of God.

Nevertheless, Hegel found himself compelled to spell out the dialectical interaction of the two sides of the religious relationship in terms of its genesis in thinking to help those contemporary philosophers of religion and theologians recollect this fact: “It is one of the gravest and crudest errors of our time that *thought* is not recognized to be element and essential form in all of this, as well as the sole fundamental content.”³⁸ This criticism foreshadows the critiques Hegel will render of Schleiermacher and the Pietists, who, for Hegel, neglect, ignore, or forget the genetic priority of thinking when they

attempt to ground religion and religious consciousness in feeling. But, as this section indicates, Hegel is concerned with both the thinking side and the immediate, feeling side and therefore is concerned with displaying how they dialectically interrelate in the religious life of human being. Thus, because the human being is also a sensing being, Hegel now turns his analysis to showing how devotion feeds back into natural, immediate consciousness and its sensibility [*Empfindung*], thereby forming the first shape of determinacy, *religious sensibility*.

Natural Sensibility and Religious Sensibility

In the 1821 lectures Hegel favors the term *sensibility* [*Empfindung*] over *feeling* [*Gefühl*]. After the publication of Schleiermacher's *The Christian Faith* in 1822, Hegel will prefer *feeling* over *sensibility*. Indeed, Hegel's criticism of what he calls the "theology of feeling" significantly *informs* his *reformulation* of the *Concept of Religion* in 1824. Be that as it may, what is important to our present consideration of the 1821 *Concept of Religion* is that Hegel apparently *ignores* the fine distinction he makes between *sensibility* and *feeling* in the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. In the "Anthropology" (section 402) Hegel writes:

In the usage of ordinary language, sensation [*Empfindung*] and feeling [*Fühlen*] are not clearly distinguished: still we do not speak of the sensation—but of the feeling of right, of self; sensitivity [*Empfindsamkeit*] is connected with sensation [*Empfindung*]: we may therefore say sensation emphasizes rather the side of passivity—of finding [*des Finden*], i.e., the immediacy of mode in feeling—whereas feeling at the same time rather notes the fact that it is *we ourselves* who feel.³⁹

Thus, sensation [*Empfindung*] is passive and receptive, the immediate, precognitive 'consciousness of' the objects of the external world through the senses. But, it is important to note that it is 'consciousness of' in the sense of *discovering* or *finding* "the *individual* and the *contingent*, the immediately given and present."⁴⁰ Indeed, Hegel stresses: "Sensations...are immediate and are found existing."⁴¹

Feeling [*Gefühl*], on the other hand, is the active constituting of self as "inward, individuality"⁴² in immediate relation to the

objects that are given to and found by consciousness in sensation. Therefore, feeling is the primordial activity of consciousness in which it reaches out to touch [*Fühlen*] the world. Sensation is the unorganized receptivity of objects by consciousness; feeling, however, reverses this relationship of consciousness to objects. In other words, where sensation is the vehicle for experience of phenomena not yet synthesized into a unified field of phenomenality, feeling is the synthesizing act by which and through which consciousness derives a single unified meaning from its sensation. In this way, sensation and feeling, as the two sides of the immediate consciousness of the phenomenal world, provide the fundamental experiential horizon in which all subsequent acts of delineation of self and other, subject and object, and so on, by consciousness will take place. As such, Hegel notes:

The feeling individual is the simple ideality, the subjectivity of sensation. What it has to do, therefore, is to raise its substantiality, its merely implicit content, to the character of subjectivity, to take possession of it, to realize its mastery over its own. As feeling, the soul is no longer a merely natural entity, but an inward individuality. The individuality which in the merely substantial totality was only a formal being-for-self has to be liberated and made free.⁴³

In the 1821 philosophy of religion manuscript, Hegel observed that “the animal has sensation and feeling” and, indeed, as a natural awareness of being in the world, sensation and feeling in both natural and rational animals is what allows for immediate relation to a world that is acted on as ordered.⁴⁴ But because devotion [*Andacht*], with its thought of ‘absolute universality’, is also present in human consciousness, as we discussed earlier in this chapter, then “*only human being has religion essentially.*” Human sensibility, thus, is also intertwined with what Hegel calls religious sensibility: “This is the nature of [human] sensibility: it is religious insofar as it possesses a distinctive content and distinctive determinacy, and this determinacy is what was mentioned earlier. [It involves] determinacy as infinite thought of the utterly universal, determinacy as wholly empirical subjectivity, and the speculative relationship of the two of them.”⁴⁵

