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ON HOW GOD DOES NOT DIE IN THE IDEA.
THE HEGELIAN PROJECT OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF
RELIGION

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In what follows I intend to sketch the Hegelian project of the Philosophy of Religion (Religionsphilosophie) mainly by following two coordinates: on the one hand, my aim is to approach it starting from Hegel's main "dialogue partners" – Christian Wolff and Kant – and from the critique of speculative philosophy on the scenarios of the Illuminist theologies. On the other hand, the first part completed, the discussion will pursue a different route, namely, that of a classical topic discussed by Hegel in his lectures: the relation between philosophy and religion. I am trying to show how Hegel "solves" the tension between the two by lending it a hermeneutic dimension, thus opening up reflections on religion to the encyclopedic segment of the philosophy of spirit.

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"Religionphilosophie": Antecedents of a Project

The Hegelian project of the philosophy of religion needs not be discussed starting solely from his lectures delivered after 1821 in Berlin. Consistent discussions, whose object is religion, may be found in his writings as far back as the Jena period, representing an important moment in the development of the speculative perspective on religious fact. The distinctiveness of the lectures lies in the fact that they assume programmatically the expression "Religionphilosophie," thus bringing the Hegelian scenario to bear upon the entire history of the discipline's development in the context of German philosophy at the end of Modernity. A very brief sketch of this history allows for a more accurate location of the Hegelian discourse and an elaboration of the "questions" it answers. Two introductory remarks come into focus. Firstly, given the importance and vastness of the issues of the *Lectures ...*, I intend to focus on these alone, resorting to the early texts referring to religion only to the extent to which they are essential in clarifying the contents of the lectures themselves. The text may very well be seen as a dialogue with W. Jaeschke's essential comments on the Hegelian philosophy of religion. One particular position to these comments – to which I am much indebted in my attempt to understand the Hegelian text – cannot but repeatedly be taken into account.¹

The term "Religionphilosophie" appears as such at the end of the German *Aufklärung*, the continuation of a discussion regarding "*theologia naturalis*"². Nevertheless, the project is not definitely individualized from the very beginning. In one of its first uses, in S. von Storchenau, the philosophy of religion debates issues such as natural theology, its relation

to revealed theology, or the rejection of Protestantism. As such, philosophy serves religion as an apologetic instrument, in an external relation, under the principle of subordination. The debate on the philosophy of religion starts from this point and on to the decisive influence of Reinhold's contribution: the maintenance of the term, but at the same time, its accommodation of a different universe than the philosophical discourse, Kant's "ethical theology". Reinhold, in *Briefen über die Kantische Philosophie*, rejects à la Kant the theoretical claims of the philosophy of religion, considering them related to metaphysical suppositions, and assigns it instead the task of systematizing the principles of moral life. J. Ch. G. Schaumann introduces the philosophy of religion in the canon of philosophical disciplines and paves its way to a "university career" by stating that its existential principle is the possibility of being in harmony with the moral doctrine of the Gospel. Since the present lines are not meant to record the discussions regarding the philosophy of religion, but only to set the frame for defining its purpose and object, names such as J.F. Kleuker, who rejects the possibility of adjusting moral philosophy to the Gospel principles, or F. I. Niethamer, with his programmatic alienation from the theological rationalism, will only be briefly mentioned. It is paramount however that the philosophy of religion (or, under a different name, "*Theorie der Religion*") becomes – with Reinhold and the rest of the Kantian school – a common place for philosophical debate. The critique of the project of the philosophy of religion, according to the Kantian model, has supporters such as Herder or Schlegel. For instance, the former regards the philosophy of religion as a systematization of the moral principles, an attempt at lending a religious status to mere opinions ("*Lehrmeinungen*") and consequently, of "defending" the human type against its Creator. The latter, Schlegel, opposes the philosophy of religion proposed by the Kantians ("*populäre Religionsphilosophie*") to Tauler's, Böhme's or Bonaventura's mysticism.

Later on, the Kantian project of the philosophy of religion will change under the influence of the Romantic ideas. Its relation to Metaphysics – discarded along with the Kantian critique – is thus reassessed. For example, J. Salat understands the philosophy of religion as a branch of metaphysics, alongside the Metaphysics of manners. To Bouterwek the philosophy of religion is midway between metaphysics and morals, grounding the moral principles on the absolute "object" of metaphysics. At the same time, the task of the philosophy of religion, in his late works, will found philosophical theism by justifying rational faith and by questioning the validity of theology as related to the ancient Pantheon. Ultimately, Schleiermacher – in his late works – establishes the philosophy of religion as a branch of "*wissenschaftliche Geschichtskunde*", with a role in configuring dogmatic theology.

This constellation of issues can be found in Hegel's lectures on the philosophy of religion delivered between 1821 and 1830. The Hegelian

project is individualized – as W. Jaeschke shows in his *Vernunft in Religion*³ – by trying to redefine the philosophy of religion in the aftermath of the critique of traditional metaphysics – a constituent of post-Kantian philosophy – namely: the loss of the concept of the divine being, a speculative streak in the discourse on religion. The eminence of the object of religion rejects the exclusively historical or moral approach to the issue, and therefore, the layout of the academic discipline of “*Religionsphilosophie*” receives, along with the Hegelian undertaking, an essential metaphysical remedy.

When Fichte, Hegel and, last but not least, Schelling question the Kantian dualism, there will instantly arise the question on the possibility of knowing the absolute – speculative “theology”. Theology as a means of theoretical knowledge resumes its important role when the absolute becomes once more the focal object of philosophy, even while the issue is brought up once again as regards the relation between theology – natural or revealed – and its philosophical approach. In conclusion, religion captures the attention of the representatives of German Idealism as a means of knowing the absolute, rather than just some edification in the practical field, or a form of the historic world. Whether understood as a moment in philosophical knowledge or as its object, theological knowledge is an unmistakable landmark in the discussion about religion and its fundamental stake.

Hegel’s philosophy, whose object is religion, is thus related in essence to the theological truth. Reason in the speculative sense, as well as the “speculative” itself, claims the name of the relation to the absolute, replacing the term *religious*⁴. Hence, the interpretation of the Hegelian philosophy may follow one of two possibilities: it may either be read as a “secularization” of the religious theory on knowledge, or as a mere translation into its conceptual language, as a form of reflection which remains essentially religious. The philosophy-religion relation thus becomes – within the frame of Hegel’s philosophy – mostly an asymmetrical one, in which one term is subordinated to the other. The speculative system, lending a conceptual form to the truth of Religion (as well as to the truth of Art or of Science), apparently suggests the idea of the end of religion, just as, for instance, the end of Art is announced in the *Aesthetics*. The discussion in the second part of the present study will attempt to systematize the issues of this option.

In what concerns the present section it is important that the academic discipline “*Religionsphilosophie*” carries, as mentioned before, a theological remedy for restoring its speculative dimension. A similar remedy is applied to what W. Jaeschke calls the “philosophical theology”⁵ of time. The “models” of theological knowledge which Hegel deals with are “*theologia rationalis*”, the special metaphysics of tradition, “*theologia naturalis*”, a theological scenario specific to the Enlightenment (Leibniz, Wolff), and last, Kant’s moral theology. Hegel focuses on the last in the list

mostly during the works of his youth. The lectures of Berlin abandon the moral ideal from the period prior to 1800 in order to emphasize the speculative perspective on religion and its theoretical moments. Yet another chapter of the *Critique of Pure Reason* becomes now decisive: the one where the philosopher from Königsberg drafts the project of a transcendental theology, which he assigns to a secondary role, and yet not even this can be considered the starting point in understanding the Hegelian approach.

