GOOD INFINITY: HEGEL, LEVINAS AND THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF ETHICAL LIFE

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"It is finished." (John 19:30)

Rightly did Hegel say that Plato in comparison with Aristotle is 'not ideal enough', if idealism is the power of seeing the ideal elements in the actual in preference to destroying the actual in the hope of finding the ideal elsewhere.
(W.D. Ross)

SUMMARY

This study presents a critique of the social and political thought of Emmanuel Levinas. We aim to demonstrate that Levinas' hostile characterisation of Hegel's System serves to disguise a latent 'Hegelian' dimension in his own thought. Levinas' covert Hegelianism has essentially three aspects: first, Levinas, like Hegel, advances a post-critical concept of the infinite; second, his philosophical discourse bears a strong family resemblance to Hegel's speculative logic; and, third, notwithstanding his protests to the contrary, his philosophy exhibits a systematic structure (in the speculative sense of the term). By identifying these speculative motifs in Levinas' work we show, first, that it is possible to subject Levinas to an immanent Hegelian critique and we then proceed to execute it.

The dominant trend in Levinasian interpretation, follows Derrida, and tends to overlook the significance of Levinas' concept of society. We aim to show, however, that the notion of a visible ethical community is at the centre of Levinas' philosophy. Moreover, we attempt to demonstrate that Levinas' concept of an ethical community is ultimately incompatible with the subjective principle underlying modern social and political life. This in turn leads Levinas to violate his own emphasis on respecting the absolute alterity of the Other. Finally, we attempt to show that Hegel's System provides a way of redeeming the ambition of Levinas' philosophy, while avoiding its negative implications.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN TEXT AND NOTES

WORKS BY HEGEL

ETW   'Der Geist des Christendums' Shcriften. Early Theological Writings. Trans. T.M. Knox. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1975.

SEL   System der Sittlichkeit. Hegel's System of Ethical Life and his First Philosophy of Spirit. Trans. H.S. Harris and W.Cerf. New York. SUNY. 1979.

Phen   Phänomenolgie des Geistes. Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit. Tran. A.V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1977.

SL   Wissenschaft der Logic. Hegel's Science of Logic. Trans. A.V. Miller. London. George Unwin and Allen. 1969.

Enz I   Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften I: Die Wissenschaft der Logik. Hegel's Logic. Trans. William Wallace. Oxford. Clarendon Press. 1975.

Enz II   Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften II. Die Naturphilosophie tr Hegel's Philosophy of Nature. Trans. A.V. Miller. Oxford: Clarendon. 1970.

Enz III   <u>Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften III</u>. <u>Die Philosopie des Geistes</u>. <u>Hegel's Philosophy of Mind</u>. Trans. A.V. Miller. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1971.

PR   <u>Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechtes</u>. <u>Elements of the Philosophy of Right</u>. Ed. Allen Wood. Trans. H.S. Nisbet. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1991.

LPR   <u>Verlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion</u>. 2 vols. <u>Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion</u>. 3 vols. Trans. Peter C. Hodgson and R.F. Brown. Berkeley. University of California Press 1984-86.

LPH   <u>Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte</u>. <u>The Philosophy of History</u>. Trans. J. Sibree. New York, Dover, 1956.

WORKS BY LEVINAS

CP   <u>Collected Philosophical Papers</u>. Tr. A. Lingis. The Hague. Martinus Nighoff. 1987.

DL   <u>Difficile liberté</u>. <u>Difficult Freedom</u>. Translated by Sean Hand. Baltimore John Hopkins University Press, 1990.

EE   <u>De l'existence à l'existant</u>. <u>Existence and Existents</u>. Trans. A. Lingis. The Hague: Martinus Nighoff, 1978.

EI   Ethique et Infini. Ethics and Infinity. Trans. R.A. Cohen. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University, 1985.

OBBE   Autrement qu'être ou au-dela de l'essence. Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence. Trans. A. Lingis. The Hague: Martinus Nighoff, 1981.

Th I   Théorie de l'intuition dans la phénoménologie de Husserl. The Theory of Intuition in Husserl's Phenomenology. Trans. A. Orianne. Evanston. Ill. Northwestern University Press, 1973.

TI   Totalitie et Infini. Totality and Infinity. Trans. A. Lingis. The Hague. Martinus Nighoff, 1979.

INTRODUCTION

The philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas is steadily emerging as an important influence on contemporary Anglo-Saxon thought, particularly in the area of political theology but also in social and political theory generally. The appeal of Levinas' 'ethical metaphysics' is that it promises to meet the challenge of postmodernism, as it were, on its own territory. That is to say, Levinas' philosophy appears to embrace the postmodernist emphasis on anti-foundationalism, indeterminacy and pluralism while, crucially, rejecting the politics and moral relativism that this is conventionally thought to entail. Indeed, Levinas maintains it is the very incapacity of modern philosophy and the state to ground their own theory and practice that opens the ontological order to the dimension of ethical transcendence.[1] In short, then, Levinas offers us an <u>absolute</u> <u>ethic</u> <u>without</u> <u>foundations</u>. This has led a number of contemporary thinkers to contend that his philosophy may provide the basis for a radical, critical, progressive and emancipatory politics.[2] In this study we shall not confront their claims directly; rather we will undertake a systematic examination of Levinas' social and political philosophy in order to place ourselves in a position to evaluate them at a future date.

Now, it is our central contention that Hegel's system is uniquely qualified to provide the basis on which to present a sustained critical examination of Levinas' philosophy, insofar as it is the only post-critical philosophical system that can fully grant the absolute presuppositions upon which Levinas' philosophy rests, and thereby subject it to a thorough-going <u>internal</u> critique.

Therefore, the main objective of this study is to undertake an immanent Hegelian critique of the social and political implications of Levinas' philosophical thought. However, an important subsidiary aim is to contribute towards the renewal of Hegelian philosophy as the basis of an ethical comprehension of modern political and social life.

Broadly, and abstractly, speaking, we shall seek to develop the following argument. First we shall attempt to show that Levinas' understanding of infinite alterity falls within Hegel's concept of the true infinite. and that therefore Hegel and Levinas have a common point of philosophical departure. Second, we highlight the fact that Levinas' notion of the face to face 'relation' has a collective or societal dimension. That is to say, it constitutes a separate 'society of faces' standing over and against the 'faceless' world of the 'state'. In short, Levinas is committed to a notion of ethical life. Third, we aim to demonstrate how this separation of this 'society of infinity' from 'the state' results in a concept of community that is ultimately incompatible with the subjective principle underlying modernity. Fourth, we shall also show, that insofar as Levinas bases his philosophy of the Other on exclusion, it is necessarily both violent and exposed to violence, in a way that directly contradicts its most basic axiom.[3/] Finally, in and through the process of demonstrating these points we will endeavour to indicate how Hegel's system, insofar as it places the speculative relation to infinity directly within history and not at one remove from it, is able, in principle, to fulfil the ambition of Levinas' philosophy, and so accomplish an absolute recognition of

the otherness of the Other, in a way that is reconcilable with the existent plurality of modern forms of subjectivity.

Of course, we are fully aware that our project faces a number of difficulties. To begin with are we not simply proposing to subsume Levinas under Hegel's critique of Judaism? And would not this study, then, itself be a prime instance of the 'imperialism of the concept' that Levinas ceaselessly warns against?[4] To meet this objection we must make it clear from the outset that we intend to confine our assessment of Levinas' oeuvre solely to a consideration of his philosophical works. Accordingly, no reference will be made in the pages that follow to Levinas' religious writings. Levinas himself insists that there is a clear distinction to be drawn between his philosophical and confessional texts, and that the former are not to be adjudged on the basis of the latter but purely on their own merits.[5] Moreover, Hegel's early critique of Judaism has no historical specificity; rather it stands as a shorthand term to describe various forms of moral positivism. Hegel's target is more often than not Kant rather than the religion of Israel. Indeed, one might say, that the term 'Judaism' in Hegel's early oeuvre functions in much the same way as that of 'Hegel' in Levinas' philosophy, that is to say, as an exaggerated ideal-typical construct designed to encapsulate the central features of a given philosophical-cultural phenomenon. In his later work, Hegel developed a more nuanced and valid understanding of Judaism, but this is based on Biblical sources alone and makes no reference whatsoever to the Talmudic tradition.[6] Hence it would be of limited value in assessing the political implications of Levinas'

Judaica. In any case, such an undertaking is beyond the remit of this study.

A second powerful objection to our project is this: does not the notion of an immanent critique imply a philosophy of immanence?[7] And, if so, are we not begging the question against Levinas from the very beginning? In short, does not our entire study threaten to produce an elaborate apogogic proof of Levinas' central contention that Hegelian philosophy is the philosophy of the same? One possible Hegelian response to this charge is to positively embrace the circularity of the system and to defy Levinas to formulate an objection to it which does not presuppose the logic of its categorial determinations. Gadamer concisely sums up this standard Hegelian riposte as follows:

> The appeal to immediacy - whether of bodily nature, or that of the Thou making claims on us, or of the impenetrable factualness of historical change or the reality of relations of production - has always been self-refuting, in that it is not itself an immediate attribute but a self-reflective activity.[8]

However, this response will not suffice to dispose of the radical challenge Levinas' ethics poses for Hegel's system. First, Levinas anticipates this formal repudiation of his notion of ethical transcendence and develops a counter-argument, on the basis of an analogy with scepticism and its refutation, to the effect that just as the rationalist must acknowledge, at least for a moment, the truth of the sceptic's radical doubt, if only for the purposes of refuting it, so, too, the philosophy of immanence must perforce, for an instant, 'see into' the absolute otherness that its own reflective

edifice negates, as it were, in the very act of negating it. Thus the self-refutation of absolute otherness in the reflective statement that expresses it becomes the very exigency by which its transcendent content is conveyed before us. Second, the "ethical immediacy" to which Levinas refers, is, therefore, not so much pre-reflective as trans-reflective and, indeed, trans-ontological. As Levinas puts it:

> Ethics is not derived from an ontology of nature;
> it is its opposite, a meontology which affirms a
> meaning beyond Being, a primary mode of non-
> Being (me-on).[9]

It would appear, then, that Hegel's System must either dogmatically repudiate Levinas' notion of ethical transcendence or else give up its own claim to completeness.

However, this conclusion only follows if we assume an analytical connection between the method of immanent critique and an (ultimately materialist) philosophy of immanence. But, as we have already indicated, it is our contention that no such link is to be found in Hegel's System. This is, of course, not to say that many Hegelian scholars have not postulated such a connection; Levinas' overt characterisation of Hegel stands in this tradition. However, it is our view that such interpretations of the system are radically mistaken. Accordingly, the Hegelian reading of Levinas developed in this study implicitly rules out all anthropological and immanentist interpretations of the Wissenschaft. (For example, A. Kojeve[10]; G. Lukács[11]; H. Marcuse[12]; S. Rosen[13]; R. Soloman[14]). For the same reason, we also set ourselves against all 'large-entity' or Neo-Platonic interpretations, which present the absolute as an emanative cosmic substance (C. Taylor[15]; M.

Rosen[16/]. Finally we reject 'non-metaphysical' reconstructions of the system which maintain that Hegel is primarily a category-theorist (K. Hartman[17/]; T. Pinkard[18/]; and A. White[19/]) and transcendentalist interpretations which aim to demonstrate that Hegel's philosophy represents the immanent completion of the Kantian project.

Our own approach, instead, attempts to draw together three distinct strands of contemporary Hegelian scholarship. First, we are indebted to those commentators who place Hegel's Christology at the centre of the system. (For example, J. Burbidge[20/]; L. Dickey[21/]; E. Fackenheim[22/]; J. Hyppolite[23/]; W. Jaeschke[24/]; H. Kung[25/]; Q. Lauer[26/] and M. Westphal[27/].) Collectively these interpreters demonstrate that Hegel's system is not a philosophy of immanence but consists in the systematic demonstration of the speculative unity of transcendence and immanence. Moreover, although Hegel sometimes refers to 'God' as an absolute substance, it is abundantly clear from Hegel's use of the term that this is a necessary concession on his part to the exigencies of natural language; he nowise conceives of the infinite as an entity, not even as a 'supreme' entity, but always as a relation between the finite and that which exceeds it. Second, we also draw heavily upon post-Adornian readings of Hegel which illuminate the nature of speculative discourse as the dynamic attribution of an identity of identity and non-identity between substance and subject (for example, G. Rose[28/]; S. Houlgate[29/] and S. Žižek[30/]). This approach precludes the hypostatisation of Hegel's speculative terms into determinate entities, that is characteristic of so many misrepresentations of his thought. Third, we endorse a critical

approach to Hegel's Wissenschaft which points up its radically presuppositionless and anti-foundational point of departure (for example, R. Dein Winfield[31], K. Dove[32]). In our view, the integration of these three strands of interpretation provides us with a consistent hemenutical key that is able to do justice to the integrity of Hegel's absolute method.

We conclude from this that Levinas' presentation of Hegel's System as an immanent panlogism is simply false. Moreover, Levinas' caricature of Hegel serves to conceal an important Hegelian dimension in Levinas' own thought. In saying this we are endorsing Robert Bernasconi's claim that Levinas' presentation of the infinite - finite relation as a 'relation without relation' constitutes a [Hegelian] form of speculative discourse.[33] However, we shall go further than this and propound the stronger thesis that Levinas' philosophy tout court constitutes a speculative system coextensive in terms of its range and scope with Hegel's Wissenschaft.

We may directly illustrate our point with reference to Levinas' understanding of the history of philosophy. Levinas contends that for the most part the Western philosophical tradition constitutes a homogeneous bloc founded on the primacy of Being and the denial of absolute alterity. However, he credits a select few thinkers with having stumbled upon the notion of ethical transcendence. At various points in his writings, Levinas cites Plato, Aristotle, Denis the Areopagite, Descartes, and Bergson as examples of this, but never Hegel. However, once Hegel's philosophy is understood speculatively we can see that this is an unjustified omission on

Levinas' part.[34]/ For Levinas and Hegel are agreed that it is possible to _conceive_ the infinite in a positive sense, that is to say, otherwise that as a mere negation of the finite; that there is a form of reason that is higher than ratiocination; and that it is possible meaningfully to transcend the limits imposed by ordinary language. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that Hegel's distinction between Reason (Vernunft) and Understanding (Verstand) is broadly parallel, _mutatis mutandis_, with Levinas' presentation of the distinction between Saying (le dire) and the Said (le dit). Therefore, in the same measure as Hegel's speculative reason transcends the dialectical standpoint of the Understanding, it is equally transcendent with respect to the Said (le dit), ergo it cannot be reduced to the level of a theme within the Said, as Levinas asserts. Conversely, Vernunft occupies the same ideational level as Saying, or, stated in Levinasian terms, one of the ways in which Saying has 'erupted' into the history of Western philosophy is in the guise of Hegelian Reason. In short, Levinas cannot consistently deny that his philosophy is immanent within Hegel's System without pari passu repudiating the basic presuppositions of his own philosophical thought.

The immanence of Levinas' philosophy to Hegel's System further entails that the present study is, at least in part, as much a Levinasian reading of Hegel as a Heglian reading of Levinas. This is entirely consistent with the absolute method, in so far as the latter represents the full presentation of all philosophical perspectives. It will be noted that this also implies a distinction must be made between the absolute method and the textual corpus of which Hegel is the author. Thus we shall have no hesitation in

criticising Hegel's authorship from the standpoint of the <u>absolute method</u>.

In summation, then, it is our view, that the philosophy of Hegel and Levinas both have as their "object" a single infinite-totality. This is not to say that they have a shared understanding vis-a-vis the nature of this infinite-totality and its inner articulations; but only that it is the <u>same</u> infinite - totality they subject to diverse interpretations.