It is, therefore, apparent that the dialectical interaction of thinking and immediacy already established in devotion permeates

sensibility and places it 'higher' than the natural sensibility found in the animal world. Therefore, Hegel says: "All that raises human beings above the level of animal consciousness is that their sensibility is at the same time knowledge and consciousness. Human beings know themselves while animals know nothing of themselves, and human beings know only of themselves precisely in consciousness, in the withdrawing [*Zürücknehmen*] from the immediate identity with the certainty [of sensation]."46

Hence, religious sensibility differs from natural sensibility inasmuch as the subject-object relation implicit in any form of consciousness becomes known explicitly in human religious consciousness. Through its ability to abstract from its immediate empirical surroundings (for example, to posit absolute universality), human consciousness provides for itself a medium through which this self-knowing can take place. This medium is representation [*Vorstellung*].47 Through representation, human consciousness pictures empirical objects in images [*Bilden*] and presents them to itself. But the representation that arises out of religious sensibility, and that is thus intertwined with devotion, can also picture 'absolute universality', and consequently itself, in simplistic and complex ways. Nevertheless, it is important for us to remember that: "God is *not* the highest sensation but *the highest thought*; even when God is brought down to the level of representation, the *content of this representation still belongs to the realm of thought*."48 Moreover, Hegel says, "Religious sensibility *must advance* to representation and doctrine."49

For our present considerations, it is important for us to realize that religious sensibility and its representations allow for the "negation of my particular, empirical existence."⁵⁰ In essence, representation, through image making and presentation, negates both the 'outer', empirical field of phenomenality and the inner feeling of being an individual existent in the phenomenal world that, as we have just seen, arises through sensibility. In the place of both the negated 'outer' world and the 'inner' feeling of 'being in' (and touching objects in) this world, human consciousness projects its situatedness in the world 'outside' of itself and re-presents itself as an object among other objects outside its individual consciousness. Thus, representation facilitates the movement of consciousness from simple feeling of its active presence in the world into *knowing* its presence in the world as an object for thought. In this way, representation is the means through which the human subject relates to the

phenomenal world in which it is immersed as both a dependent entity and an independent entity. Thus, this negating activity inherent in human consciousness allows religious sensibility to contain within consciousness its empirical form, or what Hegel calls “empirical consciousness”:

Religious sensibility as such itself contains *both* the contrast between the determinacy of empirical self-consciousness and that of universal thought or intuition *and* their relation and unity. Religious sensibility swings back and forth between the determinacy of their antithesis and their unity and satisfaction. In the determinacy of separation together with the fact that the universal is the substantial against which the self-aware empirical consciousness also feels its essential nothingness—indeed that of its still positive <volitional> existence—this representation, this determinacy in general, is the sensation of *fear*.⁵¹

Because consciousness in effect can negate itself through the ‘swinging back and forth’ of religious sensibility between the antithesis (and separation) and unity (and satisfaction) of the ‘universal’ and empirical self-consciousness, the subsequent feeling of ‘essential nothingness’ on the part of the subject generates not only the sensation of fear, of repentance and anguish, but, as furthered, also the sensations of thankfulness, love, blessedness—all sensations that Rudolph Otto identified under his term *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*.⁵²

It is at this juncture that we must point to a crucial difference between Otto’s and Hegel’s descriptions of the genesis of religious consciousness, a crucial difference that will underlie Hegel’s criticism of Schleiermacher. Instead of sweeping the primogenial moments of religious consciousness under the general category of feeling, as do Schleiermacher and Otto, Hegel, as we have just detailed, is careful to show that the initial moment of experience of an absolute other is one that is already thought, which, then, refracts back into the feeling-sensation side of human being. Thus, unlike Schleiermacher and to a lesser degree Otto,⁵³ Hegel sees a human being as a being whose thinking is totally present and incarnate in its sensible experience from the outset.⁵⁴ This means that Hegel can build the concept of religion and its inner structures of spirituality as that which reveals and unfolds itself in thought from its first embod-

ied moment in immediate consciousness of absolute universality to its explicit expression in the philosophy of religion. Therefore, we can already see from Hegel's description of devotion and religious sensibility that religious consciousness itself generates and develops the concept of religion through its own inner determination.