The Hegelian “dialogue”

Hegel’s dialogue with these aspects of philosophical theology, namely, with rational theology, natural theology and transcendental theology, unfolds in a similar way: the German philosopher’s approach is doublefold. Thus, the critique applied to the prime concepts of the first two scenarios does not actually mean their rejection, but their retrieval in line with the speculative idea. The way in which modern theologies use the concept of the *first being* leads, according to Hegel, to a contradictory understanding of it as a finite being due to, on the one hand, the abstract form of the concept hereby called into play, and on the other hand, to the indissoluble problems it generates. W. Jaeschke’s text *Philosophy and Religion after the Death of God* lends shape to the issue. The author starts from the “crisis” of philosophical theology, explaining the shift of the frame of discussion to the philosophy of religion: “The most profound reason for the crisis of philosophical theology lies in its internal constitution, expressing the thought of God (Gottesgedanke) by means of reason”⁶. Thus, the term “philosophical theology” is affected by the attempts at conceptualising God under the above exigency, starting, in other words, from the Anselmian concept of the Supreme Being: “something in comparison to which nothing can be greater”. Both rational and natural theologies use the same concept of the divine being, albeit starting from different positions. In its negative stance, which I have spoken about, transcendental theology plays the same role. Nevertheless, the problems that arise from this approach to philosophical theology bring into focus – as Jaeschke shows – the conception of the divine attributes, or “physical theology,” constituting a drawback.

The philosophy of religion represents an attempt at overcoming the issues brought about by philosophical theology. It differs from the attempts at internal reformation of the latter by the fact that the “philosophy of religion as a philosophical discipline only arises as conditioned by the sentiment that *God is dead*”⁷. Thus, the philosophy of religion becomes the ascertainment of an absence and, in fact, of an irretrievable loss. The Hegelian scenario is characterized by the particularity that the feeling of God dead does not represent the end of the way. On the contrary, it is a “*reduction*” that opens the path to the concept

of the divine being surpassing – in form – the Anselmian concept of *Spirit*. The outcome of the Hegelian undertaking, which I will analyze in detail in the second section of this study, can be synthesized as two moments: the first is the concept of the divine being treated – in the lectures of Berlin – starting not from the exigencies of reason, but from its “operationalization” in the religious approach – the divine being showing itself in religion as the ultimate orientation of religion, rather than something beyond it. Nevertheless, religion contains – in its decisive aspects, the truth about God as a spirit, which is a truth underlying as well as resulting from religion. The understanding of this circularity is the goal of the philosophy of religion. Consequently, as regards Hegel, transcending the frames of philosophical theology means transcending the concept of God within the frames of metaphysics and its approach from the point of view of the “phenomenology” of the religious fact. The divine being appears by revealing itself within a religious frame, the latter representing – in its ultimate stake – the constitution of the truth regarding God. Thus, once the philosophers’ “god” is dead, the living, spiritual God of religion may arise. The philosophy of religion may therefore be understood starting from the critical dialogue it has led to – by way of philosophical theology – through its multiple meanings.

We should pinpoint here one further issue, which is the fact that for Hegel the circularity I have referred to above – between the truth about the supreme being as a spirit and religion as the locus for the revelation of this truth – can be understood starting from the context in which the term “spirit” itself becomes a theme, in the final section of the *Encyclopedia*. Historically speaking, at this point Hegel speaks about “the event” of bringing subjectivity in the limelight, which occurs in Protestantism. From the point of view of speculative philosophy, the event is translated through the recognition of subjectivity as infinite subjectivity and of the concept not as an abstract form of thought, but as a truth of reality. The relation between the occurrence of truth regarding the Supreme Being as spirit and the speculative philosophy of the spirit will be discussed beginning with the section on the lectures dedicated to the revealed religion, in the third part of this chapter. The thesis I am trying to argue here starts from the fact that the philosophical concept of spirit paves the way to the Hegelian synthesis between the philosophy of religion and philosophical theology, hence the recognition of the truth about the divine being as a spirit. At the same time, however, the philosophical concept of *spirit* is not defined – at least not in the context of the lectures I am referring to – as a form of this theological truth, as a manifestation, as the plenary revelation of the latter. The dialogues between Hegel and Kant, on the one hand, and Wolff, on the other hand, may specify more clearly Hegel’s intentions and strategy.

Hegel and Kant

The definition of the Hegelian thought regarding the possibility of a philosophy of religion may have been budding in an apparently less relevant work by Kant about theology, one overlooked because Kant himself indicates “moral theism” as the only possible theology within critical philosophy. Nonetheless, the *Critique of Pure Reason* speaks about the secondary role of “transcendental theology,” which can constitute the starting point for the understanding of the Hegelian approach. At the end of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant synthesizes his reflections on the possibility of theology by expressing a “critique of any theology based on the speculative principles of reason.” A few aspects presented here draw our attention precisely as they refer to other conclusions of the critique besides that of the demarcation of speculation with the purpose of opening a practical field.

Kant starts from the definition of the field of theology (understood etymologically as the “cognition of the original being”⁸): this can be the fruit of the exercise of reason (“*theologia rationalis*”) or of revelation (“*theologia revelata*”). In turn, rational theology can be transcendental, when “it conceives its object only through pure reason, with the help of some purely transcendental (*ens originarium, realissimum, ens entium*)”⁹ or natural concepts, to the extent to which it conceptualizes its object “as supreme intelligence, by means of a concept that it borrows from (the) nature (of our soul).”¹⁰

What matters in the context of the present attempt is precisely the condition of transcendental theology and the possibilities within. A definition of this approach can start from Kant’s considerations in paragraph 12 of the *Transcendental Analytics*. The issue discussed here is that of medieval transcendentia¹¹ (being, one, truth, good) and of its relation to the categories. Kant’s answer to the medieval discussion is that the transcendentia are not predicates of things, but “exigencies (...) of the cognition¹² of things”¹³, translations of the categories of quantity as regards cognition. Consequently, due to the transcendentia, as exigencies of cognition rather than attributes of things, transcendental theology can be understood starting from cognition, from experience in general, and can be redefined accordingly.

Thus, transcendental theology “derives the existence of the Supreme Being from an experience in general”¹⁴, and will become a “cosmotheology”, or from concepts not employed in any approach to experience, and consequently, it becomes “ontotheology”.

Kant shows that pure reason in its speculative sense proves to be incapable of expressing the cognition of the Supreme Being. This is due to the fact that – as reads the *Transcendental Deduction* – the principles of the intellect have as legitimate use only a transcendental rather than a

transcended one. Therefore, the cognition of that which exceeds experience apparently becomes impossible. Reason, in its speculative use, insufficient in expressing judgments regarding the Supreme Being, carries another negative theological meaning by way of censure: given the cognition of the supreme being from other than theoretical sources, speculative reason brings this cognition in agreement with itself, making its outcome worthy of expressing the concept of the Supreme Being. In short, if experience imposes on its objects the conditions of time succession or of space coexistence, the conditions will *not* be able to function as well in the event that cognition surpasses experience. One such example is the rejection of atheism: “the same arguments that show the incapacity of human reason regarding the assertion of the existence of a [supreme] being are necessarily and concurrently sufficient to prove the lack of value of any assertion to the contrary”¹⁵.