The point of entry into the system is the Preface to the <u>Phenomenology of Spirit</u>, which doubles as an introduction to the system as a whole. The express purpose of the Preface is to provide a means by which the individual consciousness may be granted access to the standpoint of the Notion. In Hegel's famous words:

> The individual has the right to demand that science should at least provide him with the ladder to this standpoint, should show him the standpoint within himself. [Phen Para 26]

Joseph Flay perspicuously observes that the most significant feature of Hegel's use of the ladder metaphor in this context is not the suggestion of a 'stairway' to the absolute, but rather the emphasis Hegel places upon the necessity to show natural consciousness the standpoint of the absolute <u>within itself</u>.[35/] Immediately following on from the passage cited above, Hegel continues by saying:

> His right is based on his absolute independence, which he is conscious of possessing in every

> stage of his knowledge; for in each one, whether recognised by science or not, and whatever the context might be, the individual is the absolute form ie, he is the immediate certainty of himself and, if this expression is to be preferred, he is therefore unconditioned <u>being</u>. [Ibid]

We see from this statement, first, that, for Hegel, the individual always possesses an absolute reflexivity vis a vis its own existential irreducibility "which he is conscious of possessing at every stage of his knowledge" ... "whether recognised by Science or not", and, second, that it had the absolute "within itself", in a sense, as we shall see, that includes but also transcends the Platonic motif of immanent recollection. The relationship between the 'absolute standpoint' and the existential self constitutes the structural axis of the Phenomenology, which consists of a double narration wherein the experience <u>of</u> consciousness is demonstrated to be the experience of the absolute <u>in</u> consciousness.

However, the Phenomenology does not begin with the bare individual, but with "natural consciousness", the post-Cartesian reflective subject. This yields an epistemological standpoint which posits a knowing subject standing over and against a favourable object. Cognition is conceived either as an instrument, actively synthesising intuitions with concepts in accordance with the <u>a priori</u> forms of the Understanding (Kant), or else as a medium, passively receiving sense impressions and duly 'abstracting' concepts from them (Locke). Cognition qua instrument necessarily alters the object in the act of cognizing it; cognition qua medium inevitably 'refracts' the object through its own prism. In both instances the net result is the same: we only know the object "for

us", as it were, "subjectively", not as it is "in-itself" [cf: Phen Para 73].

As a consequence, reflective consciousness is haunted by the fear of scepticism, and this leads it to develop a preoccupation with method, in a vain attempt to divorce its own contribution, so to speak, to the cognition of the object so it might come to know the latter in its objective purity. Hegel, however, proclaims this fear of error to be the error; for it is grounded in an undisclosed fear of the truth [cf: Phen Para 74].

Hegel's critique of "natural consciousness" has certain parallels with Husserl's dismissal of the 'natural attitude'. Husserl by the singular device of the phenomenological epoche suspends the 'natural attitude' and places consciousness within the field of pure phenomena. From this standpoint, the sceptical predicament that bedevils transcendental and empirical philosophy, viz, how to subtract the contribution of cognition to the knowledge of the object so as to know the 'thing-in-itself', is exposed as something of a pseudo-problem. For, Husserl, both the reflective ego and its transcendent object are the result of quite distinct intentional acts (Erlebnisse) of transcendental consciousness. Levinas, in his early study of Husserl's theory of intuition, sums up Husserl's stance as follows:

> Any theory of knowledge presupposes, indeed, the existence of an object and of a subject that must come in contact with each other. Knowledge is then defined as this contact, and this always leaves the problem of determining whether knowledge does not falsify the being which it presents to the subject. But the problem is exposed as fictitious once we understand that the very idea of "an object" is to be found in the

concrete life of a subject; that a subject is not a
substance in need of a bridge, namely knowledge, in
order to reach an object, but that the secret of its
subjectivity is its being present in front of objects. [ThI
24-25]

In this work, Levinas goes on to develop his own distinctive
thesis that Husserl's transcendental phenomenology is, in essence
- since it presupposes the absolute being of consciousness - an
ontology.

Now, Hegel appears to have anticipated Husserl when, in the
Introduction to the <u>Phenomenology</u>, he maintains that
phenomenological inquiry does not proceed by seeking to apply an
autonomously justified method to a pre-given object-domain. On
the contrary, it is only by leaving aside all presuppositions so as to
simply describe what is there before us that "we" - the
phenomenological observers - "succeed in contemplating the matter
as it is in and for itself" [Phen Para 85]. Thus, in a similar vein to
Husserl, Hegel maintains that:

The distinction between the 'in itself' and knowledge is
already present in the fact that consciousness knows
an object at all. Something is <u>for it</u> the <u>in-itself</u> and
knowledge, or being of the object for consciousness, is,
for it, another moment. (Ibid)

Moreover, since both 'subject' and 'object' are both equally
'for consciousness' it follows that there is no need to impart an
external criteria to determine whether they correspond with one
another, rather "consciousness is itself their comparison" (Ibid).

At this juncture, however, Husserl and Hegel part company. Husserl follows up the initial epoche of the natural attitude with a further series of reductions designed to uncover the pure eidetic essences underlying the totality of phenomena and the transcendental subjectivity through which they are constituted. Hegel, on the other hand, is concerned to describe and recollect [Er-innerung] the successive shapes of consciousness (Gestalt) and their related forms of life, as they appear in time, from the standpoint of absolute knowing. We must stress that "absolute knowing" does not constitute the kind of subject-substance monism or Absolute Ego which Levinas finds in Husserl. Rather, as we shall see, it refers to the standpoint of a philosophical consciousness which has transcended the forms of representational depiction of the absolute.

From the very outset of his philosophical career, Levinas rejected Husserl's emphasis on the primacy of theoretical reason. Heavily influenced by Heidegger, he ends his early work on Husserl's Wesensschau by declaring that the eidetic reduction must be grounded in historicity, intersubjectivity and care and not, as Husserl would have it, vice-versa. However, Levinas' 'ontologisation' of Husserl is decidedly un-Heideggerian in one highly significant respect. Contra Heidegger, Levinas maintains that negativity is not the primary determinans of Being. On this point, faithful to Husserl, Levinas contends that negation is an internal modification of the plentitudinous, absolute Ego. This statement of the matter has the important implied corollary that, insofar as negativity does not transcend the absolute being of consciousness, but is rather a specific Erlebnis, as it were, internal

to it, then the "outside" to the absolute Ego, if there is an "outside", is not <u>pure nothingness</u> but <u>absolute otherness</u>.

Now, it is our contention that essentially the exact same view of the relation between absolute otherness and negativity is to be found in Hegel's <u>Logic</u>. The Hegelian Absolute is not, as one commentator avers, a pure <u>negatio negans</u>.[36/] For Hegel, otherness, in an absolute sense, is <u>prior</u> to negation. Being and nothingness necessarily stand together in a relation of dialectical opposition. Absolute Otherness - or "Becoming" - constitutes the speculative <u>Unity</u> of being and nothingness. In our view, the central structural principle of Hegel's entire system - the negation of the negation - is predicated on the derivative status of negativity with respect to absolute alterity. It is crucial to note that in the celebrated movement of the negation of the negation, the second negation is qualitatively different to that of the first. The first negation is operative within the realm of representation and phenomena, in short, in the realm of oppositions; hence this necessarily entails it is implicated in a world of force and violence. The second negation, by contrast, is as peaceful as the first is violent, for it assumes the form of power and authority <u>over</u> force and violence. Ultimately, the negation of finite consciousness is negated in turn by an overarching absolute otherness that is both <u>in</u> and <u>beyond</u> total negativity. Indeed, as we shall see, Hegel's critical distinction between the good or true infinity and the bad infinity rests upon the final presence of this "moment" of pure, unconditioned <u>transcendence</u> within the System.

Levinas renders the priority of absolute alterity to being and negation which we found implicit in Husserl's phenomenology, fully explicit in his mature work. This constitutes the substantial ground of his break with Heidegger's philosophy. It also provides the metaphysical basis for his non-negative concept of the infinite. But, for Levinas, the infinite is revealed and known to the finite not through mystical intuition or miracles, still less through theoretical proofs, but rather in the ethical witness borne by one-for-the-Other. In Levinas' words "Metaphysics is enacted in ethical relations" (TI 79). Moreover, the ethical relation by its very nature assumes a collective, social character:

> An infinity that does not close in upon itself in a circle but withdraws from the ontological extension so as to leave a place for a separated being exists divinely. Over and beyond the totality it inaugurates a society. The relations that are established between the separated being and Infinity redeem what diminution there was in the contraction creative of Infinity. Man redeems creation. (TI 104)

Thus, the pluralisation of the ethical relation founds an ethico-religious community, although, as we shall see below, according to Levinas, it is equally true to say that the ethico-religious community is a precondition of the ethical relation.

Now, we find a parallel development in Hegel's speculative Trinitarianism:[37/] the non-negative infinite, while remaining absolutely Other, nonetheless enters into the realm of absolute negativity and finitude, reconciles it to itself, and then withdraws into its absolute alterity, leaving only a spiritual trace of its divine presence within the world, and in each finite consciousness. This, in turn, inaugurates a spiritual community dedicated to the

commemoration of the redemptive event, on the one hand, through the symbolic reenactment of the implicit reconciliation of the divine and the human, and, on the other hand, by undertaking the vocation to make the implicit reconciliation between the divine and the human the fully explicit and <u>actual</u> principle of the secular world. For Hegel, therefore, no less than for Levinas, "man redeems creation".

However, these broad parallels co-exist alongside profound divergences between Hegel and Levinas' thought. These are essentially two-fold, first they concern their respective understanding of the inner-nature of the infinite-finite relation and, second, they relate it to their representations of the relationship between the religious community and history.

In contrast to Hegel, Levinas holds that though the infinite has been 'put in'[38]/ the finite, it is not thereby <u>reconciled</u> with it. For Levinas, reconciliation would be tantamount to the refutation of the absolute otherness of the Other. Moreover, it would substitute an egoistic concern for personal salvation for the divine-ethical command to be one-for-the-Other. Hegel, on the other hand, would consider the denial of reconciliation to be itself unethical, insofar as this would entail that the self is not fully liberated from the fear of death to a life of freedom, and hence would inhibit the full development of the personality that is necessary to the accomplishment of an absolute relation to the absolute.

A second major area of divergence between Hegel and Levinas, which in large measure follows from the first, is that whereas Levinas maintains that the ethico-religious community is essentially a-historical and as such, removed from the vicissitudes of historical change, and therefore stands over and against an unredeemed world; Hegel, contends that from the very beginning of history, religion and the secular realm have remained in an unceasing dialectical relation to one another; the misrecognitions and inversions that this relation has undergone, is necessary to the fulfilment of the vocation of both religion and the state.

This identity and difference in the content of their philosophy also account for the identity and difference in the form of their philosophical method. Hegel maintains that the Absolute cannot be comprehended in isolation from its immanent development in modern forms of philosophical reason. To attempt to counterpose an absolute intuition of the absolute to the prevailing systems of reflective philosophy would simply reduce the absolute to a one-sided, empty determination. Therefore, Hegel insists, it is indeed necessary to show how the Absolute is implied by or appears through the illusions and the antinomies of the reflection standpoint.

To this end, the phenomenological observer identifies with the theoretical and practical stances of natural consciousness and follows the way in which the latter's own experimental self-development brings it into collision with the given epistemological or cultural configuration which constitute the immediate horizon of its life-activity. The result is a collapse into antinomy and the

dissolution or 'falling to ground' of the particular philosophical paradigm and its related form of life. Eventually, after retraversing the entire itinerary of the <u>Bildung</u> of western philosophical and moral consciousness, the subject of the <u>phenomenology</u> attains to the standpoint of science <u>(Wissenschaft)</u>. and what first appeared to it as alien and external, is now disclosed to be the truth of its own existential self-certainty.

For Hegel, the "motor" of the phenomenological development is the speculative proposition. In contrast with ordinary propositions, speculative sentences do not simply assert an identity between a fixed subject and an accidental predicate, but express the dynamic internalisation, as it were, of the predicate in the subject-term. We see the nature of this distinction when we consider that in the case of an ordinary judgement S is P, for example, "the rose is red", the correction of such a judgement, although it requires an adjustment on the part of the judging subject, evidently leaves the object, i.e. the rose, just as it was. Conversely it follows that since the object remains entirely intact, the subject's relation to the object also remains essentially unchanged, and this, in turn, entails that its reflective equilibrium is relatively untroubled. However, Hegel's point is that all our judgements are made within the context of a given paradigm, and are therefore always, so to speak, theory-dependent. Therefore, at certain junctures, a revision of the subject's judgement of an object will not simply require a mere adjustment on her part, but may well result in a transformation of the prevailing paradigm and thus generate a whole new subject-object configuration. Hegel sums up such a development as follows:

> ... in the alteration of knowledge, the objects itself alters for it too, for the knowledge that was present was essentially knowledge of the object: as the knowledge changes, so too does the object, for it essentially belonged to this knowledge. (Phen Para 85)

In other words, when the conceptual framework in which an object is apperceived alters, then so too does the nature of the object, and this brings about a corresponding change in the subject-object relation.

Speculative experience therefore consists in a constant process of recognition of self and object. Hegel sums up this phenomenological development as follows:

> Since consciousness thus finds that its knowledge does not correspond with its object, the object itself does not stand the test; in other words, the criterion for testing is altered when that for which it was to have been the criterion fails to pass the test; and the testing is not only a testing of what we know but also a testing of the criterion of what knowing is. (Ibid)

Experientially, the first relation to the object is negated by the realisation of the untruth of the relation. This results in the Aufhebung of the previous relationship in a new subject-object configuration. That is to say, A's re-cognition of (its relation to B) transforms the relation of B to A. Through this alteration, the essence of B shows itself in the way it appears to A. Yet it must be borne in mind that there is in fact a double transitivity involved here: the appearing of essence in being is, at one and the same time, the appearing of the Notion in essence.

At each stage of its phenomenological progress, then, the subject experiences the contradiction between its definition of the object and the object <u>in re</u>. In Hegel's words, "It suffers, as we might put it, a counter thrust. Starting from the subject, as though it were a permanent ground, it finds that since the predicate is really the substance, the Subject has passed over into the Predicate" (Phen Para 60). As a result, the subject no longer stands in a merely external relation to the predicate; rather, the predicate has become part of the very substance of its own subjectivity. From the first person standpoint of natural consciousness, therefore, "the realisation of the Notion counts for it rather as the loss of its own self; for it does lose its truth on this path. The road can therefore be regarded as the pathway of <u>doubt</u>, or more precisely as the way of despair" (Phen Para 78). But this <u>descent</u> into despair is equally a necessary and essential moment in the <u>ascent</u> towards absolute knowing. The repeated fall into the abyss of absolute negativity punctuates the successive transitions of consciousness's phenomenological journey: from the struggle for mastery, through to Stoic indifference, to the formal abstraction of the Kantian moral will, and the revolutionary nihilism of the terror, culminating in the pure conscience of the Beautiful soul. The concomitant loss of the natural self "renders Spirit competent for the first time to examine what truth is" (Ibid). By working through the totality of merely finite representations of the infinite, the subject is finally brought face to face with an absolute otherness that suffers the negative in itself. Thus, the overcoming of all pictorial representations of the absolute - the death of God - is <u>pari passu</u> the revelation of the absolute <u>in</u> consciousness and the re-birth of consciousness <u>in</u> the absolute, i.e. in spirit (<u>Geist</u>). Hence,

the subject, through the infinite withdrawal from all determination, is finally elevated to the standpoint of a universal self-consciousness. Although this 'ascent' is absolutely necessary, it nonetheless represents only the penultimate moment in the movement towards absolute knowing. For having attained to the status of a universal self-consciousness, the subject must allow itself to be absolved of its completed selfhood. Absolute knowledge, therefore, is neither the correspondence between a concept and an object - adequatio rerum et intellectus - for Hegel this is mere 'correctness' (Richtigheit): nor is it a total coherence between wholes and parts; it is rather the unity of identity and non-identity between infinite alterity and unconditioned finite being. This result constitutes the alpha and omega of the entire system: the accomplishment of what consciousness already "is", viz, the unity of absolute otherness and negative self-activity. In Hegel's words:

> Pure self-recognition in absolute otherness, this Aether as such, is the ground and soil of science or knowledge in general. The beginning of philosophy presupposes or requires that consciousness should dwell in this element. (Phen Para 26)

The overcoming of all representational depictions of the absolute eo ipso raises consciousness to the standpoint of pure thought. This allows the transition to a presuppositionless, and hence self-determining, Science of Logic, that, in turn, provides the conceptual basis for an immanent, self-determining system of ethical life (Sittlichkeit). In the words of Richard Dien Winfield "In the domain of theory, a logic of self-determination realizes the radical self-responsibility and independence that reason has traditionally claimed in attempting to obtain wisdom. In the field of

practice, the reality of self-determination establishes a self-ordered system of institutions beholden to no standards that are not self-imposed".39/ Both the Science of Logic and the Philosophy of Right are predicated on the historical advance to modernity and the resultant liberation, in principle, of both the mind and the will from all natural determinancy and facticity; though it is equally true to say that, for Hegel, the advent of modernity is grounded in the Absolute Idea and the actualization of the Idea in the concept of right.