Indeed, Hegel is concerned with affirming the *internal* necessity and validity of the "standpoint" of religious consciousness by demonstrating how it does in fact contain within itself the two sides, whose developing determinations we have detailed thus far. Hegel writes:

Specifically, the religious standpoint contains: (α) The *objective* and *universal*—not in any sort of determinateness (e.g., a species or right), nor [as] a universal ([such as] will or freedom as universals). [What it contains is] rather *the* utterly unlimited universal or concrete that encompasses utterly everything within itself—the natural and spiritual world in its full expanse and in the endless articulation of its actuality (β) The *subjective*—likewise in the full expanse of its self-consciousness (γ) The two sides are totalities only because and to the extent that each has incorporated the other within itself implicitly. The objective totality includes also the spiritual world, which [takes shape] by incorporating and subsuming the [natural] world in its imagining and thinking. For subjective consciousness shapes and deepens itself within itself by means of reciprocal interaction with its world.⁵⁵

Notwithstanding the significance of emphasizing the reciprocal interaction of consciousness with its world through its own encapsulation of the world in the religious standpoint, Hegel now turns his attention to a direct consideration of the role of representation for the furthering of the inner dialectic of religious consciousness.

Representation and Cultus

In the last section of the 1821 *Concept of Religion*, "The Relationship of Religion to Art and Philosophy,"⁵⁶ Hegel is concerned with how representation invokes explicit knowledge of God out of the inner relationship of the subjective and objective within religious consciousness, a knowledge that will then be further cognized in specu-

lative thinking itself. In fact, representation becomes the necessary bridge or middle ground between the immediate moments of religious consciousness and speculative thinking. For Hegel, representation leads to this explicit knowledge of God because it is a further manifestation of what we called the *interstice* or *spiritual realm* between the 'thinking subject' and 'the immediate subject', where the divided self is the relation of the two sides. Indeed, the inner dynamic of this relationship between the two sides is furthered in the very way representation brings them together:

On this account, then, representation stands in a state of constant *restlessness* [*Unruhe*] between immediate sensible intuition and thought in the proper sense. Its determinacy is sensible in character, derived from the sensible, but thinking has gone into itself [*das Denken hat sich hineingelegt*]; in other words, the sensible is elevated by way of abstraction into thinking. But these two, the sensible and the universal, do not interpenetrate each other thoroughly; thinking has not yet completely overcome sensible determinacy, and even if the content of representation is the universal, yet it is still burdened with the determinateness of the sensible and needs the form of natural life. But it remains always the case that this moment of the sensible is not valid on its own account.⁵⁷

This point is made quite clearly in the following passage from the *Encyclopaedia*:

In our representations [*Vorstellungen*] a *two-sided condition* obtains so that either the content is provided by thought, but not the form; or, conversely, the form belongs to thought but not the content. If I say, for example, anger, rose, hope, I acknowledge all such things as coming to me by way of sensation, but I speak of this content in an universal manner, in the form of thought. I have left out much that is particular and only given the content as something universal; yet the content remains sensuous. Conversely, if I represent God to myself, the content is, to be sure, a product of pure thought, but the form is still sensuous in the way that I find it immediately present in myself. In representation, therefore, the content is not merely sensuous, as it is in direct examination of things;

rather, either the content is sensuous and the form appertains to thought, or *vice-versa*. In the first case the material is given and the form belongs to thinking: in the other case the content which has its source in thinking is by means of the form turned into something given, which accordingly reaches the mind from without.⁵⁸

As we noted in the previous section, representation takes what is already present within the religious relationship and cloaks it in the garb of images drawn from the empirical world. With these images, representation deepens the awareness of the rupture or cleavage between the divine and the human already blossoming within religious consciousness. In short, these images make this gap more pronounced. Indeed, *the more God is pictured as divine other, as somehow existing outside of the field of phenomenality, the more the knowledge of the true and its reconciliation is made possible for human consciousness in its self-consciousness by picturing the finite world as God's other*: "As religion represents it, there is in God the other of God, God's Son, i.e., God as other, the other that remains within love and within divinity; and the Son is the truth of this finite world. Thus it is not intrinsically an other material, whose necessity would only be observed, <but rather in and for itself the same material, i.e., for the first time the truth>."⁵⁹ In this passage, Hegel is anticipating the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, which he will discuss in detail in Part Three, "The Consummate Religion" of the 1821, 1824, and 1827 manuscripts. (See especially Chapter Five.) As a representation, this doctrine takes part of its understanding of God from the natural relations of the family: "Hence we have the expressions 'Father' and 'Son'—a designation taken from a sentient aspect of life, from a relationship that has its place in life."⁶⁰ As well, the doctrine of the Trinity points to the absolute truth known by thinking in philosophy, which is already implicit in the nonsentient notion of God the Holy Spirit as unity of the Father and the Son. Therefore, the Christian doctrine of Trinity exhibits the pattern to which Hegel is alluding: God the Father is *initial unity*; the Son, the *differentiation* of God from Himself; and the Holy Spirit, as '*return*' and '*reconciliation*' of the two prior moments to each other. In this way, the Son is the 'truth of this finite world' in two senses: as that through which self-differentiation of God (the Father) into an other (the finite world) can take place, and as Jesus Christ.⁶¹ Hegel says in 1827:

We say that God eternally begets His Son, that God distinguishes Himself from Himself, and thus we begin to speak of God in this way: God does this, and is utterly present to Himself in the other whom He has posited (the form of love); but at the same time we must know very well that God is Himself this entire activity. God is the beginning, He acts in this way; but He is likewise simply the end, the totality, and it is as totality that God is Spirit.... The fact that this is the truth, and the absolute truth, may have the form of something given. But that this should be *known* as the truth in and for itself is the task of philosophy and the entire content of philosophy. In it is seen how all the content of nature and spirit presses forward dialectically to this central point as its absolute truth. Here we are not concerned to prove that this dogma, this tranquil mystery, is the eternal truth; this comes to pass, as has been said, in the whole of philosophy.⁶²

On the basis of the two senses of the “Son” that we noted earlier, Hegel can be construed as also alluding to the ultimate realization of the truth of unity-in-difference of God, and human being will come in the Christian representation of the Son as the person of Jesus Christ. In such a representation, human life is seen as containing divine life within itself, and divine life as also holding human life within itself. Indeed, as we will see in Chapter Five, the Son as Christ is the divine other’s life in human being that lifts human being up into the divine life. For the unfolding of the concept of religion, however, actual representations of Christianity and the various world religions are not what are at issue. Rather, it is of the utmost importance to disclose to thinking how representation itself is the implicit and explicit mediation of the thinking and the immediate sides of human being, thereby opening up consciousness’s interiority for conceptualization.

To begin uncovering the role of representation in religious consciousness, Hegel alludes to the *Encyclopaedia*’s division of the absolute into art, religion, and philosophy; however, Hegel does not enter into great descriptive detail about the content of these spheres because “essentially it is a question of the *form* in which the absolute truth is [found] in religion.”⁶³ What is important, then, is how they are to be seen as interrelated in a mosaic of meaning: “These [forms] interpenetrate each other essentially because each of them, while

thus distinguished, is at the same time the totality of consciousness and self-consciousness."⁶⁴

The mutual integration of art and religion rests on what is first distinguishable as the immediate intuition of the artist: "Truth in the genuine sense is the *correspondence of the object with its concept*, the *idea*; and this is the content of art in and for itself—a content that concerns, of course, the substantial, wholly universal elements, essential aspects, and powers of nature and spirit."⁶⁵

At the same time, religion is "the totality of the two [art and religion]."⁶⁶ But, Hegel continues, "With respect to the consciousness of its content...it is not bound and strictly limited to the form of immediate intuition and mythical image."⁶⁷ Even though "There must be a religion whose intuition occurs essentially in the form of art," it is not the case that all religions must stay at this level.⁶⁸ Consequently, religious representation is distinguishable from *image* [*Bild*], but it does make use of 'pictures' and 'images' derived by immediate intuition (i.e., art) from sensation. The distinctiveness of representation over and against image lies in the *transcendence* implicit in, and which arises through, religious sensibility: "Representation [is] the image elevated into universality: [it is] thought, full of thought, and is a form for thought."⁶⁹

Indeed, Hegel identifies various *words* as representations; for example, *God*, *soul*, and *world*, all of which imply transcendence through their universality; indeed, "thought is their overriding factor."⁷⁰ But, even more important, representational language combines with images in such a way as to constitute the *relational* aspect of thought in religious consciousness. Because of the 'elevation' of images in universal terms, that is, into universality, these representations express the essential relationship of the finite to the infinite. Indeed, the representational language found in religion binds together to point beyond the contingencies of finite human being. Hegel notes: "To the extent that religion gives its content essentially in the form of representation, it has a *doctrine*—namely, that of *truth*."⁷¹

Consequently, these doctrines and truths appear as if they are independent of humanity and therefore as *given* or *presented* to humankind. Because these doctrines and truths seem to be *received* doctrines and truths, they are understood by humanity as *objective* truth:

Moreover, its representations have the significance of truth as *objectivity* in contrast with the other mode [of truth, that] of