One of Kant’s texts of 1780 (*What Does It Mean: to Orient Oneself in Thinking*) can bring additional explanations. To Kant to *orient oneself* means to start from the world and its information with the purpose of expressing – on subjective grounds – judgments regarding things beyond our world. In a subsequent note to the text, the German philosopher specifies the sense of “logic” orientation in thinking: “in case of insufficient objective principles of reason, to determine oneself in considering oneself true (*“Fürwahrhalten”*) according to a subjective principle”¹⁶ gives the restricted sense of the above-mentioned orientation. The necessity of reason, both theoretical and practical, for conceiving an original existence works in this context as a subjective basis of orientation in the super-sensitive field. The *self-insufficiency* of the phenomenal world makes reason relate to what there is beyond it, not in the way of objective cognition, but in the way of an exigency. The individual’s relation to the super-sensitive acquires this way an intermediary position: it is not cognition (*“Wissen”*), as it lacks the basis for objectivity. Likewise, there is no “historical belief”, opinion or supposition that can be infirmed or confirmed, thus *becoming* science. But there is no complete obscurity, or silence of the thought and unconditional surrender to inspiration, revelation or a “higher” authority, either. Kant calls the above-mentioned relation the “reason of faith” (*“Vernunftglaube”*)¹⁷: “the basis for considering something true here is merely subjective, namely, the necessity of reason (and, so long as we are humans, it will stay this way) only to suppose rather than demonstrate the existence of “a supreme being””¹⁸.

The “reason of faith” Kant speaks about and that corresponds – in terms of the *Critique of Pure Reason* – to the regulating character of ideas refers, at a later point in time, to the exigencies of transcendental theology. As long as the Original Being, as Kant calls it, cannot be intuited, its concept is formulated only in agreement with the principles and “sayings” of theoretical reason. What exceeds the field of these sayings tending to become cognition needs be denied as a note to the respective

concept. The role of transcendental theology is precisely to implement this censure and to reduce the theological predicates merely to transcendental ones, stemming directly from the needs of reason, from the sayings and the principles related to reason itself and not to (partial) knowledge of the objects of experience. Thus the “sayings” of theoretical reason play the role of the *leading thread in deducing the concepts* of transcendental theology.

Hegel’s critique of the programme of transcendental theology as proposed by Kant starts from his fundamental objection to Kantianism. When Hegel reads the Kantian project, as well as all the other philosophical options as far back as the Greeks’, his hermeneutic principle is that of existence of the whole, the sum total of the moments of thought. We find such a statement in the *Logic*: “Each part of philosophy is a philosophical whole, a full circle in itself; in each of these parts, however, the Philosophical idea is found in a particular determination in a special medium”¹⁹. In other words, the viewpoints of the three critiques, with the ontological, theological or practical consequences they entail, need to be discussed from the perspective of the whole that comprises them, of the principle that ensures both their continuity and their demarcation.

Kantianism, according to Hegel, “is a new position of thought in relation to the objectivity on which it focuses in its approach, namely the Enlightenment made methodically, which means that the truth cannot be known; only the phenomenon can”²⁰. This transformation of the “nothingness of Enlightenment” and its becoming a system is actually based on a certain understanding of the “transcendental” term. Hegel shows that this reduces the objective determinations – in their subjective way – and reason gets to be valued only in its regulative rather than constituent form.

Nevertheless, two points in the Kantian Critiques show, according to Hegel, the inconsistency of this unilateral understanding of reason correlated with abstract subjectivization. On the one hand, there is the “transcendental deduction”. In legitimating the application of the transcendental structures of the intellect only through sensitiveness, Hegel acknowledges, unlike Kant, the expression “intuitive intellect or intellectual intuition”²¹. Through transcendental imagination, Hegel believes, the identity between the concept and the object is accounted for, and the entire subsequent Kantian approach does nothing else but reduce it to mere subjectivity, thus denying its very evidence. *Faith and Science*, a Hegelian text of 1802, had already included the thesis of the identity between transcendental imagination and the intuitive intellect, which is reminiscent of yet another symptomatic role of Kant’s works: “namely the point in which a region constituting the middle area between empirical diversity and the abstract unit is acknowledged”²². This is reflexive judgment just as, for instance, as regards aesthetical judgment, the concept is identical to the object in representing *the beautiful*. Nonetheless, Hegel goes on to say, this identity is seen merely as the concordance of our

cognition faculties, a subjective concordance, therefore, and not one with an objective foundation.

Hegel's conclusion, in both cases, is the same: Kant acknowledges speculative thought, enunciates it in different ways, and then – giving it a strictly subjective significance: concord or form – he lapses into formalism and into the thesis of the inability of reason. Yet from the point of view of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* held in Berlin, Hegel's critique points out one further aspect. Earlier writings, such as the *Faith and Science* of 1982, limit themselves to ascertaining, based on the contradictions of Kantianism, the possibility of knowing the super-sensitive, which Kant considered, given the limitations of transcendental theology, an illusion of the old natural theology, the special metaphysics of modernity. In the works of the philosopher of Königsberg, I saw – says Hegel – that the idea of an intuitive intellect resurfaces under different names. At the same time, the intuitive intellect is merely a moment in the cognition of the divine things; it represents the inner-self of this cognition and not its complete development. As with the intuitive intellect, establishing the identity of the concept with its object does not call for its necessity as well. The exigency of establishing this necessary identity devolves upon science – Hegel shows in his *Phenomenology of the Spirit*. Given the exigency that characterizes it, it is the scientific form that brings out truth as a system, by means of its characteristic mediation. Speaking about a philosophy that fulfils the scientificity requisite, Hegel notes: “the abstract or unreal is not its element and content, but rather the real, what is self-establishing, has life within itself, existence in its very notion. It is the process that creates its own moments in its course and goes through them all; and the whole of this movement constitutes its positive content and its truth”²³.

In other words, the transition from transcendental theology to the philosophy of religion occurs in two stages: firstly – and Hegel uses precisely this expression when speaking about the Kantian triplicity – the cognition of the original being, retrieved “by instinctive insight” by Kant, needs “to be raised to its significance as an absolute method”²⁴. Secondly, this significance must regain its necessity through a scientific development. The two stages mark out decisively, and substantially, the moments of the constitution of the *philosophy of religion*.

Hegel and Wolff

Hegel's dialogue with natural theology evolves the same way. The author Hegel refers to explicitly in his lectures is Wolff. His natural theology project becomes paradigmatic for the orientation of the philosophical theology of the German Enlightenment. Wolff defines natural theology as “die Wissenschaft dessen, was als durch Gott Möglich verstanden wird”²⁵. The “problem” of natural theology is, thus, what can be thought of as possible (*possible* as in the general objective of philosophy)

starting from the concept of God and the properties ("*Eigenschaften*") and works ("*Werken*") we perceive through it. Two main elements concern Hegel in his approach to Wolff: the manner in which he builds the concept of the Supreme Being and demonstrates its existence and the method of constituting the system.

As regards the first issue, paragraph 1076 of *Vernünfftige Gedancken von Gott, der Wlt und der Seele des Menschen, auch allen Dingen überhaupt*²⁶, called *Woher wir einen Begriff von Gott und seinen Eigenschaften haben* is relevant. The source of acquiring this concept is the similarity that God maintains with the human soul. The cognition of the soul, the ability of the soul to know itself in its finitude is the leading thread for the creation of the divine being concept, by removing the constitutive limits of the soul. Wolff's example is that of the capacity of representation. The essence of the soul lies in its representative faculty ("*die Kraft, die Welt vorzustellen*"), starting from the condition of its own corporality in the world. This faculty has two limitations: on the one hand, a representation can only be of this present world; on the other hand, the representation depends on the state of the body in the world ("*Zustand ihres Leibes*"), which makes the representation partially clear, and, more importantly, essentially successive. The parenthesizing of these limitations offers the concept infinite representative faculties, which represent the present world and other equally possible worlds whose representations are concomitant and clear. This representative faculty is to Wolff the essence of the divine being ("*Wesen Gottes*"). The representative faculty bears the name of intellect ("*Verstand*"): "*Es ist demnach der Verstand Gottes eine deutliche Vorstellung alles dessen, was moeglich ist, zugleich oder auf einmal* par 952, 953 –, *folgendes ist der Verstand Gottes unendlich*"²⁷. The infinite divine intellect is to Wolff the source ("*Quelle*") of the essence of things, of their possibility. The source of the reality of things is the divine will ("*Willen*"), which – like the divine intellect – is eternal, infinite, and unchanging. Wolff starts from two attributes ("*Eigenschaften*") in order to develop a theology of what is possible and real, respectively: "*Und also haben wir einen Weg den Willen Gottes zu erkennen durch Betrachtung der Natur Gottes und des Wesens und der Natur der Dinge, die von Ihm dependieren*"²⁸. The divine power concept ("*Macht*"), the explanation of the existence of evil or of the connection between the divine purposes, the laws of nature and the existence of miracles are likewise debated. The divine attributes, the two principles (intellect and will) and its derivatives, such as justice ("*Gerechtigkeit*") or wisdom ("*Weisheit*"), depend on the primary meaning of the divine being, towards which Hegel directs his critique: that of a self-sufficient being ("*Selbststaendiges Wesen*"), in other words, of a being having within itself the fundament of its reality ("*Grund seiner Wirklichkeit*"). Wolff reaches this concept through a cosmological argumentative reasoning, showing the necessity for the existence of a being whose fundament depends on no other being. The way in which the