In our view, the trinity of texts: the Phenomenology, the Science of Logic and the Philosophy of Right constitute the kernel of Hegel's system and its absolute method: we go as far as to say they may be designated as the system-proper. Accordingly, in this study, we shall treat all Hegel's early writings, of the Frankfurt and Jena periods (including the Phenomenology) as, essentially, an extended propaedeutic to these three works; and we shall interpret Hegel's later writings, the Heidelberg Encyclopaedia (and its revised editions) and the Berlin Lectures, as an exposition of their results in all fields of human inquiry and knowledge.

In the light of this brief overview of Hegel's system, and by way of establishing the organizational framework of our study, we shall now attempt to add substance to our claim that Levinas' philosophy constitutes a speculative system coextensive in scope with, and immanent to, Hegel's Science. Our treatment of Levinas' philosophy will almost be wholly confined to a consideration of, and commentary upon, Levinas' two major works: Totality and Infinity and Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence. There are

two reasons governing our decision to make these two works the main focus of our attention. First, we consider TI and OBBE to represent the culmination of Levinas' entire philosophical development. His other works and essays (outside of his confessional texts) are comprised either of work-in-progress which receives its definitive statement in TI and OBBE, or, else of a restatement of their conclusions. Second, we shall seek to show that, for Levinas, TI and OBBE constitute a single, systematic unity. In our view, OBBE does not consist of an auto-critique and self-repudiation on Levinas' part of the method and conclusions of TI; on the contrary, it represents the completion of the earlier work.

Now, it is by no means fortuitous that the key to understanding the relationship between Levinas' two major works is to be found in his covert relationship to Hegel's philosophy. The structure of TI reflects the combined influence of Husserl, Hegel and Franz Rosenzweig on Levinas' major work. From Husserl, Levinas retains the notion of Wesensschau, although he re-works it in a radically new direction. At one level, then, the work consists of a series of phenomenological reductions, wherein the conditioned strata: labour, representation, civil society and the state, are secondary to, and derivative of, their ethical foundation in the 'idea of infinity', the face to face, the dwelling and fraternity.

However, following in the footsteps of Franz Rosenzweig,40/ Levinas eschews Husserl's transcendentalism, and, by implication, Heidegger's notion of historicity, and maintains that the unconditional, ethical foundation of being is "discontinuously continuous" with the historical and phenomenal contents that are

secondary to it. The result is that there is not one but two 'deductions' to be found in TI. On the one hand, Levinas presents the ethical community as a <u>stasis</u> which exists in its own 'infinite time' outside of history. On the other hand, he counterposes this notion of a static community to an account of the <u>genesis</u> of the socio-historical world, culminating in the development of civil society and the rational state. Now, his presentation of the phenomenological genesis of the historical world is not modelled on Husserl's notion of the <u>epoché</u>: rather it takes the form of a naturalistic appropriation of Hegel's concept of phenomenology, that bears the stamp of Kojeve. However, contrary to Hegel's <u>Phenomenology</u>, there is in TI no possibility of an ultimate reconciliation between the ethical community and the world, since, according to Levinas, the ethical relation <u>requires</u> that 'fraternity' and the state remain in a fixed antithesis to one another.

In contrast to TI, where the argument is expounded <u>sub specie aeternitas</u>, OBBE begins from the standpoint of a consciousness immersed within the field of representation (the said). The two works overlap to a large extent in terms of their content, with two important exceptions. First, there is no analogue in OBBE to Section IV of TI "Beyond the Face". Whereas, TI ends with an exposition of "Fraternity", OBBE culminates with a statement of the relationship of the ethical relation to the third party <u>within</u> the state. Conversely, there is no equivalent in TI to Chapter II of OBBE "Intentionality and Sensing", which sets out to demonstrate how the notion of ethical saying is communicated <u>through</u> the forms of ontological and transcendental reflection. In fact, the structure of OBBE is essentially circular: beginning from

the position of the self within-the-world, it effects its reduction to the primary condition of proximity and substitution, before integrating it back into the world, as the basis of an ethical demand for justice within the state.[41/]

It is our contention that the entire structure and argument of OBBE relies upon a particular deployment of the speculative method. To see this we must first turn to the introduction to OBBE ("The Argument") where Levinas sums up his intended mode of procedure thus:

> The otherwise than being is stated in a saying that must also be unsaid in order to thus extract the otherwise than being from the said in which it already comes to signify but a being otherwise. [OBBE 7]

In other words, the statement of the ethical relation proceeds via two steps: first, there is a thematic negation of the said. This amounts to merely a formal negation, since, as Derrida has shown, the infinite can only be stated as a negative modification of the finite (ie in-finite). However, Levinas does not leave it there, but proceeds to a second step, that negates the apophasis in which the infinite is denied. In Levinas' own words, the said is reduced so as to 'surprise' the saying on the 'hither side' of the theme that states it. Now, it is this second step that provides the inverse parallel to the Hegelian negation of the negation. The "unsaying" of the thematic negation of the said, negates the first negation of the said. But the second negation does not operate on the same logical and syntactical level as the first. Rather, the 'unsaying' of the negated said, produces a movement beyond representation, though this

does not merely result in a lapse into non-sense, since it is *through* the negation of representation that the subject is brought into relation with an absolute otherness beyond negation. To put it another way, the unsaying of the unsaid said is at once a <u>presentation</u> of saying <u>qua</u> Saying <u>in</u> the Said.

Levinas, then, contra Derrida, maintains that the apophasis does not constitute an ultimate limit which returns us to the untranscendable condition of our original finitude; for insofar as, absolute negativity contains a nonnegative trace of absolute otherness within itself, absolute negation is an "effect" of absolute otherness, and not vice-versa. Ethical language attempts to 'hold together' the aporetic unity of the absolute <u>heteros</u> and total negativity. To this end, Levinas asks:

> Can this saying and this being unsaid be assembled, can they be at the same time. In fact, to require this simultaneously is already to reduce beings other to being and non-being. We must stay with the extreme situation of a diachronic thought. [Ibid]

We note that the <u>form</u> of Levinas' concept of diachronic thinking corresponds almost exactly to Hegel's definition of speculative thought:

> <u>Speculative thinking</u> consists solely in the fact that thought holds fast contradiction, and, in it, its own self, but it does not allow itself to be dominated by it as in ordinary thinking, where its determinations are resolved only into other determinations or into nothing. [SL 440-441]

In the same passage, Hegel goes on to say that "speculative thinking" brings the forms of ordinary thinking "into a relation that contains their contradiction and allows their Notion to show or shine through the contradiction" (Ibid). It is evident that Levinas' injunction to "stay with the extreme situation of a diachronic thought" so as to allow saying to show itself in the said, parallels Hegel's speculative demand to hold fast to contradiction in order to allow the Notion to manifest itself through the antinomies of reflective thought.

However, notwithstanding this underlying identity of speculative form between Hegel and Levinas it is equally evident that the directions of their respective philosophies are diametrically opposed. For Levinas, "staying with diachronic thought" entails a reduction of the said to "a passivity prior to the passivity-activity alternative" (OBBE 121). It requires, so to speak, an Aufhebung in reverse. In this respect, OBBE necessarily presupposes the result of the deduction of the ethico-religious community set out in TI, for, as we shall see, it is only on condition of the prior existence of the ethical community that the absolute passivity necessary to the accomplishment of the ethical relation may be lived and witnessed.

For Hegel, on the other hand, 'holding fast to contradiction' is the means by which the reflective consciousness is elevated to the absolute standpoint of the Notion, that is to say, to a conceptual comprehension of the absolute active-passive unity that supersedes all ontological and transcendental determinations. Moreover, the fully comprehended Notion of the Notion or Absolute Idea is accomplished, and concretely accomplishes itself, as the

unity of Absolute Spirit and Objective Spirit, not outside, but within world-history.

We contend therefore that on account of the underlying (though inverse) unity of speculative form between the philosophy of Hegel and the philosophy of Levinas, Hegel's system is able to embrace Levinas' thought without doing violence to it, and so subject it to a non-question begging, immanent critique. In the sequel, we shall attempt to demonstrate through a Hegelian commentary on TI and OBBE that, given his own premisses, Levinas' attempt to isolate the ethical community from history and the world, is ultimately untenable in itself, and, what is more, has profoundly deleterious social and political implications.

Our study is divided into three parts. In Part One, we attempt to make good our claim that Levinas' philosophy is, as it were, internal to Hegel's System. The first four chapters form part of a continuous argument. Employing Freud as a tertium comparationis we attempt to demonstrate that Hegel and Levinas have an essentially common understanding of the relationship between time, creation and forgiveness. In the final two chapters of Part One we undertake a commentary on Chapter III and IV of OBBE in order to determine the speculative and metaphysical unity of identity and difference between our two thinkers. On this basis we then proceed, in Part Two and Part Three respectively, to isolate the two 'deductions' in TI, identified below. In Part Two, we follow Levinas' account of the genesis of the socio-historical world through four distinct stages: The transition from the elements to the world of representation; from the world of representation and

labour to the illusions of civil society; and from civil society to the rational-bureaucratic state. In Part Three, we concentrate on Levinas' deduction of the static, ethical community. We critically examine Levinas' account of the Dwelling, the 'ethical covenant', the 'phenomenology of eros', 'fecundity' and 'filiality'. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of Levinas' restatement of the relationship between justice and the third party in Chapter V of OBBE. We attempt to demonstrate that the positive features of Levinas' understanding of the ethical relation may only be sustained within the framework of a Hegelian comprehension of the relationship between religion and the state.

FOOTNOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1/ See Ethics of the Infinite An Interview with Emmanuel Levinas in Richard Kearney Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers. The Phenomenological Heritage (Manchester, Manchester University Press 1984) p. 64: Levinas states, contra Derrida: "whereas he tends to see the deconstruction of the Western metaphysics of presence as an irredeemable crisis, I see it as a golden opportunity for Western philosophy to open itself to the dimension of otherness and transcendence beyond being".

2/ See, for example, Zygmunt Bauman Postmodern Ethics. (Oxford and Cambridge USA, Blackwell, 1993); Simon Critchley The Ethics of Deconstruction (Oxford and Cambridge USA, Blackwell, 1992) and Tim Gorringe Capital and the Kingdom (Orbis, SPCK, 1994).

3/ For a parallel critique of Levinas from a Hegelian perspective, see Gillian Rose The Broken Middle (Oxford and Cambridge USA, Blackwell, 1992) pp. 247-273.

4/ Levinas is particularly sensitive on this point. See his vitriolic article "Hegel and the Jews": "Anti-semitism is based within the system which amounts to saying within the absolute. What a Godsend! DL p. 236.

5/ Cf Kearney. Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers, p. 54.

6/   On this point see Peter Hodgson 'The Metamorphosis of Judaism in Hegel's Philosophy of Religion' in (ed) B. Cullen <u>Hegel Today</u> (Aldershot, Averbury, 1988).

7/   Theodore Adorno in <u>Against Epistemology</u>. Translated by William Domingo (Oxford, Blackwell 1982) asserts just such a connection between immanent critique and a philosophy of immanence.

8/   Hans-Georg Gadamer. <u>Truth and Method</u> (London: Sheed and Ward 1975) p. 308.

9/   Kearney.   <u>Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers</u>. p. 61.

10/   Alexandre Kojéve. <u>Introduction to the Reading of Hegel</u>. edited by A Bloom, translated by J.H. Nichols (New York: Basic Books, 1969).

11/   George Lukács. <u>The Young Hegel</u>. translated by R. Livingstone (London: Merlin Press 1975).

12/   Herbert Marcuse <u>Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity</u> translated by Seyla Benhabib (Cambridge Massachusetts, London, England. The MIT Press 1987) and <u>Reason and Revolution</u> (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1941).

13/ Stanley Rosen. G.W.F. Hegel. An Introduction to the Science of Wisdom. New Haven and London. Yale University Press 1974.

14/ Robert Solomon In the Spirit of Hegel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

15/ Charles Taylor Hegel (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1975).

16/ Michael Rosen, Hegel's Dialectic and its Criticism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

17/ Klaus Hartmann, 'Hegel a non-metaphysical view' in (ed) Alasdair MacIntyre Hegel: A Collection of Essays (Garden City, NY: Doubleday 1972).

18/ Terry Pinkard, 'The Logic of Hegel's Logic' in (ed) Michael Inwood, Hegel (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1985).

19/ Alan White, Absolute Knowledge. Hegel and the Problem of Metaphysics (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1983).

20/ John W. Burbidge, Hegel on Logic and Religion The Reasonableness of Christianity New York, 1992) and On Hegel's Logic. Fragments of a Commentary (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1981).

21/   Lawrence Dickey Hegel: Religion, Economics and the Politics of Spirit. 1770-1807 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) and Hegel on religion and philosophy' in (ed) Frederick C. Beiser The Cambridge Companion to Hegel (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993).

22/   Emil Fackenheim The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).

23/   Jean Hyppolite, Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit. translated by S. Chemick and J. Heckman (Evanston, Ill., Northwestern University Press, 1974).

24/   Walter Jaeschke, Reason in Religion. Translated by J. Michael Stewart and Peter C. Hodgson. Berkeley, (University of California Press, 1990).

25/   Hans Kung, The Incarnation of God. Translated by J.R. Stephenson, Edinburgh, Tand T Clark, 1987.

26/   Quentin Lauer, A Reading of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit. (New York: Fordham University Press, 1993).

27/   Harold Westphal, Hegel, Freedom and Modernity. (Albany N.Y., State University of New York Press, 1992) and History and Truth in Hegel's Phenomenology (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanitieu Press, 1979).

28/ Gillian Rose, Hegel Contra Sociology. (London: Athlone Press, 1981).

29/ Stephen Houlgate, Hegel. Nietzsche and the Criticism of Metaphysics. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

30/ Slavoj Zizek, For they Know not What They Do. Enjoyment as a Political Factor. (London: New York, Verso, 1991).

31/ Richard Dien Wienfield, Reason and Justice. (Albany: State University New Yor Press, 1988) and 'The Method of Hegel's Science of Logic' in (ed.) George Di Giovanni, Essays on Hegel's Logic. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990).

32/ Kenley Dove, 'Hegel's Phenomenological Method', in Review of Metaphysics. 23, 4 (June 1970).

33/ Cf: Robert Bernasconi, 'Levinas Face to Face - with Hegel', Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology. 13 (1982), No.3, 267-76.

34/ This is particularly evident with respect to Levinas' reformulation of the ontological argument, which is much closer to Hegel than to the Cartesian version which Levinas standardly cites as an example of the 'eruption' of transcendence into Western philosophy. Compare, for

example, the following two passages taken from TI and from Hegel's Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion:

The idea of infinity, the infinitely more contained in the less, is concretely produced in the form of a relation with the face. And the idea of infinity alone maintains the exteriority of the other, with respect to the same, despite this relation. Thus a structure analogous to the ontological argument is here produced: the exteriority of being is inscribed in its essence (TI 196).

The consciousness of finite spirit is the concrete being, the material in which the concept of God is realized. We are not here talking about any adding of being to the concept or a simple unity of concept and being - expressions like these are misleading. The unity in question is to be grasped rather as an absolute process, as the living activity of God - but in such a way that both sides are differentiated in it so that it is the absolute activity of eternally producing itself (LPR III 356). Emphasis added.

35/ Joseph Flay, Hegel's Quest for Certainty. (Albany: SUNY Press, 1985), p.26.

36/ Michael Rosen, Hegel's Dialectic and its Criticism. p.90.

37/ For a discussion of Hegel's Trinitarianism see Dale M. Schlitt, Divine Subjectivity. (London and Toronto University

of Scranton Press, 1993) and Fackenheim, <u>The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought</u>, pp.149-153.

38/ This is Levinas' own phrase. See his essays 'Philosophy and the Idea of Infinity', p.54 and 'God and Philosophy', p.161, both in CP.

39/ Richard Dien Winfield, <u>Reason and Justice</u>, p.15.

40/ See Appendix.

41/ See Simon Critchley, <u>The Ethics of Deconstruction</u>, p.229. Critchley sees the movement from the said in the second chapter to saying in chapter III and chapter IV back to the said in chapter V as a movement fron an <u>unjustified</u> to a <u>justified</u> said.

PART ONE

<u>INFINITY, TIME AND</u>

<u>REDEMPTION</u>

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: PROXIMITY AND THE PROBLEM OF MASOCHISM

In OBBE, Levinas adopts a violent language to describe the way in which I am obligated to the other prior to my constitution as a self. Thus: "an-archic" responsibility "uncovers the one that speaks", (OBBE 44) exposing me to "insults and to wounding" (OBBE 49). By "stripping me of every identical quiddity" to the point where I am left "without complexion" (Ibid). Levinas continues:

> It is a denuding beyond the skin, to the wounds one dies from, denuding to death, being as vulnerability. It is a fission of the nucleus opening the bottom of its punctual nuclearity, like to the lung at the core of oneself. (Ibid)

However, even this nucleus "has to continue to be torn from itself" (Ibid). For Levinas, subjectivity is this "suffering of suffering, the ultimate offering of oneself, or suffering in the offering of oneself" (OBBE 54). Subjectivity is "a passivity more passive still than any passivity" (OBBE 50), that produces, "the exposure to wounding and enjoyment, an exposure to wounding in enjoyment, which enables the wound to reach the subjectivity of the subject complacent in itself and positing itself for itself" (OBBE 64).

The lurid terms Levinas employs to describe "Proximity", and the related 'states' of obsession, hostage, persecution, etc., raises the question as to whether his ethics is, not to put too fine a point

on it, frankly pathological. A Freudian interrogation of his work, therefore, naturally suggests itself. Perhaps the central role masochism plays in his texts, particularly in OBBE, may be traced back to an undisclosed interest that has its source in an unconscious need, namely the need for punishment. and that as a consequence the outwardly supererogatory nature of infinite responsibility inwardly conforms to a secret desire for self-gratification through self-mortification?

At first sight it would appear that Levinas' categorical terms may be directly assimilated to the structural typology of Freud's metapsychology. An interpretation along these lines would doubtless make the there is correspond to the death-drive; equate enjoyment with the Id or pleasure principle; and render the "face" synonymous with the superego or ego-ideal. This would then warrant the re-interpretation of Levinas' description of the ethical encounter - as the masculine Other calling into question a desiring subject directed towards feminine alterity - as a phenomenological reformulation of Freud's hypothesis that it is the internalisation of the Oedipal prohibition which effectuates the transition to the stage of morality.

In addition, a Freudian reading promises to provide us with a key with which to unravel the dynamics of the Levinasian text. According to Freud's account of the Oedipal complex, the law of the father checks the desiring subject's projection of its aggressive and libidinous instincts on to the body of the female Other. The subsequent internalisation of the parental law results in the formation of the subject's superego. The superego in turn receives

its repressive force from the introversion of the subject's life and death instincts. These are then turned against the libido itself. The inscribing of the incest taboo within the psychic economy of the infant brings about his or her auto-castration and facilitates the transition to the next stage of psychic development. However, if the trauma of the prohibition is for some reason not successfully abreacted than it is likely to resurface at a later stage as an unconscious sense of guilt, which may, in turn, function as the latent source of an obsessional neurosis. Such a neurosis often takes the form of an insatiable desire for self-punishment and self-affliction, which may provide the subject with its only form of relief from the torment of an overactive and tyrannical superego.[1]

Freud investigates this phenomenon further in a short text entitled: "The Economic Problem of Masochism" (1924). Freud notes that the existence of masochism cannot be explained in terms of an economy of pain and pleasure, since the positive embracement of unpleasure plainly contradicts the principle of hedonism.[2] From this consideration Freud infers that masochism is connected with what is 'beyond the pleasure principle', i.e. the death instinct. He proceeds to classify masochism in accordance with three forms: (a) Erotogenic - as a condition imposed on sexual excitation, (b) Feminine - as an expression of a Feminine nature and (c) moral - as a norm of behaviour. We shall briefly examine each of these three types of masochistic behaviour.

Erotogenic masochism derives from the residue of the death-instinct which has not been transposed outwards on to objects but

has been introjected and defused throughout the libido. This manifests itself as "feminine masochism". Freud restricts his discussion to the appearance of this kind of masochism in men, where it finds expression largely in fantasies of punishment and debasement that signify a regression to infantile life. The masochistic ego "wants to be treated like a small and helpless child, but, particularly like a naughty child" and this places "the subject in a characteristically female situation."3/ Significantly Freud also notes that:

> A sense of guilt, too finds expression in the manifest content of masochistic fantasies; the subject assumes that he has committed some crime (the nature of which is left indefinite) which is to be expiated by all these painful and tormenting procedures.4/

Thus, the inculcation of a baseless sense of guilt provides the transition to the moral form of masochism.

Erotegenic and feminine masochism therefore, according to Freud, denote the "pleasure-in-pain" that results from the binding of an introverted portion of the death-instinct with the libido. This explains the connection between the expression of libido and the experience of guilt, such that the libido may only seek expression if it is either accompanied by, or takes the form of, a punitive self-retribution. The expiation of the guilt simply is the desire for punishment by another, prototypically from the parent.

Now Levinas appears to reproduce this Freudian schema connecting the death-instinct and the libido with pleasure and pain

in his account of ethical signification when he links "wounding in enjoyment" with the there is and desire. It may be objected in Levinas' defence that he explicitly stresses the non-erotic nature of the ethical assignation in OBBE. Yet, Freud has, so to speak, 'anticipated' this attempt to sever the connection between the libido and the moral law in his account of moral masochism.

Indeed the definitive feature of this third form of masochism is that it has "loosened its connection with what we recognise as sexuality".5/ Unlike the two previous forms of masochism - the erotogenic and the feminine - it is indifferent as to source of its punishment.

> All other masochistic suffering carry with them the condition that they shall emanate from the loved person and shall be endured at his command. This restriction has been dropped in moral masochism. The suffering itself is what matters; whether it is decreed by someone who is loved or who is indifferent is of no importance. (p. 240)6/

A moment ago we noted how the auto-castration of the desiring subject7/ is effected through the introjection of the parental authority into the ego. The superego therefore retains essential features of the subject's parents - strength, severity, the inclination to supervise and to punish. In addition, it also contains a residue of the transposed libidinal cathexis, which now reappears in the ego in a sublimated form, thoroughly concatenated with the authoritarian conscience. This latent sexualization of the superego may inhibit the process of moral development which ought to proceed by the progressive interiorisation of non-parental superegoic substitutes. This is checked in the case of moral

masochism, however, which acts to re-sexualize the moment of moral sublimation and so brings about a fixation of the subject, manifesting itself as a compulsive repetition of the Oedipal stage. Freud laments:

> This is to the advantage of neither the morality nor the person concerned. An individual may, it is true, have preserved the whole or some measure of ethical sense alongside of his masochism; but alternately a large part of his conscience may have vanished into his masochism. Again masochism creates a temptation to perform 'sinful' actions, which must then be expiated by the reproaches of the sadistic conscience (as is exemplified in so many Russian character-types) or by chastisement from the great parental power of Destiny. In order to provoke punishment from this last representative of his parents, the masochist must do what is inexpedient, must act against his own interests, must ruin the prospects that open out to him in the real world and must perhaps destroy his own real existence.[8]/

In the light of this Freud excursus, Levinas' affirmation of the "proximity" of pain and enjoyment, and the pulverisation of the ego in the ethical assignation - "election in persecution" - appears to represent an infantile regression to the feminine and moral forms of masochism as a direct consequence of an unresolved Oedipal complex. On this reading Levinas' whole philosophy may be viewed as an example of an obsessional neurosis writ large. Far from being "ethical", Levinas' philosophy of the Other, were it be enacted, would result in the self-destruction of the subject, and a fortiori. the moral subject.

Now, it is our contention that Levinas' notion of "proximity" is not reducible to the Freudian category of "moral masochism". However, in what follows, we will not defend Levinas directly from

his would-be Freudian critic, but, by way of a detour through Hegel's system. First we aim to show, on the basis of the Spirit of Christianity and its Fate: The Phenomenology of Spirit. The Science of Logic: and the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion. that Hegel provides a more profound and far-reaching understanding of the relationship between guilt and punishment than that which may be derived from Freud's metapsychology. In particular, Hegel's account demonstrates, contra Freud, that an ethics of self-sacrifice cannot be explained simply in terms of the symptomatic expression of an unresolved Oedipal complex, but must primarily be comprehended as an infinite response to a Trans-Oedipal accusation against the self. In this, absolute sense, self-sacrifice is a necessary moment, one may even say the penultimate moment, in the emancipatory movement of self-overcoming, and deliverance from, the negative formation of the subject.

In the course of establishing the Hegelian case vis à vis Freud, we shall indicate how Levinas' ethics also transcends the limited perspective provided by the Freudian hypothesis. This, in turn, will enable us to show that Levinas shares with Hegel a notion of infinity that surpasses the standpoint of a philosophy of "original finitude". Therefore, our encounter with Freud provides the tertium comparationis around which we shall seek to establish our thesis that Hegel's and Levinas' philosophical works are immanent to one another.

Finally, on these grounds, we proceed, in the last two chapters of this section, to a direct comparison between Hegel and Levinas themselves. This takes the form of a reading of Chapter III

and Chapter IV of OBBE respectively that relates Hegel's speculative Christology to Levinas' notions of "proximity" and "substitution". Our aim here is to determine the elements of identity and non-identity between their respective understandings of the relation between infinity and subjectivity. This will then provide the systematic framework for the immanent critique of Levinas' social and political thought that forms Part Two of our study.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1/   Sigmund Freud.   The Pelican Freud Library (ed) James
      Strachey.   Hardmondsworth.   Volume One: Introductory
      Lectures on Psychoanalysis 1974. Lecture 13. Lecture 20.

2/   Sigmund Freud.   The Pelican Freud Library (ed) James
      Strachey. Volume Eleven. On Metapsychology 1984 p. 413:
      "The existence of a Masochistic trend in the instinctual life of
      human beings may be justly described as mysterious from
      the economic point of view.   For if mental processes are
      governed by the pleasure principle in such a way that their
      first aim is the avoidance of unpleasure and the obtaining of
      pleasure, masochism is incomprehensible.

3/   Ibid p. 416.

4/   Ibid.

5/   Ibid.

6/   Ibid p. 420.

7/   Ibid.

8/   Ibid p. 425.

CHAPTER TWO

GUILT AND ATONEMENT

In EE, Levinas illustrates the nature of the there is with reference to the scene of the return of Banguo's ghost in Shakespeare's Macbeth. Levinas' point is that the there is (il y a) is not synonymous with the death-drive; it is rather suspended between being and nothingness, a "nothing-interval" which cannot pass on and which "returns" in every negation.[1] Now, it is not accidental, in our view, that Levinas refers here to the exact same passage from Macbeth which Hegel alludes to in The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate. Hegel's attack on Judaism and Kant in that work is precisely an assault on the positivity of the moral law - or the superego in Freudian parlance - from the point of view of the unity of infinite life. In the Spirit of Christianity. Hegel observes that law and punishment cannot be reconciled.[2] Although when a penal sanction is exacted on a felon the positive law is satisfied, the reverse does not hold; the felon remains in a state of bad conscience even after he has suffered his punishment, since the law remains over and against him as an 'alien power'. Hegel anticipates Freud when he says that the bad conscience of the trespasser may lead him to transgress again so as to bring further punishment on himself:

> The oppression and grief of a bad conscience may drive him once more to a dishonesty ie it may drive him to running away from himself and therefore from law and justice; he throws himself into the busom of the administrator of abstract justice in order to experience his goodness, in the hope that he will close his eye and look at him other than he is. (ETW 227-228)

Hegel uses this example to illustrate a basic distinction he draws between punishment as the cancellation of the transgression of the law and punishment as a fate. With respect to the former, he observes, the punishment of the transgression bestows universality upon the transgressive deed. Though the criminal act has "smashed the matter of the law", its universal form is reinstated by the retribution exacted in the enforcement of the penal sanction. Both the transgression and the punishment constitute deeds, but the former is particular and the latter universal, and, as such, they remain in an unreconciled opposition to one another. Thus, although the law has in a sense brought the deed into being, the cleavage between law and punishment remains.

By contrast, the law of Fate permits the unification of the trespasser with his punishment and hence allows for the forgiveness of the transgression. As Hegel notes "in the hostile power of fate, the universal is not severed from the particular in the way in which the law, as universal, is opposed to man or his inclinations as the particular" (ETW 229). The law of Fate, therefore, refers to a single, infinite-life, which is not negated but only alienated by the taking of one life by another. This is illustrated by the return of Banquo's ghost:

> Destruction of life is not the nullification of life but its diremption and the destruction consists in its transformation into an enemy. It is immortal, and, if slain, it appears as its terrifying ghost which vindicates every branch of life and lets loose its Eumenides. The illusion of the trespass, its belief that it destroys the other's life and is enlarged thereby, is dissipated by the fact

> that the disembodied spirit of the injured life
> comes on the scene against the trespass, just as
> Banquo's ghost who came as a friend to Macbeth
> was not blotted out but immediately thereafter
> took his seat, not as a guest at the feast, but as
> an evil spirit. The trespasser intended to have
> do with another's life, but he has only destroyed
> his own, for life is not different from life, since
> life dwells in the single Godhead. (ETW 229)

In short, whereas the penal law creates the deed by bestowing upon the particularity of the transgressive act the universality its commission violates, in the punishment of fate the transgressive deed creates the law; hence its rectification is not alien to but at one with the transgressor who perpetrates it.

Hegel acknowledges that a reconciliation with fate appears impossible since in the limit case of murder it "seems to require a cancellation of annihilation" (ETW 230). However, fate enjoys an advantage over the penal law insofar as "it occurs within the orbit of life, while a crime falling under law and punishment occurs on the contrary in the orbit of insurmountable oppositions and real events" (Ibid). What is the nature of the distinction Hegel is drawing here between the "orbit of life" and the "orbit of insurmountable oppositions and real events"?

We venture that this distinction alludes to the relation between infinity and finite being, or, in Levinas' terms, the 'relation without relation' (TI80) between infinity and totality or Saying and the Said. The "orbit of life" in which fate rules, therefore, denotes the primal diremption of infinite-life. That is to say, the 'orbit of life' is in creation but outside representation, ie outside 'oppositions and real events'. Hence, phenomenality carries within

itself a double trace: the trace of creation and the trace of absolute alterity in creation.

The word Fate (Schicksal) has a mythical ring to it and this is no doubt why Hegel abandoned it in his mature work. Essentially, however, it refers to the paradox of a guilt incurred prior to any actual crime or transgression. Here we see Hegel's direct affinity with Levinas' notion of an irrecusable responsibility prior to any free decision on the part of the subject (OBBE 136-140). The punishment exacted on the existent is coeval with the primordial transgression of its being. The fact of finite existence denotes a severance from the Other, one may even say, metaphorically speaking, the "murder" of the Other. But we must be precise about what we mean by the "Other" in this context. Here the term "Other" signifies that which is Other-than-life, as it were, the 'obverse' of life, a pure transcendens. Hence, it is not to be equated with absolute nothingness. Rather negation must be understood as an internal modification of the primary "fact" of creation. Perhaps the following formulation may serve to clarify our point: the Other is the Other to life or creation while the Other to creation is death and negation. The Other-to-life and life taken together constitute infinite-life.3/

Hence, insofar as the primary act of creation constitutes an absolute separation from the Other, then, from the very "beginning" or ab-originally, the self is afflicted with a bad conscience. This primordial sense of guilt cannot be attributed to the Oedipal complex since it clearly precedes it. Paradoxically, the self is guilty even before it is a self. On this point, Hegel and Levinas are in

complete agreement. The <u>both</u> hold to the notion of infinite-life as set out above.