sufficient being is understood becomes essential in the Hegelian context: as a self-sufficient being, the Supreme Being is separated from that which exists through it: from the world and from the finite soul. The path to knowing this being is through the denial of the attributes of finiteness in the manner mentioned above. In its separation from the created world, the Supreme Being remains, nonetheless, intelligible through its patterns, and it is called by a series of terms that apply analogically to finite things: "Wesen", ens, in some contexts even "Ding" (thing). "Da nun ein Ding, was Verstand und einen freyen Willen hat, ein Geist ist; so ist auch Gott ein Geist, und zwar da sein Verstand und seine Wille der allervollkommenste ist, der allervollkommenste Geist"²⁹. The substantial manner in which the Supreme Being is understood is reflected in the understanding of the whole of theology, as a presupposition of the intelligibility of all of its co-terms. Eternity, almightiness, uniqueness are understood exclusively as the names of a substance whose concept represents a number of negations of the limits of the created world, designed, however, in analogy with the latter.

The method of creating the concept of a divine being is, at this point, problematic. The cognition of the divine being, starting from the cognition of the soul and the world is to Wollf an essentially figurative one: "Es ist demnach klar, dass wir in diesem Welt keine anschauende, sondern nur eine figürliche Erkänntniss Gottes haben"³⁰. For the cognition of the divine being, the world and soul offer, as I mentioned above, only a reflecting environment, a mirror. Starting from this "mirror" it is the sign (the figurative cognition) that distinguishes the divine from the finite. Figurative cognition, unlike non-mediated cognition³¹, has the advantage of allowing for the differentiation of what is, in non-mediated cognition, indiscernible. For instance, the parts of a whole perceived simultaneously in non-mediated cognition are, with the help of signs, individualized and separated from the whole. The drawback of figurative cognition, which makes up for its important analytical role in cognition, is the possibility of using words void of content ("*leere Wörter*") as if they designated a reality. Both aspects intervene in the discussion referring to natural theology.

The cognition of the divine being, by analogy with the soul and the lawfulness of the world, is possible due to the discriminating quality of words. "Denn wir dürfen nur die Wörter oder Zeichen weglassen, dadurch die Einschränkungen angedeutet werden, und andere davor in die Stelle setzen, dadurch die Befreyung von allen Schranken bedeutet wird; so stellen nach dem die Wörter oder andere Zeichen das Uneingeschränckte in Gott vor"³². The task of the word is to recognize and surpass the natural boundary contained by the soul or the world as „*imago dei*.” The mechanism of analogical cognition is thus possible by censuring the limit imposed by the word, which will implicitly be the object of Hegel's critique at various times.

One last aspect relating to the constitution of the concept of a Supreme Being regards an old problem with an essentially theological content, namely the infinity of divine names, translated in the context of natural theology through the characteristics of the concept. The question that arises is the following: How can the hierarchy and discrimination of these names be possible? Wolff's answer is in accordance with his choice of the cosmological argument as proof of the existence of the Supreme Being. It is the constitution of the world and of the soul that offers the leading thread for the enumeration and hierarchization of the properties that make up the content of the concept in question. The cosmological argument leads to the idea of the divine as a self-contained being ("*Selbstständiges Wesen*"), hereby different from the entire sphere of created beings. Wolff continues: "Nun müssen wir ferner untersuchen, was er für Eigenschaften haben muss, damit die Welt von ihm sowohl ihrem Wesen, als ihrer Würcklichkeit nach ihren Ursprung haben kan"³³. For example, the questions regarding the existence of more than one real world leads to the discussion I mentioned above referring to the extension of the divine intellect and will and their deriving properties. However, in the sphere of created elements, the soul ("*Seele*") occupies a distinct place. The main attributes that Wolff's natural theology deals with, the will and the intellect, are described starting from the analogy of the divine being with the object of rational psychology. "Alles, was wir bisher von Gott erwiesen haben, kommet daraus, dass er alles, was möglich ist, auf einmal deutlich vorstellen kann (...) Und demnach hat hierhin das göttliche Wesen einige Aehnlichkeiten mit dem Wesen unserer Seele"³⁴. Yet as Wolff himself observes in what follows (par. 1076), the soul has the possibility of knowing itself, so that the cognition of the soul and its analogy with the divine being serves as an initial moment in designing the concept of the divine being. The insufficiency of the world implies the necessity of conceiving a Supreme Being that is conceived of in analogy with the soul, due to the important role played by the representative faculty, the intellect, both in explaining the uniqueness and the degree of perfection of the world and in the constitution of human cognition. The presupposition of the soul-divinity *analogy* is the irreducible difference of the two "ontological regions", which will be, yet again, the object of Hegel's critique, which I will summarize at the end of the present section.

Starting from the divine being concept thus constituted, Wolff builds the edifice of natural theology mathematically, deductively. This formal method is justified by Wolff, on the one hand, by the fact that the entire metaphysical content, exposed in the work, is rational – unlike the positive content of revealed religion – and consequently, the logical form of deductive judgments ("*Vernunft-Schlüsse*") represents the form of the content itself. On the other hand, the adoption of the mathematical form of the expository has a pragmatic justification: it becomes irrefutable, protecting the truths of natural theology against attacks by atheism or

“profanity”. The finality of Wollf’s philosophy is a practical one (moral and political, respectively) and as regards natural theology, it calls for the exercise of veneration (*Verherrlichung*), in compliance with the truth: “*Verherrlichung Gottes in allem Thun und Lassen*”³⁵. The clarity of the divine being concept, acquired by analogy with the cognition of the soul, as well as the irrefutability of what derives logically from this concept represents the fundament of its universal acceptability. One of the problems that preoccupies Wollf in this context is the relation maintained by natural and revealed theologies. Paragraphs 1010-1020 argue à la Leibniz, many times over, in favour of the idea that the two agree, so that the approach of natural theology also contains a clearly apologetic side to it in addition to its moral intentionality.

The Hegelian critique focuses on several aspects. The first is related to the possibility of the Supreme Being concept. The second, to the demonstration of the existence of God and, finally, the third, to the formal method of natural theology. Jean-Marie Ladric synthesizes³⁶ the structure of the Hegelian argumentation as follows: the manner of thinking of the intellect, specific to the philosophy of the Enlightenment, implies, according to Wollf, the possibility of applying the cosmological argument starting from the self-insufficiency of the finite world. The Hegelian logic takes the first step in the critique of this manner of argumentation by “transforming” the representation of the intellect into a speculative concept. Thus, the perception of the infinite in thought, as the infinite of thought, as a plenary form of its reflexivity, leads, later on, to the reinterpretation of the implicit logic from the point of view of the philosophy of spirit. The speculative concept, as I have already asserted, is to Hegel a form of the absolute spirit, while logic reveals itself as the actual “inner-self” of the philosophy of the spirit. In conclusion, in terms of the arguments in favour of the existence of God it is the ontological argument that comes to replace Wollf’s cosmological one and thus becomes the stake of the philosophy of religion, developed within the frames of the latter; the infinite, as a reflexivity of the concept, is the infinite of the retrospection on the self of the Absolute spirit.