For Hegel, the expiation and atonement of this primordial guilt is accomplished through a dying-to-self that brings the subject into <u>relation</u> with the absolute <u>heteros</u> or pure <u>transcendens</u> on the "hither-side" of the negative, and thereby releases it to re-accomplish the already-accomplished reconciliation with divine alterity. Hegel contends that this redemptive movement receives its most complete representational expression in the Christian myth of the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ. In the penultimate section of the <u>Phenomenology</u> Hegel provides the following speculative commentary on the crucifixion; stated from the point of view of its phenomenological experience in consciousness:

> The death of the Mediator is the death not only of his <u>natural</u> aspect or of his particular being-for-self, not only of the already dead husk stripped of its essential Being, but also of the <u>abstraction</u> of the divine Being. For the Mediator in so far as his death has not completed the reconciliation, is the one-sidedness which takes as essential Being the simple element of thought in contrast to actuality: this one-sided extreme of the self does not yet have equal worth with essential being; this it first has as Spirit. The death of this picture thought contains, therefore, at the same time the death of the <u>abstraction of the divine being</u> which is not posited as Self. That death is the painful feeling of the Unhappy Consciousness that God Himself is dead. (Phen. Para 785)

The death of all representations of God, then, is necessarily a moment of absolute sorrow and grief. In Freudian terms it would signify not merely the death of the subject's natural parents but

also the destruction of its internalized parental superego or ideal-father. Thus it constitutes a complete break-up of the natural self; a traumatic loss which leaves the subject utterly bereft and inconsolate. By the same token, however, the nullification of all finite representations of the absolute occasioned by this "in-breathing of spirit" (Ibid) brings the self into relation with the pure negativity of its being and thereby confirms it in its absolute subjectivity as an infinite power of withdrawal from every determinate content. On the other hand, the death of the abstract concept of God as an object standing over and against or "above" the self is at one and the same time the rebirth of the immediacy of God in [human] Spirit. The 'death of God' therefore completes the transition from substance to subject, that is to say, from an external to, as it were, an internal relation to the absolute. The absolute no longer exists in an empty 'beyond' outside the self but is present within, the now redeemed, spiritual self.

Hegel nonetheless maintains that at this stage of the development of religious consciousness the self has only attained to an implicit reconciliation with the absolute Other, since it merely understands the significance of the redemptive event in intuitive terms as a purely negative self-relation. Hegel sums up this deficiency by drawing the following parallel:

> Just as the individual divine man has a father in principle and only an actual mother, so too, the universal divine man, the community, has for its father its own doing and knowing, but for its mother, eternal love which it only feels but does not behold in its consciousness as an actual immediate object. (Phen. Para 787)

In other words, consciousness has become, as it were, its own "father", insofar as it is no longer dependent on illusory ego-ideals for its own existential self-certitude, but it nonetheless remains in a state of disseverence from the divine, which is expressed as an eternal love for its "mother". As we shall see Hegel's gendering of the relation to the absolute at this point is of no little significance. Now in the first instance consciousness does not seek to think the nature of this continued diremption but to feel it through the development of a devotional subjectivity which commemorates (Andenken) the incarnation in the religious cultus and through the sacraments. At first sight it would appear that the reintroduction of media at this point to once again represent the absolute to the self would be tantamount to a refusal to live with the truth that god is dead by seeking refuge in the erection of new ego-ideals. However, for Hegel, this would represent only a one-sided understanding of the truth of the matter; for the reversion to representation is a necessary movement towards a conceptual and therefore genuine reconciliation between the human and the divine; merely staying with the absolute in its pure immediacy would constitute the most regressive self-relation possible.4/

To fully see why this is so we must leave the relation of religious consciousness to the incarnational event expounded in the Phenomenology and examine the same relation from the other side, so to speak, that is, from the standpoint of the Absolute Idea, as it is stated by Hegel in his Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion. In a critical passage, Hegel first restates the experience of the speculative Good Friday from the point of view of consciousness:

> God has died, God is dead - this is the most
> frightful of all thoughts, that everything eternal
> and true is not, that negation itself is found in
> God.   The deepest anguish, the feeling of
> complete   irretrievability,   the   annulling   of
> everything that is elevated are bound up with
> this thought. (LPR III: 323)

But Hegel continues:

> However, the process does not come to a halt at
> this point; rather a reversal takes place: God,
> that is to say, maintains himself in this process
> and the latter is only the death of death.   God
> rises again to life, and thus things are reversed.
> The resurrection is something that belongs just
> as essentially to faith [as the crucifixion]. After
> his resurrection Christ appeared only to his
> friends.   This is not an external history for
> unbelievers; on the contrary this appearance
> only occurs for faith.   The resurrection is
> followed by the glorification of Christ and the
> triumph of his ascension to the right hand of
> God concludes this history. (LPR III: 323-324)

In this philosophical reconstruction of Christian dogmatics,
Hegel configures the myth of the incarnation in accordance with
the logical development from the Idea of God, its externalization in
representation and appearance and its return to itself in universal
self-consciousness or Spirit.   Within this triadic schema the
appearance of the Son of God represents the negation of the Idea of
God or the Father and the death of Christ signifies the negation of
this negation or the death of death.   In Hegel's words, Christ has
"come out of the state of death" in order "to put death to death".
The Son of God therefore has taken on finitude and humiliation in
all its forms:

> This humanity which is itself a moment in the
> divine life, is now characterised as something
> alien, not belonging to God.   This finitude

> however, on its own account (as against God) is
> evil, something alien to God. But he has taken it
> [upon himself] in order to put it to death by his
> death. As the monstrous unification of these
> absolute extremes, this shameful death is at one
> and the same time infinite love. (LPR III: 324)

Our point in citing this passage is to show that the "death of God" involves a double movement of which consciousness is aware of only one side: the loss of its natural self and its continued diremption from the Other. The reverse side of this process, of which it is capable of only a partial apprehension through religious symbolism, is the return of the infinite into itself. (This is expressed figuratively as the return of the Son to the right-hand of the Father.) This converse moment however is absolutely necessary since it is only on condition that there "is" an absolute otherness into which the "son" can return that there can be love under the aspect of agape and not merely a natural self-love. The finitized infinite, so to speak, must return into itself or else it would abolish rather than redeem the finitude of the finite by condemning it to the misery of an infinite but empty freedom. Contrariwise, the infinitized finite must, as it were, return to the world if it is to bear witness[5] to its redemption and freedom, since it is only in being for others that the self has freedom.[6]

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1/   EE. Chapter IV.2: Existence without Existents pp. 57-64.

2/   Cf: ETW. <u>The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate</u>. Particularly
      section III: <u>The Moral Teaching of Jesus: Love as the
      Transcendence of Penal Justice and the Reconciliation of
      Fate</u> pp. 224-252.

3/   Michael Rosen in <u>Hegel's Dialectic and its Criticism</u>
      demonstrates how Hegel repudiates the Platonic, neo-
      Platonic and Augustinian attempt to conceive the mystery of
      the creation in terms of a "light-metaphysics" on the grounds
      that it reduces the mystery to a representational mode of
      thought. As Rosen himself puts it: "When we try, in like
      fashion, to find metaphors out of which to construct an
      image of Hegel's cosmology the system appears to be
      paradoxical and contradictory. Yet, crucially, for Hegel this
      is just the point. The progress of Thought is something that
      cannot be pictured, and so long as we try to do so we shall
      find ourselves falling back into the impasses of the
      traditional cosmologies" (p. 84). It is somewhat surprising
      therefore that given Rosen's own insightful understanding of
      Hegel's approach to the problem of creation that he goes on
      to maintain that Hegel has "<u>not</u> abandoned the traditional
      neo-Platonic enterprise" (86). Rosen arrives at this
      conclusion by hypostalising the Idea and then attributing to
      Hegel the notion that this immanent Idea 'particularises'
      itself through images and copies of its own absolute form;

the very idea in other words that, as he himself points out only a few pages earlier, Hegel was so critical of in (other) representatives of the philosophical tradition.

In fact, Hegel maintains that in pure Thought consciousness is able to transcend the standpoint of the Understanding and think the relation between being and negation (creation or becoming) on the one hand and absolute alterity on the other, with the result that the latter overarches and "incorporates" the former. In the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion (1824) Hegel expresses this speculative relation in figurative terms as follows: "Christ has risen. Negation is thereby overcome, and the negation of negation is thus a moment in the divine nature" (LPR III: 220).

4/   Emil Fackenheim in The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought eloquently sums up Hegel's position on this point: "Philosophy cannot, next, accept a divine presence in the religious relation and yet simply reject religious representation. The religious content, while true, would reduce itself to the emphest of truths - a sheer empty Presence manifest in or to a sheer feeling equally empty. In Hegel's time, as in ours, demythologising philosophies sought simply to destroy myth and symbol. Hegel's own philosophy is not among these. In his view, myth and symbol do not cover but rather uncover religious truth.

5/   Cf: Peter Hodgson's editorial footnote to LPR III: 254-255 on Hegel's use of the expression "witness of Spirit":

"The expression <u>Zeugnis des Geistes</u> contains an ambivalence or double meaning in Hegel. On the one hand, it can refer to the witness of the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of God by which authentic faith is awakened in human subjects; on the other hand, it can refer to the witness of <u>our</u> spirit to spiritual truth".

We find a similar "double meaning" <u>mutatis mutandis</u> in Levinas' notion of saying (le dire):

Infinity is not announced in the witness given as a theme. In a sign given to the other, by which I find myself torn up from the secrecy of Gyges, "taken by the hair" from the bottom of my obscurity in the saying without the said of sincerity, in my "here I am" from the first present in the accusative, I bear witness to the infinite. The infinite is not in front of its witness, but as it were outside, or on the "other side" of presence, already past, out of reach, a thought behind thoughts which is too lofty to push itself up front. "Here I Am, in the name of God" without referring myself directly to his presence. (OBBE 149)

6/   LPR.III: 133: "Singularity exclusively is <u>for</u> others; [it is] immediacy and the return from the Other into itself. The singularity of the divine idea, the divine idea as one human being, is first brought to completion in actuality to the extent that it initially has many single individuals confronting it, whom it brings back into the community and therein it is [present] as actual, universal self-consciousness".

CHAPTER THREE

GOOD INFINITY

In paragraph 801 of the final chapter of the <u>Phenomenology</u>. "Absolute Knowing", Hegel states:

> Time is the notion itself that <u>is there</u> and which presents itself to consciousness as empty intuition; for this reason spirit necessarily appears in time just so long as it has not grasped its pure notion, ie. it has not yet annulled time. [Phen. Para 801]

Four paragraphs later Hegel announces that Spirit <u>has</u> grasped its notion and time <u>has been</u> annulled. Accordingly, the <u>Phenomenology</u> is spoken of in the past tense; the ladder has done its work:

> Whereas in the <u>Phenomenology of Spirit</u> each moment is the difference of knowledge and truth and is the movement in which the difference is cancelled, science on the other hand does not contain this difference and the cancelling of it. On the contrary, since the movement has the form of the notion, it unites the objective form of truth and the knowing of itself in an immediate unity. [Phen. Para 805]

In saying that time has been completed or annulled, Hegel is, of course, not claiming that it has come to a finish in the sense of reaching a determinate end or terminus; his conclusion is rather that the formative possibilities inherent in time and history have been <u>conceptually</u> comprehended in their totality, and, as a result, infinite otherness and time - the medium of the finite - are <u>implicitly</u> reconciled in absolute cognition.

From a Hegelian point of view, "absolute knowing" - pure self-recognition in absolute otherness - transcends the "ontological difference" as formulated by Heidegger.[1] That is to say, from a notional standpoint, the distinction drawn by the latter between being (Sein) and beings (Seiendes) corresponds to the logical difference between pure being or Becoming and its ontical differentiation in and through determinate negation. However, for Hegel, negativity is not the ultimate determinans. The absolute qua negatio negans "returns" into an infinite alterity beyond being and quantitatively determined time. In Being and Time, Heidegger maintains per contra that the notion of the infinite is parasitical on the primacy of the historicity of being. In Heidegger's own words: "only because primordial time is finite can 'derived' time temporalize itself as infinite".[2] On this basis, he later maintains that Hegel's absolute idea is an ontotheological concept that rests upon an inversion of authentic temporality: "'spirit' does not fall into time; but factical existence 'falls' as falling from primordial authentic temporality".[3] Heidegger contends that Hegel "levels off" time, reducing it to a formal dialectical model that conceives it in purely quantitative terms as something simply 'there' in the sense of being immediately "present to hand". He concludes that Hegel's system represents the culmination of Western philosophy as a metaphysics of presence which understands the question of being and time in terms of the selfsameness of being and essence.[4]

Where does Levinas stand with respect to Heidegger's characterisation of Hegel's concept of time? Evidently, at one level, he simply carries over Heidegger's ontological interpretation of

Hegel into his own work. Take, for example the following passage from OBBE:

> For Sartre, as for Hegel, the oneself is posited on the basis of the for-itself. The identity of the I would thus be reducible to the turning back of essence upon itself. The I or oneself would seem to be its subject or conditions, the oneself taking on the figure of an entity among entities, would in turn be reducible to an abstraction from a concrete process of self-consciousness, or from the exposition of being in history, or in the stretching out of time, in which, across breaks and recoveries, being shows itself to itself. Time, essence as time, would be the absolute in return to itself. (OBBE 103)

Levinas attempt to couple Hegel with Sartre in this passage is instructive; for it shows that he extends Heidegger's characterisation of the tradition to include not only Hegel but also Sartre and indeed Heidegger himself. But this simply won't wash. For Sartre, in Chapter One of Being and Nothingness. explicitly contradistinguishes his own "Phenomenological Ontology" from Hegel's system: "when Hegel writes Being and Nothingness are empty abstractions and the one is empty as the other", he forgets that emptiness is emptiness of something. Being is empty of all determination than identity with itself, but non-being is empty of being. In a word we must recall here against Hegel that being is and nothing is not."[5] Sartre then proceeds to commend Heidegger's project of a fundamental ontology as a philosophical advance over Hegel's "logicist" interpretation of Being. Heidegger, he declares, "does not fall into the error of Hegel, viz "he does not preserve a being for non-being, not even abstract being, nothing is not; it nihilates itself."[6]

Sartre's analysis is clearly oriented by the substantialist interpretation of the <u>Absolute Idea</u> he inherited from Heidegger. Although it is indeed the case that Hegel in Chapter One of the Science of Logic, "Being", maintains that nothing is not the contradictory of being but its opposite, his point is not that being and non-being are identical but that they are <u>ontologically correlative</u>: being cannot be <u>thought</u> apart from non-being and vice-versa. It follows therefore that <u>thought</u> or the <u>unity</u> of being and nothing (ie becoming) is not reducible to either side of this ontological polarity. Furthermore, "becoming" in its externality,[7/] constitutes the relation between infinite alterity, or the externalness of the notion, and temporality in its immediacy, prior to all ontical determination. Therefore, in refusing to characterise non-being as <u>pure</u> nihilation Hegel is indicating that both being and nothing are relative to the <u>pure transcendens</u> of infinity. We see then that Hegel and Levinas stand on the same side of a philosophical divide that separates a philosophy of infinity from a philosophy of original finitude (represented <u>inter alia</u> by Heidegger, Sartre, Derrida, and Freud).

Unfortunately it is beyond the scope of this study to offer a full defence of the interpretation set out above, since this would involve extensive reference to the whole of the <u>Science of Logic</u>. In lieu of this we shall follow in outline the movement from determinate being to the notion of the true infinite as set out by Hegel in Book One, Section One, Chapter Two of the <u>Logic</u>. This section presents, in the realm of immediacy, the essential moments of the transitive relation between infinity and being, which is restated in all its concrete determinateness in the final chapter of

the Logic on the Absolute Idea. (the speculative unity of being and essence). On this basis, we shall then proceed to show how Levinas' notion of diachrony falls within Hegel's concept of time.

When Hegel states therefore that Becoming is the unity of being and nothing, we see that the "is" in question is not reducible to the purely negative self-transition of the one term into the other, for this negative movement is inseparable from its non-negative return into "otherness". The end of the Logic is to render this element of otherness fully transparent to Thought. This constitutes the whole eros of the Logic (perverse as this sounds), which drives the Notion forward to its consummation in the Absolute Idea. The forward movement is equally a return to its ground since its result is the complete articulation of what has been presupposed all along, ie pure self-recognition in absolute otherness. The "identity" therefore that remains constant throughout the categorical transitions effected in the logical development is a dirempted concept which is the "unity" of the alterity and negativity or of the passive and active "dimensions" of thought when it is purely present to itself. Hence, the definition of the speculative Notion as the identity of identity and difference is a misnomer, for, strictly speaking, this is a Schellingian notion that is accounted for within the Logic of Essence. The true Notion, and this is made explicit in the conclusion of the Logic, is the identity and non-identity of identity and difference.[8/] This abstract logical formulae is the essential basis of Hegel's ethical theory.

We take up our discussion of infinity at the point where Hegel introduces the notion of finitude.[9/] The category of finitude

is grounded in the idea of the limit (Grenze) which, in turn, is entailed by the notion of a "something". The "something" is the negative self-relation of a bearer and its quality: the something simply in itself is the other in its own self, since it is the "other" which provides it with its own limit (SZ 118).[10/] Hegel deepens this notion to show that "something" can only be said to be in itself insofar as it has returned into itself out of being-for-another. Insofar as the "something" is now defined as what is not it is open to external influences and therefore may be said to have a constitution. The constitution holds together two moments: on the one hand, it is the passive moment which defines what it is, and on the other hand it is the active determination (Bestimmung) which defines not only what it is not. but also what it is not yet. In other words, the something has placed within itself a striving for its own nullification for "alternation is posited in the something" (SL 125). This is what finitude means.

In finitude the something and its limit are intrinsically interrelated. Every finite something fulfils its inner vocation at the moment it destroys itself and passes over into another something. Finite things are; but their self-relation is such that they are driven to transcend their own limit. The distinctive feature of a finite being as opposed to a mere something is that whereas the latter merely alters the former perishes. Finite beings:

> ... are. but the truth of this being is their end. The finite not only alters, like something in general it ceases to be; and its ceasing to be is not only a possibility so that it could be without ceasing to be, but the being as such of finite things is to have the germ of decease as their being-within-self: their hour of their birth is the hour of their death. (SL 129)

However, the very idea of the finite contains its opposite. Since it is an eternal truth that all finite things must pass away we have arrived at our first negative definition of infinity. For the thought of the transitory nature of all things is not itself transitory. This is the "justice" of infinite being.

Yet, this notion of infinity is clearly conditioned by the notion of the finite to which it is opposed. This in turn produces the reflection that the infinite ought not be dependent on the finite, a reflection that is self-generated by the category of finitude moving beyond its own limit and this in turn gives rise to the notion that ceasing to be ought to cease to be. The notion that finitude itself ought to be cancelled therefore leads to the deduction of the first moral categories in the realm of Being. This is indicated within Hegel's deduction by a shift from the Idea of limit (Grenze) to that of limitation and the replacement of the notion of the just infinite by that of the Ought (Sollen).

It is evident that this movement reflects, in historical terms, the shift from the philosophy of Kant to that of Fichte.11/ The notion of limitation refers to the self-limitation of the Anstoss posited by the Infinite Ego. The activity of the Infinite Ego is checked and blocked by the wholly passive Anstoss, which is the result of the ego's self-posited act, reflected back into itself. Nonetheless to the extent that the ego requires an "other" for its own activity it is not completely independent. Thus the ego does not wholly determine the non-I but rather demands that it conform to the conditions of its self-legislated moral law.12/ Though this is

an infinite demand that can never be realised on account of the finitude of the subject, the ego must nevertheless not cease striving (Streben) to accomplish it. Hegel believes he has here located the logical basis of the contradiction in the "moral point of view", which cannot be serious in its stated aim of eliminating heterononomy within the self, since if it were successful it would eliminate moral striving as such; hence it must a priori rule out the possibility of attaining ethical fulfilment. Accordingly, the infinite ought also remains conditioned by the finitude to which it is opposed. Therefore, the negation of the "just infinity" of transitoriness has led to the re-emergence of the finite in a new form: "Thus in ceasing to be, the finite has not ceased to be; it has become in the first instance another finite which, however, is equally a ceasing-to-be as a transition into another finite, and so on to infinity" (SL 136). Thus we arrive at Hegel's celebrated notion of the 'bad infinite'.

However, this bad infinity also harbours its own other within itself. The very alternation between ought and limitation coalesces into a unity which when negated through its own immanent development unites the finite with its own opposite and so demonstrates that the finite is in the infinite and not opposed to it. Again, in historical terms, this represents the development in German Idealism from Fichte to Schelling. Although we have arrived at the notion of the infinite qua infinite, it is a purely negative infinite, or an indeterminate void. Hegel notes that in relation to this negative infinite all determinations are posited as vanished and sublated within it, hence this "affirmation as qualitative, is immediate self-relation, is being: and thus the infinite is reduced to the category of a being which has the finite

confronting it as an other; its negative nature is posited as simply affirmative hence as the first and immediate negation" (SL 139). In Christological terms this moment corresponds to the death of God, as it were, the Saturday between Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

However, this is not the true infinite, since it stands counter-posed to the totality of the finite. This in turn gives rise to a spurious infinity as Thought alternates between the idea of the infinite and the idea of the finite as two separate qualitatively distinct moments. Each therefore has the other in its own self and this entails that insofar as the infinite is a negation of the finite or the finite is a negation of the infinite, the finite reappears in the infinite itself as its other "because it is only in its connection with the other that the finite is" (SL 142). We see here that Hegel is as much opposed to the idea of there being a limit relating the infinite to the finite as Levinas. Hegel is quite explicit on this point with respect to the merely affirmative infinity; he states that "what we have here is an abstract transcending of a limit, a transcending which remains incomplete because it is not itself transcended" (Ibid). But how is it possible to transcend self-transcending limitation in order to arrive at the notion of a true or good infinite?

Hegel provides two clues to his answer to this question that are buried in the details of his deduction. First, he states that though the Understanding is satisfied with the resolution of the spurious infinity it remains nonetheless entangled in "unreconciled, unresolved, absolute contradiction" (SL 139). Hegel immediately adds however, "it can only be brought to a consciousness of this fact by the contradictions into which it falls

on every side when it ventures to apply and to explicate these its categories." In other words, it is through the experience of falling to ground of its own contradictions that consciousness may be brought into relation with the true nature of the infinite. Second, when detailing the bad faith of the proponents of the affirmative infinity, Hegel, and he has Schelling in mind, states that for them "This infinite has the fixed determination of a beyond which cannot be reached, for the very reason that it is not meant to be reached, because the determinateness of the beyond, of the affirmative negation is not let go" (SL 142). Entry into relation with the true infinite will therefore require an identification with absolute or affirmative negation, but equally it will be necessary to "let it go".

Hegel goes on to anticipate Derrida's point that to state the infinite is already to finitize it:[13/]

> In saying what the infinite is, namely the negation of the finite, the latter is itself included in what is said; it cannot be dispensed with for the definition or determination of the infinite. One only needs to be aware of what one is saying in order to find the determination of the infinite in the finite. (SL 143)

But whereas Derrida reads the fact that the infinite can only be expressed as infinite in a univocal manner, Hegel notes the opposite also holds: we may equally say that the finite can be expressed as a negation of its own negation. The point is that both terms imply one another. If we say that the infinite is the negation of the finite then we have two finites - the in-finite and the finite or a finitized infinite; conversely if we say that the infinite is a

negative modification of the finite (which appears to be Derrida's position in VM) then we have an infinitized finite.

Hegel is not saying that there is a true infinite being somewhere beyond the oscillation between these two forms of infinity; on the contrary, his point is that the true infinite is in the movement between them. From a Hegelian point of view, Derrida's claim that the very fact that the notion of the infinite can only be expressed in negative terms indicates the primacy of 'original finitude' and appears as a prime example of the simple affirmative infinity outlined above. The 'notion' of differance - the 'middle voice' outside of passivity and activity, which may only signify itself as a trace of itself, corresponds in outline with the infinite withdrawal or "in-breathing" of spirit, symbolically witnessed as the death of God and logically accounted for as the 'infinitized finite'. Hegel contends that this "infinite" negative withdrawal from the finite necessarily bestows a determinateness on the negative pole of the relation. It is important to note that this 'determinateness' does not derive from the term of the relation - since ex hypothesi it has no "term" - but from the relation itself.

Hegel's maintains that we must not stop at the negative pole and celebrate it as if it were the true infinity, as Derrida recommends in his essay on Differance. when he says of Differance that "we must affirm it - in the sense that Nietzsche brings affirmation into play - with a certain laughter and dance."14/ On the contrary, the negative-pole must be negated in turn. But how is this negation to be accomplished? Are we required to trample all over those laughing, dancing, self-affirming beings?

In fact, Hegel has in mind something far more peaceable. Hegel's point is that insofar as the self remains related to the negative it retains a negative relation to its own self. The final transition to the true infinite is accomplished when the self simply "lets go" of the negative ground of its own being. The subject which has come to identify its subjectivity with absolute negativity, and has thereby negated all determinateness, must now negate this negation. As Hegel expresses it:

> It is therefore only negation which sublates itself in the negation. Thus infinity on its side is determined as the negative of finitude, and hence of determinateness in general, as the empty beyond; the sublating of itself in the finite is the return from an empty flight, a negation of the beyond which is in its own self a negative. (SL 146)

The self by 'letting go' of its negative self-ground does not retreat back into determinate being, but rather opens itself to enter into "relation" with otherness in the negative. As a result, the contradiction between the infinite and the finite is resolved through "the negation of the qualitative determinateness of both" (SL 145), and the infinite is no longer beyond or outside the self, for: "it is and is there present before us" (SL 149). To borrow a phrase from Levinas we may say the self is now 'in' proximity to it. It is in this sense, and only this sense, that Hegel speaks of the infinite returning into itself and the straight line of infinity having been closed in a circle (Ibid).

How might we respond to a Derridean objection that Differance is outside of negativity as such, and hence to speak of

negating it or "letting go" etc., is pure nonsense since all such 'logical' operations presuppose and reproduce it? Of course, at this level of metaphysical rarefaction there is simply no non question-begging way of conclusively deciding between these two points of view. We can only proffer two reasons why we think it is necessary to consider the Hegelian notion of the true infinity primary: First, Hegel's statement that any assertion to the effect that a limitation cannot be transcended is self-refuting since any one who makes it must "be unaware that the very fact that something is determined as a limitation implies that the limitation is already transcended" (SL 134) is not merely a formal truism. Reason is not satisfied until it has thought itself through to its end. Hegel's understanding of the infinite is more intellectually fulfilling since it has the virtue of completeness. Second, Hegel's understanding of the infinite is to be preferred because of the ethical and practical implications that follow from it, which we shall consider at length in part two of this study.

The relationship of infinity to being is concretely experienced in time. It is in this sense that Hegel terms time the Other-of-the-Notion. The isomorphism between the Logic and the Philosophy of Nature can be seen in the juxtaposition of the following two statements: in the Logic Hegel states that being and nothing are the unity of becoming, and adds:

> But in so far as being and nothing, each unseparated from its other, is, each is not. They are therefore in this unity but only as vanishing, sublated moments. (SL 105)

In Paragraph 258 of the Encyclopaedia. where time is referred to as "intuited becoming" we find this parallel statement:

> In it is the being which, in that it is. is not. and
> in that it *is not, is*.

In the Zusatz to the same Paragraph, Hegel further adds that time "is the pure form of sensibility or intuition, it is the insensible factor in sensibility" (Ibid). This conforms to Levinas' notion of time as a "passive synthesis" (OBBE 52).

Time then is the externalized equivalent to the moment of becoming in its pure immediacy. It is not a 'container', according to Hegel. in the Kantian sense; it is rather the element of life. "The Chronus which engenders all and destroys that to which it gives birth" (Ibid). Time therefore is in Hegel's words "the existent Notion itself" (PhSp Preface para. 46). However. we may see from our account of the Notion set out above, that Kojeve is misinterpreting Hegel when he reads this statement to mean that the Notion and time are identical.15/ Hegel is quite explicit on this point, for he defines the Concept as the 'power over time':

> Spirit is above time, because it is in itself the
> Notion of time in and for itself. it is the eternal
> unbreached by time. (Ibid)

The Notion as the power over time is the absolute present which is progressively concretized, in accordance with the enrichment of pure externality in and through its immanent development in the immediate and reflective forms of nature and spirit.16/ But it is vital to note that the 'absolute present' is itself

dirempted into a transcendent and immanent pole: into pure alterity and non-quantitative temporality.

Hegel states the relation between the absolute present and temporality as follows:

> Eternity [Ewigkeit] is not before or after time, it is prior to the creation of the world, nor is it sequel to its disappearance, it is the absolute present, the now, and it has no before or after. (Ibid)

This reference to "Eternity" lends credence to Heidegger's contention that Hegel's system is the culmination of ontotheological tradition that interprets the "present": as a nunc stans. But as we have seen Hegel's notion of the present (Gegenwart) is nothing of the sort. Ironically, Marcuse while still studying with Heidegger was one of the earliest Hegel scholars to pick up on this. In his early works on Hegel's ontology, Marcuse cites the following lines from Paragraph 258 in which Hegel states that the Idea in time though "inherently a process, it is not within the process, it contains its double aspect, as in itself without process" and then astutely adds that the Idea "is without process (prozesslos) ... Precisely because it is alive only as process, it is without process, that is to say, it will not become 'part' of the process."[17/] This directly contradicts Kojeve and is much closer to Hegel's meaning.[18/] In other words, the absolute present is not a fixed instant above time; it is 'co-terminus' with temporality but not identical to it. However, Marcuse, in his desire to assimilate Hegel to a compound of Dilthey and Heidegger, failed to take account of the non-negative dimension of Hegel's notion of the "now".

For Hegel then, time in its <u>pure</u> externality is both Other than-the-Notion, and contrary to what Heidegger says, <u>not-yet</u> sublated in quantitative duration; that is to say, it initially remains outside the 'orbit' of reciprocity and opposition. It is therefore evident that notwithstanding the fact that Levinas follows Heidegger in his overt characterisation of Hegel's concept of time, his own notion of <u>diachrony</u> is essentially congruent with Hegel's basic understanding of the nature of temporality.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1/   Martin Heidegger. <u>Being and Time</u>. Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford, Blackwell, 1983) Section 4.

2/   Ibid. Section 331.

3/   Ibid. Section 436.

4/   Werner Marx <u>Heidegger and the Tradition</u>. Translated by Theodore Wesel and Murray Greene. (Evanson, Illinois. Northwestern University Press 1971).

5/   John Paul Sartre. <u>Being and Nothingness. An Essay in Phenomenological Ontology</u>. Translated by Hazel Barnes (London, Methuen, 1968) Introduction p. 15.

6/   Ibid.

7/   ie in nature.

8/   In the final chapter of the <u>Science of Logic The Absolute Idea</u>. Hegel sums up the whole preceding development of the <u>Logic</u>. Formal thinking, he contends, can only get as far as thinking the relation of the infinite to the finite in a one-sided fashion. Thus it asserts the proposition that the infinite is the finite and thereby neglects the sense in which the infinite is <u>not</u> the finite; or else it falls into the opposite error of

maintaining that the finite is the infinite (ie in-finite). Speculative thinking, however, stays with the contradiction and thinks the contradiction. In this way, it discovers that the negative of the infinite is not simply the negative but "the negative of the negative" and is therefore "as contradiction, the posited dialectic of itself" (SL 835). The result is that we arrive at the first immediate universal or the "turning point of the movement of the Notion" (Ibid). Now this first negative is not an immanent substance - subject. This would be to hypostatise the Idea. It is rather the unity of absolute otherness and absolute negativity or the sublation of the Notion and Object. The second negative, the negative of the negative (the synthetic moment) is the otherness of the Other: life and spirit, in and "through which a subject, a person, a free being, exists" (SL 836).

We find confirmation of our interpretation in the following passage:

> In this turning point of method, the course of cognition at the same time returns into itself. As self-sublating contradiction this negation is the restoration of the first immediacy of simple universality; for the other of the other, the negative of the negative, is immediately the positive, the identical, the universal. If one insists on counting this second immediate is, in the course of the method as a whole, the third term to the first immediate and the mediated. It is also, however, the third term to the first or formal negative, and to absolute negativity or the second negative; now as the first negative is already the second term, the term reckoned as third can also be reckoned as fourth, and instead of a triplicity, the abstract form may be taken as quadruplicity; in this way, the negative or difference is counted as a duality. The third or fourth is in general the unity of the first and

> second moments, of the immediate and the
> mediated. (SL 836)

This is to say, the negation of the finite and its "return" to the infinite constitutes a "second immediate". But this second immediate, as the third term to infinite otherness and its negation, is equally the unity of these two antecedent moments. Since it is only in this third term that absolute alterity and finitude obtain their completion it may equally be said to be the first term upon which the two prior moments are predicated. However, this restoration of the first immediate, precisely because it represents the unity of absolute alterity and negative abstraction, is itself dirempted into a moment of identity and a moment of non-identity. Thus it may be reckoned as the "fourth term" which constitutes the identity (absolute alterity) and non-identity (absolute negativity) of identity (being) and difference (nothingness). Hence, the negative or difference is counted as a "duality": once as the Other to absolute alterity and once as the Other to pure being.