In his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* Hegel synthesizes: “... this science (that is, *natural theology*) could not have the same goal as ours. Yet it called itself theology and its content and object was God as such; our object, however, is not God as such; the content of our science is religion. In regard to this concrete science we can say that, since it was only a science of understanding, its concept of God was restricted to the sterile result of an abstract being of this understanding. Thus God is not conceived as a spirit ...”³⁷. In the following section I will try to analyze the concept of philosophy of religion in order to show the specificity of an approach that focuses on justifying the truth about the Supreme Being as a spirit by recognizing the manner in which it is self-revealed within religion. Implicitly, this can constitute a critique of the natural theology project, not

from the perspective of the metaphysical mechanism it involves, but from the perspective of the reintegration of the *revelation* idea and of its understanding as a “manifestation” from the speculative point of view.

It should also be mentioned here that, related to the Wollfian constitution of the Supreme Being concept, the Hegelian critique focuses implicitly on its basic analogical method. One of J. D'Hondt's texts³⁸ clarifies the issue. The analogy is unacceptable when dealing with the philosophy of absolute knowledge. To Hegel it remains a limited cognition, or in other words, a cognition of the limit, of the separation of the ontological regions according to their degree of perfection. For a philosophy of unity, whose presupposition is unity in its different forms and which was interpreted from a metaphysical point of view as an exemplary monism form, the analogy rather represents the furthestmost epistemic form. Instead, Hegel indicates conceptual derivation, exposed in the *Logic*, as a form of manifestation of the absolute Idea in the field of thought. Nevertheless, J. D'Hondt mentions a possible reevaluation of the analogy precisely from the point of view of the conceptual derivation used by Hegel to replace the medieval scenario of the analogy. I am referring here to the places in which the relation between representation and concept is viewed as a “metaphorical” relation. Could we speak about the interpretation of the relation as an analogical relation that starts from the representation in order to know the concept? According to a lecture by Hegel that emphasizes the interpretative valence of this relation, the answer is negative. Once again, the idea of analogy implies the separation of the analogical fields, the preeminence of one over the other. From the point of view of the Hegelian “hermeneutics”, the relation does not designate a transition from one cognition to another, but precisely the fact that the stake of philosophical cognition lies in the tension between the two forms of thinking. Thus, the analogical reasoning remains – according to Hegel – a rhetorical accessory each time it is used (as in the clarification of the concept through the image of the organism, or of the system through the succession of circles), as it is accompanied by the specification of its relativity. According to J. D'Hondt, as regards the Hegelian analogy, any “*Entsprechen*” is at the same time a “*Widersprechen*”.

In both of the cases analyzed – the Hegelian critique of the Kantian criticism and Wollf's “*theologia naturalis*”, respectively – the approach was, basically, the same: starting from the “results” of the Enlightenment, Hegel lays the ground for the theology of the infinite spirit, of absolute subjectivity, which reinterprets from a logical point of view the limitation that crosses these results as a moment in an all-embracing assertion. In turn, this assertion is exposed circularly, starting from reflexivity as the formal structure of the Spirit, yielding a result most pertinent for us: the understanding of this circularity as a relation of the finite spirit to the infinite one, as religion. The infinite spirit is the privileged theological

object, which makes it possible – necessary even – for the project of religion as theology within the entire system, and as a fundament of logic³⁹.

„Religionsphilosophie“: tension cancelled

According to Hegel, the relation between philosophy and religion does not imply the fact that philosophy takes religion for its object, an “inert” object. Thus, the philosophy of religion does not identify with the science of religion in contemporary terms. “Philosophy explains itself as it explains religion ... thus religion and philosophy interflow, philosophy is itself divine service, but they are both divine service proper; they differ from one another by this particular manner of concern with God”⁴⁰. The 1827 version (ed. J.) adds: not only does philosophy explain itself through explaining religion, but the reverse is true too: “und indem sie sich expliziert, expliziert sie die Religion”. Consequently, the study of the relation between philosophy and religion as a preliminary moment in the discussion about the Hegelian project of the philosophy of religion starts from the recognition of the object common to both: the absolute. If starting from the latter, the relation can be specified, but not the other way around. In other words, the common object of philosophy and religion, the absolute, is that which shows how their relation is possible. The attempt of working backwards, from the mentioned disciplines and from their relation towards the object they have in common will fail, for the relation itself remains, in this case, non-mediated and, from a historical point of view, it ends by being one of multiple aspects of opposition. Hegel’s examples indicate the sense of this “impasse” in analysis. The meeting between philosophy and theology specific to Patristics or Scholasticism led to the establishment of the dogmatic form of Christian scholarship, but in both cases – Hegel shows – the two disciplines remain distinct and, in the historical logic of this relation, they end in opposition.

The absolute content

The Hegelian discussion of the relation follows two coordinates. From the point of view of the content, the connection of the two disciplines is justified by the fact that, once philosophy comes out from under the domination of the intellect and is recognized as a speculative, scientific approach, it acquires for its main purpose the “storage” of the historical dogmas of the church: “The reconstruction of the authentic doctrine of the church must start from philosophy, for it is philosophy that leads that insipid reflection to its fundament, namely to the thing that makes it (that is, *the church doctrine*) perish”⁴¹. From the point of view of the form, the relation is once again justified only by starting from the speculative

meaning, rather than the traditional one of philosophy based on the intellect. Religion represents, from the point of view of its specific conscience form, a non-mediated type of cognition⁴². The absolute certainty of faith is a proof of that. Philosophy, on the other hand, is identical to the intercession of the concept. The logical relation between the mediation and non-mediation of cognition explains and, at the same time, justifies the possibility of the relation between the two. The restoration of the content of religion as a spiritual content, as I will try to show below, “the release” of the subject of finitude and accidentality, of the relation with the absolute from the presupposition of their differentiation takes place through the “transition” from non-mediated to mediated cognition, through the mediation of the forms of thought entailed by the concept. In brief, Hegel synthesizes the formal relation between philosophy and religion (ed. J., 1831 version): “In der christliche Religion ist der religiöse Inhalt ausgebreitet, aber in der Form der Vorstellung; diese Form übersetzt die Philosophie in die Form des Wissens”⁴³. The meaning of this “translation” into the concept form will be debated in what follows.

In the first stage, Hegel discusses the possibility of a connection between philosophy and religion, emphasizing the fact that the object of religion – similar to philosophy’s own object, the super-sensitive, the absolute – is, beyond the relation, turned into a positivity and thus limited. The problem is that the object of philosophy is also, according to Hegel, specified necessarily as the object of religion. In the above-quoted fragment from 1827 (J. ed.) version of the lectures, the clarification of the relation occurs both ways: philosophy clarifies itself as it explains religion and, in reverse, it explains religion as it clarifies itself. What sense can this “mutuality” be given?