Slavoy éièek in For they know not what they do. Enjoyment as a political factor maintains, quite rightly in our view, that the moment of "non-dialecticisable excess" - posited, in different guises, by a variety of postmoden thinkers - far from eluding the system is in fact a crucial aspect of "[its] very dialectical movement" (P. 179); for the "moments of this process could be counted as three or four, with the subject as the surplus-moment which 'counts for nothing'" (p. 180). However, éièek's Lacanian perspective leads him to interpret

this "surplus moment" in a one-sided fashion as the "excess of the pure nothingness of self-relating negativity" (p. 179) thereby ignoring Hegel's corresponding stress on pure alterity.

9/ The following discussion of Book One. Section One. Chapter Two of the Science of Logic "Determinate Being" is indebted to Piotr Hoffman's study Violence in Modern Philosophy (Chicago and London. University of Chicago Press 1989), particularly Chapter II Section II.

10/ Jacques Derrida in "Violence and Metaphysics: an Essay in the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas" in Writing and Difference translated and introduced by Alan Bass (London, Routledge 1990) mobilises this section of the Logic against Levinas as follows. Speaking in the name of Parmenides Derrida states (p. 126):

> "(1) The infinitely other, he would say perhaps, can be what it is only if it is other, that is other than. Other than must be other than myself. Henceforth, it is no longer absolved of a relation to an ego. Therefore, it is no longer infinitely, absolutely other. It is no longer what it is. If it was absolved, it would not be the other either, but the same. (2) The infinitely other - cannot be what it is - infinitely other - except by being absolutely not the same. That is, in particular, by being other than itself (non ego). Being other than itself, it is not what it is. Therefore, it is not infinitely other etc."

However, Derrida homogenises the movement of the Notion in Hegel's Logic by reading the co-determination of the something and the other in "Determinate Being" as

paradigmatic of its entire development. Derrida therefore fails to see that the negation of being in essence is quite distinct from the determinate negation of something by its other; and that the negation of essence in the Notion stands at an even greater remove still. Consequently, he is led to misunderstand the infinite - finite relation in Hegel's thought as resting on an ontological continuity between the two "terms" of this relation, as is evidenced in his critique of Levinas from a soi-disant Hegelian standpoint:

> The "False-infinity", a Hegelian expression which Levinas never uses, nevertheless seems to us, perhaps because it is Hegelian, to haunt numerous gestures of denunciation in Totality and Infinity. As it was for Hegel, the 'False-infinity for Levinas would be the indefinite, negative form of infinity. But since Levinas conceives true alterity as nonnegativity (nonnegative transcendence), he can make the other the true infinity, and make the same (in strange complicity with negativity) the false infinity. Which would have seemed absolutely mad to Hegel (and to all the metaphysics expanded and rethought in him): how can alterity be separated from negativity, how can alterity be separated from the "false infinity"? Or inversely, how could absolute sameness not be infinity' (p. 119).

In this passage, Derrida, in the name of Hegel, subjects Levinas to a merely dialectical criticism. Thus he simply begs the question against Levinas by a priori denying the possibility of a me-ontology while, at the same time, reducing Hegel's speculative discourse to the standpoint of a philosophy of reflection. It is precisely because Hegel's speculative logic sublates dialectics that it is able to directly engage with Levinas' philosophy and subject it to a genuinely immanent critique.

11/ SL 136: "The philosophy of Kant and Fichte sets up the ought as the highest point of the resolution of the contradictions of Reason; but the truth is that the ought is only the show point which clings to finitude and thus to contradiction."

12/ Fichte The Science of Knowledge. Editor and translated by Peter Heath and John Sachs Cambridge. Cambridge University Press 1982 p. 191: "The check (Anstoss) (unposited by the positing self) occurs to the self insofar as it is active, and thus is only a check (Anstoss) insofar as there is activity in the self; its possibility is conditioned upon the self's activity: no activity of the self, no check." For a commentary on Fichte's notion of Anstoss see Frederick Neuhouser Fichte's Theory of Subjectivity (Cambridge. Cambridge University Press, 1990) pp. 49-53. Levinas explicitly distances himself from Fichte in OBBE when he refuses the notion that "all suffering due to the action of the non-ego is first a positing of this action of the non-ego by the ego" (OBBE 123-24). Robert R. Williams's stimulating attempt to demonstrate a Fichtean dimension in Levinas' thought (cf: Recognition: Fichte and Hegel on the Other. (New York, State University of New York, 1992) is ultimately unconvincing to the extent that it relies on interpreting Levinas' philosophy of ethical transcendence as a transcendental ethical philosophy. Hegel's full immanent critique of the Fichtean standpoint is executed in the

"Doctrine of Essence". Chapter One. "Illusory Being." (See Gillian Rose <u>Hegel Contra Sociology</u> pp. 192-196).

13/   Jacques Derrida in "Violence and Metaphysics" p. 114 attempts to impale Levinas on the following contradiction: either the absolutely Other is <u>absolutely</u> Other, in which case nothing can be said of it, or else something can be said of it, in which case it is not absolutely <u>Other</u>. He concludes from this that "Infinity cannot be understood as Other except in the form of the in-finite" (Ibid) and, later, "Infinite alterity as death cannot be reconciled with infinite alterity as positivity and presence (God). Metaphysical transcendence cannot be at once transcendence towards the other as Death and transcendence towards the other as God" (Ibid p. 114). Here Derrida loads the argument by construing infinite alterity as <u>determinate</u> positivity and <u>determinate</u> presence. Yet his own notion of <u>differance</u> brings him to the threshold of conceiving an indeterminate, nonnegative "presence" <u>beyond</u> absolute negativity; a possibility he attempts dogmatically to exclude by <u>identifying</u> absolute negativity (Death) with infinite alterity.

14/   Jacques Derrida "Differance" pp. 129-160 in <u>Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Hussel's Theory of Signs</u> translated with an Introduction by David B. Allison. (Evanston. Ill. Northwestern University Press, 1973) The full quotation reads as follows:

>   "There will be no unique name, not even the
>   name of Being. It must be conceived without

nostalgia: that is it must be conceived outside the myth of the purely maternal or paternal language belonging to the lost fatherland of thought. On the contrary, we must affirm it - in the sense that Nietzsche brings affirmation into play - with a certain laughter and with a certain dance" (p. 159).

15/   Alexander Kojeve.   Introduction to the Reading of Hegel editor A. Bloom. (New York and London - Basic Books 1969) p. 154.

16/   It is crucial to note that for Hegel power [Macht] denotes a nonviolent relation to otherness. To illustrate this we cite the following passage from the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion where Hegel draws a distinction between power [Macht] and Force [Gewalt] as the difference between genuine faith based on freedom and mere belief based on positive evidence. His cue is a discussion of the spiritual veracity of miracles:

> It is the Spirit (that verifies) the power [macht] of the Spirit, by its truth as Spirit over Spirit. [It is the genuine force over spirit ie a power by which there is left to spirit all its freedom]. Miracles is merely a force [Gewalt] over natural connections and hence only a force exerted on the consciousness that is bounded within the consciousness of these limited causal connections. [LPR III: 146]

17/   Herbert Marcuse.   Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity. (Cambridge. M.I.T. Press, 1987) pp. 149-150.

18/   For an interpretation closer to Hegel's self-understanding of the relationship between the Concept and time see John Burbidge "Concept and Time in Hegel" in Hegel on Logic and

<u>Religion: The Reasonableness of Christianity</u> (New York.
State University of New York Press, 1992) Chapter VIII.

CHAPTER FOUR

ABSOLUTE RECOGNITION

We noted above that in the Spirit of Christianity and its Fate. Hegel makes a distinction between punishment incurred by Fate and punishment occasioned by the transgression of the penal law, viz, that with respect to the law of Fate the deed creates the law in the sense that it is "caused by guilt without a crime" (ETW 232), whereas in the case of a merely human misdemeanour, the imposition of a legal penalty creates (or universalizes) the deed. We also noted that this distinction between fate and law corresponds to two different temporal orders: the 'orbit' of infinite life and the 'orbit' of real events.

As said, Hegel, in the Spirit of Christianity maintains that whereas the penal law may "correct" the transgression that occasioned it, such that the trespass will then be "forgotten", it does not have the power to expunge the deed, and hence the offender will continue to suffer with a bad conscience and may even commit further crimes in order to atone for an all-consuming sense of guilt. On the other hand, a transgression against fate is an injury to life and "life can heal its wounds again" (ETW 230). Hence, although atonement for a fatal injury against life requires the paradoxical "cancellation of annihilation" (Ibid) it is nonetheless possible to expiate and be forgiven for this offence; whereas it is impossible to reverse a single deed qua empirical event. However, if life is forgiven then the memory of the empirical deed will lose its power to oppress.

Hegel maintains that when the self knows itself to be in a primordial state of bad conscience: "then the workings of his fate commences, and this feeling of a life disrupted must become a longing for what has been lost. This deficiency is recognised as part of himself, as what was to have been in him and is not" (ETW 230-231). Now it might appear from this statement that Hegel is subscribing to a version of the myth of Aristophanes of which Levinas is consistently critical.[1]/ Hegel explicitly precludes such an interpretation by immediately adding:

> This lack is not a not-being but is life known and felt as not-being. (ETW 231)

The kind of self-knowledge that Hegel has in mind in regard to the commencement of fate is the same as that which Levinas speaks of in TI with respect to the transition from enjoyment to work and representation. The I attains an inchoate recognition of itself qua I through its initial encounter with the strange otherness of the other. Therefore, Hegel is making essentially the same distinction Levinas draws between Desire and need (TI 34). The Desire for the absolutely other is predicated upon a subject which having satisfied all its material needs and so accomplished a condition of self-sufficiency, is propelled further to seek an absolute recognition of its selfhood.

These parallels between Hegel and Levinas are not so surprising in view of the fact that the deduction of the "Interiority", or the 'pre-ethical prerequisites of the ethical relation' in TI, is modelled on Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit. In TI, the subject-in-

enjoyment or "atheist will", is broken from its Edenic world by a Desire for-the-other beyond material satisfaction and by the threat of the there is. Although Levinas holds these two "phenomena" analytically apart, they evidently form a compound. Moreover it is clear that this episode in TI represents Levinas' re-telling of the transition from Desire to self-consciousness via the master-slave dialectic set out in the Phenomenology. We shall return to this theme in Part Two. Here we shall concentrate on outlining Hegel's account of the transition from desire to absolute knowing.

In the Phenomenology Hegel introduces the concept of desire in the first part of the section "self-consciousness". The preceding section Consciousness deals with the movement of theoretical consciousness from 'sense-certainty' to 'perception' to its conclusion in 'Force and Understanding'. This culminates in the inversion of the inverted world and the 'inclusion' of both the sensible and the supersensible world in the Notion of 'Infinity'. We know from our interpretation of the notion of the true infinite above, that infinity here does not signify a pure immanence but, the holding together of absolute otherness and absolute negativity in relation to the totality of immediate and reflected determinations. As such, infinity equals infinite-life, and the transition from consciousness to self-consciousness is equally the transition from the theoretical notion of the Infinite to its practical embodiment in concrete existence.

Life in its immediate mode is pure time itself, which unfolds as the pure restless self-moving process of the coming to be and ceasing to be of living things. Life simply is the separation of

organic nature from inorganic nature and the cancellation of this separation ad infinitum. Levinas follows Hegel here, as in much else in TI, when he states that the lived duality of the body consists in a simultaneous distance from and immersion in the elements which he describes as a "mastery in dependence" (TI 114). Furthermore, both Hegel and Levinas stress the anteriority of being to reflection. Levinas' critique of the Husserlian notion of constitution is parallel with Hegel's description of Kant's critical philosophy as a "subjective idealism".2/

In the Phenomenology. Hegel shows how the alternating process of alimentation gives rise to a rudimentary consciousness that comes to see the other as an independent being standing over and against itself. In accordance with the logical movement the first self consciousness emerges which knows itself as the other to its other. From thence there is a further transition through which this minimally self-conscious being is led to find satisfaction in another self-conscious being, rather than in a merely inanimate object. This sets the stage for the celebrated master-slave dialectic.

Hegel beings his discussion of the struggle for recognition by first stating the optimal conditions for mutual recognition in order to underline the distorted and one-sided nature of the recognition that results from the initial "trial by death". An individual self-consciousness may only attain to independence through another self-consciousness when both self-consciousness's in question "recognize themselves as mutually recognizing one another" (PhSp Para. 184). Hegel therefore implies that genuine mutual recognition is only possible when an individual self-consciousness

is capable of acting on principles that are universally valid for all. This in turn presupposes a community of persons based on relations of abstract right. Now Hegel makes it clear that in the original struggle for recognition these conditions do not remotely appertain. Here two individuals confront each other who have "not yet accomplished the movement of absolute abstraction, of effacing all immediate being" (Phen. Para. 185). The immediate form of recognition requires that self-consciousness be for the other what the other is for it, and this entails a further double development, an action on its own part and an action on the part of the other. The action required from the other is that the other seek its death; and the action necessary on its own part is that it be prepared to stake its own life.

It is the moment of intentionality involved in the duel which is all-important. It is absolutely necessary that the death of the other be willed. It is this irreducible intent that breaks the cycle of the natural process by introducing absolute negativity into the realm of infinite life. Levinas makes essentially the same point when he states that "The Other is the sole being I can wish to kill" (TI 198). It is precisely because self-consciousness has staked its own life and has thereby transcended all its natural determinations, that it can find no satisfaction from simply killing the other, for it would then still be related to the other qua natural being, and not qua self-consciousness. The same reasoning lies at the basis of Levinas' seemingly paradoxical statement that murder is an ethical impossibility.3/ The simply "abstract" negation of the other, would in a strange sense, leave the resistance of the other's will absolutely inviolate. It is this non-violated will that returns in

the negation to haunt the homicide. The desired outcome of the struggle for recognition therefore is that the other not succumb to an external negation but "carry out the negation in itself" (Phen Para. 175). This is the truth of Levinas' perspicacious remarks on the nature of hatred:

> Hatred does not always desire the death of the Other, or at least it desires the death of the Other only in inflicting this death as a supreme suffering. The one who hates seeks to be the cause of the suffering to which the despised must bear witness. To inflict suffering is not to reduce the Other to the rank of an object, but on the contrary to maintain him superbly in his subjectivity. In suffering the subject must know his reification, but in order to do so he must precisely remain a subject. Hatred wills both things. Whence the insatiable character of hatred; it is satisfied precisely when it is not satisfied, since the Other satisfies it only by becoming an object, but it can never become object enough, since at the same time as its fall, its lucidity and witness are demanded. In this lies the logical absurdity of hatred. (TI 239)

Hegel gives no details of the actual combat between the two self-consciousness' but the outcome is evident: the victorious consciousness enslaves the vanquished self-consciousness. The latter chooses enthralldom to death.[4/] In this sense, the master is the personification of death while the slave may be said to be the personification of life or creation. However, in the course of the combat both master and slave have negated the sphere of natural immediacy. Even in their initial state master and slave constitute an unacknowledged unity of opposites; and this eventually becomes transparent as these two states of activity and passivity are transmuted in the course of the phenomenological journey through Spirit.

Hegel maintains that the asymmetry of the master-slave relation entails that, on the one hand, the master receives no recognition in the slave, since the latter is a total dependent, and, on the other, that the slave evidently receives no recognition by the master, nor does it receive any satisfaction in its work, since it is alienated from it. However, despite the fact that there is no genuine intersubjective recognition between the master and the slave, there is nonetheless an important relation of non-recognition. For the slave embodies the truth of the antecedent struggle to the death:

> For the consciousness has been fearful, not of this or that particular thing, or just odd moments, but its whole being has been seized with dread; for it has experienced death the Absolute Lord. (Phen. Para 194)

In this absolute experience it discovers the basis of its own subjectivity in absolute negativity; for it has been "quite unmanned, has trembled in every fibre of its being, and everything solid and stable has been shaken to its foundations" (Ibid). Furthermore, the slave in its service to the master, through work, and specifically through fabrication, continually re-enacts this liberation from elemental life. The master, on the other hand, sinks back into a natural existence insofar as it merely lives to consume the produce of the slave in a life of enjoyment and pleasure, and so loses its consciousness of absolute fear.