Form: representation and concept

A possible answer starts from a series of observations made by W. Jaeschke. To the German interpreter the relation between religion and philosophy is actually that between the religious representation and the philosophical concept. Therefore, the form of thought specific to the two disciplines is the starting point of the discussion: on the one hand, the form of thought specific to the subjective spirit – the representation –, and the form specific to the absolute spirit, the concept, respectively. The philosophy of religion thus surpasses (“*Aufhebung*”) the religious representation in concept. The problem is reduced, at this point, to the meaning of the Hegelian *Aufhebung*: “Die *Aufhebung* ist in sich selbst zwar eindeutig. Sie ist aber Apologie und Kritik zugleich”⁴⁴. The transition from representation to concept – Jaeschke warns – is not reduced to a mere immanent movement of representation, for philosophy does not “confirm” religion in all of its aspects, but constitutes a reduction of its non-

speculative character, of the opposition between the infinity of content and the limitation of the form in which this content is presented in thought. This reduction is conceived by religion as something extraordinary, as a conversion of its nature into something else than itself. It is this where the interpretations of the Hegelian philosophy as a theory of secularization starts. “Die Vorstellung kann nicht anerkennen, dass der Übergang von der ausschliessenden zur allgemeinen Einzelheit und zum Selbstbewusstsein des Geistes in der Konsequenz ihres eigenen Inhalts liege”⁴⁵. Jaeschke argues that the necessity specific to the philosophic concept – necessity understood as the self-development of the content – does not identify with the exterior necessity of the appropriateness specific to the religious representation. The transformation of the representation into concept is conceived as an “action” of the concept over the representation, the relation between religion and philosophy remaining a relation that can be described – in Noica’s terms – as a model of “unilateral contradiction.” The transition, the evaluation of the relation between philosophy and religion can be fulfilled from the standpoint of philosophy rather than of religion.

A problem arising at this point is that of the content common to both religion and philosophy, which necessarily determines the transition from its representational form to the conceptual one. “Doch stellt sich die Frage nach dem Identität des Inhalts in diese Formen- die Frage, wie das Absolute in mehreren bestimmten Formen sich darstellen und gleichwohl nicht als endlicher Inhalt gefasst werden, sondern das Absolute bleiben könne”⁴⁶. The relation between the content of religion and the content of philosophy is not, according to Jaeschke, tautological: the *absolute* of religion is not identical with the *absolute* of philosophy. The absolute Hegel speaks about in the two cases actually meets the requirement of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* of conceiving it as a subject rather than solely as substance. Conceiving the unique object of religion in its different forms within the determined religion, then within absolute religion, and finally in philosophy is not contradictory precisely because in fact philosophy conceives the succession of the finite forms of the historical religions as moments of the whole rather than as a simple succession of forms. Once again, the unilateral contradiction is found in the interpretation of W. Jaeschke, who quotes F. Wagner: “die dem Inhalt eigene Form in der Formeinheit von Inhalt und Form besteht, die Form als Form aber dem Inhalt äusserlich bleibt”⁴⁷. The form of representation specific to religion is *aufgehoben* in concept, signaling the *difference* the former contains, marking it decisively as a moment in the dialectic unit of the concept. In conclusion, as regards the content of religion, philosophy plays the role of conferring it the absolute form, of conceiving representation as a moment of the speculative concept.

W. Jaeschke’s interpretation of the relation between philosophy and religion, which discusses both aspects of the relation – the form and

content specific to both – lies under the sign of the unilateral contradiction between representation and concept. Representation is, in its relation to the concept, the weaker term, meaning that the term that makes the relation possible is the concept by introducing the representations to the system. Hence the incomprehensibility of the transition towards philosophy from the point of view of religious conscience. Concretely, the philosophy-religion relation becomes a modality of assuming the object of religion by philosophy and, thus, its “authentication” through the concept. Moreover, the philosophy of religion has the role of operating the surpassing („*Aufhebung*”) of the representational form of the religious content by imposing the necessity of the philosophical concept. W. Jaeschke guides the discussion towards the way in which philosophy or religion conceives the absolute, showing the way in which philosophy, without marking the “end” of religion, corresponds to the appropriate reference to the object they have in common. Yet, can the relation still be conceived beyond this “unilateral contradiction”? I am trying to answer affirmatively, based on the text of the lectures.

My attempt does not deal with surpassing religion through philosophy, or the recognition of the “limits” of the truth of religion – meaning the replacement of this truth with a different one – but with its “reinterpretation.” In a way, I intend to exploit the possibility announced but refused by Jaeschke, which sees the concept resulting from the order of representations rather than under external censure. In this respect, I agree with the observations made by Vieillard-Baron, who proposes, to the same purpose, a reading of Hegel’s philosophy of religion that avoids the topic of the end of religion. W. Jaeschke’s argument, according to which the dialectic relation of the concept and representation, the “negation” that unites them, is actually forgotten, works from the perspective of a “metaphysical” reading of the chapter in the *Science of Logic* devoted to the concept and of the Hegelian works. If understood as a form of thought under the theory of cognition of the absolute, the unilateral contradiction between religion and philosophy is unavoidable. A slight reading of the concept, seen in relation with representation as significance (“*Bedeutung*”) of the latter, opens up the path towards establishing a new relation between the two disciplines.

God and the philosophical Idea. About significance (*Bedeutung*)

Speaking – as shown above – about the form and content of religion and philosophy, Hegel “demonstrates” the possibility of a dialogue between the two; it is a “necessity of the time” (“*Zeitbedürfniss*”), in an age in which the difference between the two can lead on the one hand to a reduction of religion to mere feeling, a subjective relation to an unknowable absolute, and on the other hand, to abandoning the traditional object of philosophy, the super-sensitive, in order to reduce the

philosophical reflection to purely formal activity that comes into “play” with the intellect. The re-evaluation of philosophy from the point of view of reason will alter the relation, by assuming the object of religion as the study object of philosophy – a privileged one at that – not only legitimate, but necessary even. The philosophical “preoccupation” with this object is not in the way of rational theology, which starts its own analysis from the presupposition that this object is an *ens*, an existence, for it starts itself from the manner in which this object is already given within religion. The absolute as object of religion, like God, is actually the object of the philosophy of religion, as Hegel writes in the manuscript of the lectures (ed. J, 1821): “die Religion, die IST, zu erkennen und zu begreifen”⁴⁸. This is the purpose of the lectures on the philosophy of religion. The Hegelian intention may be reformulated from the point of view of the interpretation I propose: the philosophy of religion is concerned with showing that the object of religion, the absolute, is necessarily chosen through reflection as the object of philosophy, that God, in other words, is a manifestation of the Idea, and is thus identical to the Spirit. The content of the fundamental truth of the absolute religion (God is spirit) is to Hegel comprehensible not through the dogmatic identification of the two terms (*God* and *spirit*), but through the common term that connects them: the Idea. The identity between the philosophical concept (the Idea) and the religious representation (God) opens up theology to the field of the philosophy of spirit, which is also a “justification” (*Rechtfertigung*) of the dogma through the evidence of the “proof of the spirit”⁴⁹.

The first moment overlaps with the discussion regarding the concept of “signification” (*Bedeutung*). This is best developed in the 1824 version of the lectures, but the term can be found in other versions as well. The “significance” concept translates, in terms of the expressions that “designate” the modality of the presence of absolute in the conscience, as the relation between representation (the God of religion) and concept (the philosophical Idea). Hegel’s conclusion, according to the observations regarding the double meaning of “significance,” is that “the object of the philosophy of religion is the absolute, not only as thought, but also in its manifestation. The manifest Idea must be conceived in its absolutely concrete significance, in which there lies the determination of self-manifestation and revelation. This side of the existence must in turn be included in the thought, as this is philosophical”⁵⁰. It is precisely the meaning of this transition from the concrete significance of the existence of the Idea to its absolute significance that is clarified by Hegel through the logical mechanism of transition from representation to concept.

By defining religion as the non-mediated conscience relating to the divine being, and philosophy as a mediated relation to the absolute, the problem becomes that of the relation between these two types (mediated and non-mediated) of conscience. The mediation has the meaning of determining what is simple, its “specification” through its negative form

and the return to itself from this relation: “(...) thought dissolves this form of the simple, in which the content is found in representation; dissolving the simple means distinguishing in the simple different determinations and marking them off, so that the simple may become known as something that is different in itself (made of, in D. D. Roşca)”⁵¹. Hegel mentions that the difference between the mediation specific to the cognition of finite things and that specific to reason lies in the fact that, in the latter case, mediation is one “with itself”⁵² and not with an exterior, limitative element. Hegel’s example in the philosophy of religion is the proof of the existence of God. The proof represents the form specific to the mediated science about God. The concept of divine being and its “existence” is thus under “tension”; the latter appears as a determination of the concept and the mediation as the determination therein, transforming faith in one existing God into the necessary cognition of this object.

An example: the ontological argument

The ontological argument is discussed in the chapter on the metaphysical concept of the idea of God in the third part of the lectures⁵³. The orientation of the argument is opposed to the traditional one: it starts from the concept of God and it concludes with His existence. Hegel admits the fact that Anselm gave form to the ontological argument. The critique of the Anselmian form is that it develops within a conception that mistakes the “concept” for the “representation.” Hence, “in the Anselmian type of concept, the presupposition is actually the unity between concept and reality; it does not satisfy reason in this argumentation, as the supposition is that spoken about”⁵⁴. The relation between concept and reality, as long as the concept is understood according to the representation pattern, is non-mediated and asserted as a presupposition. The argument is circular, like the vicious circularity of the intellect. The critique and, at the same time, the restoration of the ontological argument acquires, according to Hegel, the image of the redefinition of the concept from the speculative point of view, thus surpassing the logic of representation: “But the fact that the concept determines itself, objectifies itself, accomplishes itself, is a ulterior conception, which came to light only with the nature of the concept”⁵⁵. The concept, from the speculative point of view, “sets” reality as its own determination, a result exposed in the development of the *Logic*. In turn, the ontological argument takes on the developed form of the logical approach. The mediation with itself of the speculative concept enables the necessary assertion of its identity with the being. The frame of the discussion focusing on the “metaphysical concept of God” imposes the limitation of the analysis to the theoretical value of the arguments. The *Lectures* open the perspective: religion as such constitutes the decisive argument for the existence of the Divine Being. The latter manifests itself only within religion as a form of life of the spirit and, within this form, it is

actually proven as existing. The fundamental assertion of absolute religion – “God is spirit” – is equivalent to the ontological argument “God exists,” and the contact point between the two is the spiritual relation between the finite and the infinite, which, within religion, is an immediate relation, and in philosophy, a speculative one, raised to the form of concept and exposed as a manifestation of the absolute Idea.

The mediated cognition of philosophy opposes the non-mediated cognition of religion, feeling or faith by the fact that the mediation necessary to the concept is a characteristic of this cognition. The content thus becomes objective, the subjective relation to it being justified as a “moment” in the development of the content. Yet another consequence of the transition in Hegel’s philosophy of religion is the form acquired by mediated cognition: “it lies within the thing itself that when one speaks about the science of God, it is immediately about the form of a syllogism”⁵⁶. Thus, the discursiveness of philosophy opposes the forms of the edifying discourse specific to religion, and the argumentative moment plays an essential role. The problem is that of the interpretation of the syllogistic form of science. It is not the exterior mediation of terms specific to the syllogism of finite things. The extremes are, as regards the science of God, labelled as such only through the median term, which unites them as well as maintains their difference (*aufgehoben*). The “method” of this science is the object of the *Logic*. The development of the approach in the *Lectures* pursues, as a guiding thread, the development of the determinations of the concept as they are exposed in the content of the *Logic*: the non-mediated concept – the determined type of concept – the absolute type of concept, the idea. The opposition between these two types of cognition and between their discursive formulas does not refer to the idea of the end of religion, which could arise with the transition from representation to concept. First of all, Hegel states in the 1827 edition of the *Lectures*: “Unmittelbares und vermitteltes Wissen sind von einander unterschieden, und doch gehört eine sehr geringe Untersuchung dazu, um zu sehen, dass sie untrennbar sind”⁵⁷. The *Logic* also describes the relation between the two ways of cognition while warning against their consideration as exterior, as functioning in their singularity. In view of the philosophy of religion, this aspect can be redefined as an attempt to argue against the separation between religion and philosophy: philosophy “accomplishes” religion as a necessity, Christianity being the place where this moment becomes decisive. On the other hand, philosophy as science, the mediated cognition of the absolute, develops in a necessary relation with religion. The philosophy of religion, of history, of art or of nature are not, for instance, in this context, applications of philosophy or mere exemplifications of its fields of use, but “moments” of philosophy itself; the difference between a philosophy “in itself” and its uses is inoperative to Hegel, in spite of the accidentality that accompanies his journalistic or didactical activity. Thus, the transition from the religious representation to the philosophical

concept, which is the stake of the philosophy of religion, can be understood from the perspective of the concept of philosophy as a “clarification” of representation, as an agreement of the form of thought with the infinity of its content. The philosophy of religion generates the transition from judgment to syllogism then, from the abstract concept, defined as singular, to the system of such singularities, to the tension that allows the clarification of the absolute content.

Thus understood, the relation between representation and concept, which describes for Hegel the double sense of “significance,” corresponds to the first moment in a scenario that can be called “interpretative.” The second moment is the “justifying” one (*Rechtfertigung*) and marks the “testimony of the spirit” to the content of the representation. This moment is to be found in the lectures from Berlin, especially where Hegel speaks about the speculative concept of the *relation*.

Conclusions

The question implied by the works I have been referring to is the following: is it possible to speak about the “philosophical” end of religion, just like Hegel spoke about the end of Art, for instance? Is there a boundary between philosophy and religion marking off where one ends and the other begins? Apparently, the reading of the Hegelian works in a metaphysical key would suggest an affirmative answer. A reading of the relation between the two (philosophy and religion) that should start from the relation between representation and concept as forms of the absolute opens up the possibility of a negative answer. Starting from this relation, it is possible to discuss the relation between philosophy and religion as a hermeneutics of religion, which is at the same time a speculative “justification” of religion, a drawing-in of this religion within the horizon of truth.

The Hegelian philosophical gesture is thus “clarifying,” as Noica would say, and philosophy is dangerously placed at the “end” of religion. In the same context, of a “clarified” theology, the necessity of clarification becomes the specification of the essential possibility of theology itself. Noica shows that Hegel seems to have written here (the *Phenomenology of Spirit*) about the thought beyond our thoughts and approaches, whether we philosophize or not. And there is a thought that we bear constantly, but that actually, according to Hegel, “bears us ...”⁵⁸. Thus, my own approach has been an attempt at “slighting” the dialectics of the spirit and radicalizing its meaning as an “environment of clarification” of any type of positivities, of conceiving it as a place of thoughts – a “disclosure,” rather than “surpassing” them. I have investigated the possibility of finding a solution to the problem regarding philosophy and religion: their identity is

not immediate, generating the submission of one to the other, but mediated, and can thus translate the transcendental of understanding.

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Notes

¹ The text predominantly quoted is a translation by D. D. Roșca first published in 1969 and reedited in 1995. The Romanian translator used for his reference text the 1832 edition of the lectures, compiled by Philipp Marheineke. W. Jaeschke shows that the purpose of this edition is of making accessible to the public the ideas displayed by Hegel in his lectures. On the one hand, the editorial presupposition was that of the unity of the Hegelian conception of the philosophy of religion, in all the three versions (1824, 1827, 1831) of the lectures. On the other hand, the texts chosen by Marheineke for the compilation were part of the clearest versions of the students' "summaries," while the least processed version, that of Hegel's manuscript for the first set of lectures, is put between brackets. Through his complete edition, W. Jaeschke raises the issue of the presupposition of Hegel's unitary conception, and through critical analysis, that of the possibility of reinterpreting the succession of lectures as the path to a continuous opening of the project. The quotes are mainly from the Romanian translation by D. D. Roșca (Marheineke edition) – marked "M. ed.", but the significant differences from the Jaeschke edition – marked "J. ed." are discussed.

² See J. Ritter et al. *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, (Basel: Schwebe, 1971-2005), art. *Religionsphilosophie* I refer to below.

³ W. Jaeschke, *Vernunft in die Religion*, (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 1986)

⁴ According to "Pasul către știință" ("The Step towards Science" (Schritt zur Wissenschaft) that designates metaphorically the beginning of the period of the Hegelian works from Jena.

⁵ See W. Jaeschke, *Philosophy of Religion after the Death of God*, in *Philosophy and Religion in German Idealism*, Ed. W. Desmond, E.-O. Onnasch, P. Cruysbergh, (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2004), 1-21

⁶ W. Jaeschke, *Philosophy of Religion after the Death of God*, 2

⁷ W. Jaeschke, *Philosophy of Religion after the Death of God* 15

⁸ I. Kant, *Critica rațiunii pure* (Critique of Pure Reason), (Bucharest: IRI, 1994), 447

⁹ I. Kant, *Critica rațiunii pure* (Critique of Pure Reason), 447

¹⁰ I. Kant, *Critica rațiunii pure* (Critique of Pure Reason), 447

¹¹ A previous discussion initiated by Porfir in *Isagoga*, taken up later, among others, by Boethius and Abelard, reverberates the medieval feud of the universals.

¹² *Cognition* is my translation for the German *Erkenntnis*

¹³ I. Kant, *Critica rațiunii pure* (Critique of Pure Reason), 447

¹⁴ I. Kant, *Critica rațiunii pure* (Critique of Pure Reason), 475

¹⁵ I. Kant, *Critica rațiunii pure* (Critique of Pure Reason), 483

¹⁶ I. Kant, *Ce înseamnă: a se orienta în gândire?* (What Does It Mean: to Orient Oneself in Thinking?), in *Ideea critică și perspectivele filosofiei moderne* (The Critical Idea and the Perspectives of Modern Philosophy). Translation and editing by Alexandru Boboc and Liviu Stroia (București: Paideia, 2000), 47

¹⁷ I. Kant, *Ce înseamnă: a se orienta în gândire?* (What Does It Mean: to Orient Oneself in Thinking?), 54

¹⁸ I. Kant, *Ce înseamnă: a se orienta în gândire?* (What Does It Mean: to Orient Oneself in Thinking?), 54-55

- ¹⁹ Hegel, *Enciclopedia științelor filozofice. Logica* (Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences. Logic), (Bucharest: Humanitas Publishing House, 1995), 51
- ²⁰ Hegel, *Prelegeri de istorie a filozofiei* (Lectures on the History of Philosophy), (Bucharest: Publishing House of the academy, 1966), 587
- ²¹ Hegel, *Prelegeri de istorie a filozofiei* (Lectures on the History of Philosophy), 599
- ²² Hegel, *Credință și știință* (Faith and Science) in Hegel, *Studii filozofice* (Philosophical Studies), (Bucharest: Publishing House of the Academy, 1967), 35
- ²³ Hegel, *Fenomenologia spiritului* (Phenomenology of Spirit), (Bucharest: IRI, 1994), 33
- ²⁴ Hegel, *Fenomenologia spiritului* (Phenomenology of Spirit), 35
- ²⁵ C. Wolff, *Discursus praeliminaris*, in *Gesammelte Werke*, 3. Abt., vol. 46, (Hildesheim, Zürich, New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1983), 69
- ²⁶ C. Wolff, *Vernünfftige Gedancken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen, auch allen Dingen überhaupt*, (Hildesheim, Zürich, New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1983)
- ²⁷ C. Wolff, *Vernünfftige Gedancken...*, par. 955
- ²⁸ C. Wolff, *Vernünfftige Gedancken...*, par. 1004
- ²⁹ C. Wolff, *Vernünfftige Gedancken...*, par. 1083
- ³⁰ C. Wolff, *Vernünfftige Gedancken...*, par. 1079
- ³¹ Paragraphs 316-324 from *Vernunfftige Gedanken...* are dedicated to the discussion regarding the distinction between the figurative and the direct, intuitive (*anschauliche*) cognition. The latter implies the representation of the thing itself; the former is in essence semiotically mediated.
- ³² C. Wolff, *Vernünfftige Gedancken...*, par. 1078
- ³³ Wolff, *Anmerkungen...*, (Hildesheim, Zürich, New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1983), par. 352
- ³⁴ Wolff, *Vernunfftige Gedanken...*, par. 1067
- ³⁵ Wolff, *Vorbericht*, par. 4
- ³⁶ J.-M. Ladrice, *Hegel et la metaphysique wolffienne*, in *Archives de philosophie*, Tome 65 (2002), 15-34
- ³⁷ Hegel, *Prelegeri de filosofie a religiei* (Lectures on the Philosophy of religion), (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1998), 18
- ³⁸ J. D' Hondt, *L' analogie chez Hegel*, in *Philosophie und Poesie. Otto Pöggeler zum 60. Geburtstag*, (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 1988)
- ³⁹ see J.-M. Ladrice, 24-34
- ⁴⁰ Hegel, *Prelegeri de filosofie a religiei* (Lectures on Philosophy of Religion), Roșca Publishing House, 11
- ⁴¹ Hegel, *Prelegeri de filosofie a religiei* (Lectures on Philosophy of Religion), 14
- ⁴² Being a modality of non-mediated cognition, religion is not mistaken for art. Representation as a modality of cognition of the object is characteristic of religion while sensitive intuition is characteristic of art. For the difference between religion and art, see, for instance, paragraphs 556-571 of the Encyclopedia ..., var. 1830
- ⁴³ Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion, Einleitung. Der Begriff der Religion*, neu herausgegeben von Walter Jaeschke, (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1993), 351
- ⁴⁴ W. Jaeschke, *Die Religionsphilosophie Hegels*, (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1983), 112
- ⁴⁵ W. Jaeschke, *Die Religionsphilosophie Hegels*, 116
- ⁴⁶ W. Jaeschke, *Die Religionsphilosophie Hegels*, 118
- ⁴⁷ F. Wagner, *Die Aufhebung der religiösen Vorstellung in den philosophischen Begriff*, apud Jaeschke, *Die Religionsphilosophie Hegels*, 118
- ⁴⁸ See, for instance, the synthesis of the researches on *Hegel et l' idealisme allemand*, Vrin, Paris, 1999. The French researcher reads the Hegelian text from the perspective of a philosophy of spirit in which history censures the metaphysical moment.
- ⁴⁹ Hegel, *Vorlesungen...*, ed. Jaeschke, 10
- ⁵⁰ For the connection between the theological subject of the testimony of the spirit and the logical relation between representation and concept, see Hegel, *Prelegeri de istorie a filosofiei I*

(*Lectures on the History of Philosophy I*), (Bucharest: Publishing House of the Academy, 1996), 63-80 and *Prelegeri de filosofie a religiei* (*Lectures on Philosophy of religion*), (Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 1995), 498-508

⁵¹ Hegel, *Prelegeri de filosofie a religiei* (*Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*), Roșca Publishing House, 20

⁵² Hegel, *Prelegeri de filosofie a religiei* (*Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*), 73

⁵³ Hegel, *Prelegeri de filosofie a religiei* (*Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*), 76

⁵⁴ See Hegel, *Prelegeri de filosofie a religiei* (*Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*), 418-428

⁵⁵ Hegel, *Prelegeri de filosofie a religiei* (*Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*), 423

⁵⁶ Hegel, *Prelegeri de filosofie a religiei* (*Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*), 423

⁵⁷ Hegel, *Prelegeri de filosofie a religiei* (*Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*), 79-80

⁵⁸ Hegel, *Vorlesungen...*, ed. Jaeschke, 81