In work, the slave's negative relation to the object, which is externalized and set over and against it, gradually replaces its dependence upon the master. The slave becomes aware that its

"being-for-self" as absolute negativity is not deposited in the master, but belongs to itself, precisely at the moment when it ceases regarding its work as simply as alienation of its labour and comes to see it as the self-expression of its own essential subjectivity.

However, the emancipated slave must not simply 'forget' its existential relation to absolute negativity. As Hegel expresses it:

> If consciousness fashions the thing without that initial absolute fear, it is only an empty self-centred attitude; for its form or negativity is not negativity per se and therefore its formative activity cannot give itself consciousness of itself as essential being. (Phen. Para 196)

Hegel's point here is that freedom cannot be attained through work alone. Although work is absolutely essential for the emancipation of self-consciousness from servitude and for the attainment of conditions that will enable reciprocal and genuine mutual recognition, the accomplishment of freedom in addition requires an absolute recognition not merely qua person but also qua "essential being" or self. However, to receive absolute recognition it is necessary first to be recognised as a person. The individual, then, must, as it were, internalize the 'master' and make it into an integral part of its own subjectivity;5/ and having attained this universal self must then "let go", and thus be reconciled with the Other (the power over life and death).

We noted above that the 'lack' to which the subject is responding under the law of Fate is not a finite but an infinite

desideratum. Hence reconciliation with the Other is equally an absolute self-recognition:

> In fate, however, the man recognizes his own life
> and his supplication to it is not a supplication to
> a lord but a reversion and approach to himself.
> (ETW 231)

To have felt the insufficiency of life is quite a different fear to the fear of (penal) punishment: "The former is fear of a separation, an awe of <u>one's self</u>: fear of punishment is fear of something alien" (Ibid). It is one's response to this former fear that established one's fate.

Indeed the whole of the <u>Phenomenology of Spirit</u> may be read as so many ideal-typical responses to the law of fate. The master-slave dialectic only represents an initial rejoinder. Its conclusion is enacted in the final section of Spirit: "Conscience, the beautiful soul, evil and its forgiveness". We will not attempt a full analysis here, but simply detail its essential continuity with the <u>Spirit of Christianity</u>.

The notion of self-certain conscience develops in opposition to the formal Kantian moralist. Conscience does not need to universalize its maxims since it knows itself already as a universal self. To the universal moral point of view this represents a hubris that can only be accounted for by self-interested motives. By the judgement of universal morality is hypocritical in this respect since its condemnation of the noble active conscience is motivated by an embarrassment that its own failure to act is being thrown into sharp relief. Conscience finally confesses its imperfections and

weaknesses, but this is not reciprocated on the part of the hard hearted judge. In despair, conscience withdraws into itself, renounces the world and suffers the fate of a "beautiful soul". But its infinite withdrawal from the world only brings destruction upon itself and it "pines away" in delirium and "yearning". In the <u>Spirit of Christianity</u> this whole dialectic is played out in terms of a contrast between the Pharisees and the moral teachings of Jesus, with this important difference: in the early work Jesus is presented as the original beautiful soul, who isolates himself from life and hence wills the fate of his own death, so that the promise of the reconciliation with life remains unfulfilled; in the <u>Phenomenology</u> however the confession of the beautiful soul is eventually matched by the judging consciousness, with the result that:

> The breaking of the hard heart and the raising of it to universality, is the same movement which was expressed in the consciousness that made confession of itself. The wounds of the spirit heal and leave no scars behind. (Phen. Para 669)

This confirms that "Spirit" is lord and master over every deed and actuality, and can cast them off and make them as they never happened" (Phen. Para 668). Finally, the mutual confession of the beautiful soul and judging consciousness reveals the absolutely Other:

> The reconciling Yea in which the two 'I's let go their antithetical <u>existence</u>. is the existence of the 'I' which has expounded into a duality, and therein remains identical with itself, and it its complete externalization and opposite, possesses the certainty of itself: it is God manifested in the midst of those who know themselves in the form of pure knowledge. (Phen. Para 671)

Hegel never subsequently abandoned this standpoint. We find essentially the same stated in his 1827 <u>Lectures on the Consummate Religion</u>:

> It is characteristic of the region of finitude that all individuals remain what they are. If they have done evil then they <u>are</u> evil: evil is in them as their quality. But already in the sphere of morality, and still more that of religion, spirit is known to be free, to be affirmative with itself, so that its limitation, which extends to evil, is a nullity for the infinitude of spirit. Spirit can undo what has been done. The action certainly remains in the memory, but Spirit strips it away. (LPR III: 324-325)

Hegel states, then, that in the realm of finitude the doctrine of moral imputation holds according to which individuals may be held accountable only for their intended actions, but in the realm of 'infinitude', no such restriction applies.

If we turn once again to Levinas we find <u>mutatis mutandis</u> a similar formulation of the nature of pardon:

> The paradox of pardon lies in its retroaction; from the point of view of common time it represents an inversion of the natural order of things. It involves several aspects. Pardon refers to the instant elapsed; it permits the subject who had committed himself in a past instant to be as though the past instant had not passed on. Active in a stranger sense than forgetting, which does not concern the reality of the offence forgotten, pardon acts upon the past, somehow respects the event, purifying it. But in addition, forgetting nullifies the relations with the past, whereas pardon conserves the past pardoned in the purified present. (TI 283)

To conclude our present discussion we shall relate the reflections set out above on Freud's account of the aetiology of

moral masochism to Hegel's, as it were, phenomenological deduction of conscience. This will then set the stage for a direct encounter between Hegel's and Levinas' concept of the ethical. To summarize our previous interpretation, we recall that Freud maintained that the formation of the superego resulted from a projection of libidinal energy, cathected with the death instinct, onto the parental other, and the subsequent introversion of this self-externalized drive in the form of a tyrannical conscience. This manifests itself as a soi-disant 'unconscious sense of guilt' which is in fact a need for punishment. Self-induced affliction represents the only form of relief the subject is able to obtain from the otherwise unbearable anxiety produced by the lived contradiction which constitutes its psychic economy, namely, that the direct expression of its most basic drives is pari passu an indirect form of auto-violence. Moral masochism is merely the most refined and devious form that this self-torture may take.

However, it would be by no means far-fetched to consider Hegel as a forerunner of Freud. Hegel was one of the first philosophers to understand the destructive capacity inherent in an overactive superego. His whole philosophy of freedom and redemption is bound up with the idea of stating the conditions for an ethical release from the enforced servitude of an over-scrupulous conscience, both from its inner bondage and from its external projection in the form of the moral violences of sanctimoniousness, hypocrisy, hard-hearted judgement and self-righteousness. Hegel's "genealogy of morals" is wider in extent that Freud's and more radical in terms of its proposals for transcending the "moral point of view".

We argued above that Hegel held to the view that as a result of a primal transgression against infinite-life or the Other, the immediate self emerged as, on the one hand, other-to-infinite life, and on the other hand, other-to-determinate being in the world of "real events and oppositions". This is confirmed by the following extract from the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion which take the form of a speculative commentary on the myth of the fall:

> On the one hand, it is the antithesis of evil as such, the fact that it is humanity itself that is evil: this is the antithesis vis-a-vis God. On the other hand, it is the antithesis vis-a-vis the world, the fact that humanity exists in a state of rupture from the world: this is unhappiness or misery, the cleavage viewed from the other side. (LPR III: 447)

Hegel is here essentially restating his contention first outlined in the Spirit of Christianity that the primal transgression establishes a "causality of fate". As Hegel expresses it in the earlier work "A fate appears to arise only through another's deed; but this is only the occasion of fate. What really produces it is the manner of receiving and reacting against the other's deed" (ETW 233). In the Philosophy of Religion Hegel announces two basic reactions to the original transgression, which all subsequent forms of moral consciousness may be referred:

The first reaction and self-chosen fate is one that seeks to atone for the infinite anguish of being posited as the antithesis of God by an acknowledgement that the one's own self is fundamentally evil, and to seek to repent for this in a life devoted to moral purity, self-humiliation and remorse. The second reaction

and assumed fate is a response on the part of the subject not to the anguish of separation from God, but to the fact of being-posited in antithesis to the world: this response takes the form of withdrawal into self, and results in an affirmation of the essential nothingness of its own subjectivity, since it defines itself over and against all the attributes and determinations which may potentially be predicated of it.

For Freud, the moral neurotic is simply providing itself with a rationale to satisfy its subconscious need for punishment by inducing itself to believe that it has committed serious transgressions in regard to trivial matters, or by actually engaging in crime to incur guilt and so find an object for its anxiety. On this account the real source of the neurotic's behaviour may be traced to an unresolved Oedipal complex. Hegel has provided one of the most vivid descriptions of such a self-mortifying subject in his description of the "Unhappy Consciousness", which has, ditto Freud, dispossessed itself of its own desire by projecting it onto an Unchangeable beyond and internalizing it as a hostile censor within itself:

> Consciousness is aware of itself as this actual individual in the animal functions. These are no longer performed naturally and without embarrassment, as matters trifling in themselves which cannot possess any importance or essential significance for Spirit; instead, since it is in them that the enemy reveals itself in his characteristic shape they are rather the object of serious endeavour, and become precisely matters of the utmost importance. This enemy, however, renews himself in his defeat, and consciousness in fixing its attention on him, far from freeing itself from him, really remains for ever in contact with him, and for ever sees itself as defiled; and since at the same time this object of its efforts, instead of being something

> essential, is of the meanest character, instead of
> being a universal, is the meanest particular, we
> have here only a personality confined to its own
> self and its own petty actions, a personality
> brooding over itself, as wretched as it is
> improverished. (Phen. Para 226)

Hegel goes on to detail how this miserable consciousness is led to renounce all its enjoyments and possessions to the point of even repudiating its own subjectivity altogether and giving its whole person over to organized religion to be disposed of as a thing.

Despite these strong similarities in Hegel's and Freud's analysis they have opposed notions of how unhappy consciousness or obsessional neurosis may be transcended. Hegel, contends that, this defective consciousness is ultimately surmounted through the sublation of the opposition between otherness and negativity constitutive of the self. For Freud, the very notion of absolute alterity could only count as a sublimation, and a fairly negative one at that. Freud was extremely doubtful as to whether there can be any reconciliation, so to speak, between the Ego and its primary drives, as the following extract from Beyond the Pleasure Principle makes evident:

> No substitute or reactive formations and no
> sublimations will suffice to remove the repressed
> instincts persisting tension; and it is the
> difference in amount between the pleasure of
> satisfaction which is demanded and that which
> is actually achieved that provides the driving
> factor which will permit at no halting at any
> position attained, but in the poet's words
> "ungebandigt immer vorwarts dringt" (Presses
> ever forward unsubdued). The backward path
> that leads to complete satisfaction is as a rule
> obstructed by the resistances which maintain
> the repressions.[6]

Rather than attempt per impossibile to abreact the primary repressed instincts, Freud commends a movement forward through the progressive adaptation of substitute non-parental ego-ideals, and the surrender of the non-fulfillable goal of complete satisfaction.

Now, Hegel would agree with Freud that it is of course necessary to move forward through several stages of moral and cognitive development, ascending from simple group identity to a moral orientation in terms of a universal and public discourse of rights and entitlements. Moreover, the Phenomenology. demonstrates the intrinsically dialectical character of this advance, that is to say, it details how it may equally be viewed as a movement backwards or a "retreat into ground"; an excavation, as it were, of all the accumulated dross of the reactive and negative dimensions of the historical and cultural formation of the Western psyche.

This said, however, it is nevertheless clear that Hegel and Freud have radically opposed views as to the nature of the end of this movement of recollection. For Hegel, as said above, the result is a reconciliation between the self and absolute otherness.

The absolution of the self from the primordial fault allows it to detach expiation for the absolute guilt entailed by its very existence from, the relative guilt, or rather "guilty-feelings", attendant upon those transgressions of the moral law which may be imputed to it.[7] This in turn releases the self from the tyranny exercised over it by a domineering conscience while preserving it

from elevation into an arbitrary, untrammelled and totalizing will-to-power. Unbound itself, the spiritual self has the capacity to let others loose from the "category mistake" of attaching absolute significance and gravity to relative moral faults. It does not therefore bring about the cancellation of the moral law but rather effectuates its aufhebung or fulfilment in Spirit (Geist).

In contrast, Freud's metapsychology (and indeed the philosophy of "original finitude" as a whole) is predicated on a negative concept of freedom. On this view, freedom is essentially limited to a consciousness of necessity. Through the process of perfectly recollecting the experience of its own formation, the subject abreacts the residual fixations that have impeded its full self-actualisation. In other words, by infinitely withdrawing from the totality of determinations bearing upon it, the self is free to recast them anew. The subject therefore defines itself in antithesis to the world. But it is not free to "abreact" the ultimate negativity of its own being. Hence the goal of freedom is the object of an infinite striving which can never be ultimately accomplished, for, as we have seen above, Freud postulates an unbridgeable hiatus between desire and satisfaction. In short, Freud's metapsychology falls into a bad infinity. Freedom is "finite freedom"; it consists in a self-resignation to non-fulfilment or the least unfulfilment. There can be no absolute satisfaction.

Levinas, on the other hand, bids us to respond to the summons to face and suffer the negative and thereby enter into an absolute relation - "a relation without relation" (TI 80) - with the wholly other beyond being and non-being. Nonetheless in the

midst of this absolute relation the self and the other remain dysymmetrical. It is only once the subject has transcended the ontological order that the other is revealed to it in its absolute alterity. Thus the self is posited in absolute antithesis to God. As an elected being it assumes the power to pardon; but it is not itself pardoned by the other. On the contrary, its calling (or "fate") is to be accused by the other and to expiate for this primordial accusation by suffering for others, bearing their fault as well as its own. This "suffering of suffering" (OBBE 196 FN 26) is not a Sollen "which is always asymptotic" (OBBE 193 FN 35) but a "living infinity"; in Levinas' words: "it is life without death, the life of the infinite in its glory, a life outside of essence and nothingness" (OBBE 142).

This "living infinity" takes two forms in Levinas' work. First it describes life within the "infinite time" of the ethico-religious community or the good society. Second, it refers to the ethical witness within-the-world of the primordial (or an-archic) responsibility for the other that is concretely enacted in the "society of infinity". Roughly speaking, Levinas provides a deduction of the ethico-religious community in TI and an exposition of ethical witness in OBBE. Levinas therefore is not expounding a bad infinity (a merely finitized infinite). equally, his notion of the ethical relation does not conform to the "shape" of the "unhappy consciousness". The response to the ethical summons liberates the self from the negative power of death and frees it to enjoy life and the elements of life, albeit within the confines of a community dedicated to ethical service. It is important to note that the analyses presented in OBBE presuppose the prior accomplishment

of the ethical relation as set out in TI. We shall demonstrate below (in Part Two) that TI may equally be said to presuppose the results of OBBE.

However, Levinas' Ethics falls short of the true infinite as Hegel defines it. To see how this is so we now turn to examine Levinas' notions of "proximity" and "substitution" in the light of Hegel's speculative Christology.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1/ CF: TI 62; 254.

2/ See above. Part Two. Chapter Nine.

3/ TI 199.

4/ On this point, I find myself in essential agreement with Robert Bernasconi's reading of the master-slave dialectic in 'Levinas Face to Face - with Hegel' in Journal for the British Society for Phenomenology, Vol 13, No 3, Oct. pp. 267-76.

5/ See Gillian Rose, Hegel Contra Sociology p. 130. "The future belongs to the master. For in the future societies the master will become master and slave, but not know that he and others are slaves. They will not be called master and slave for that relationship is transparent. They will be called 'persons'."

6/ Sigmund Freud. 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' in The Pelican Freud Library (ed) James Strachcy. Volume Eleven. On Metapsychology p. 315.

7/ Paul Tillich, The Courage To Be (London and Glasgow, Collins, 1952) p. 159-162. For the distinction between existential anxiety and neurotic guilty feelings.

CHAPTER FIVE

HYPOSTASIS

The descriptions contained in the Chapters III and IV of OBBE, on Proximity and Substitution. are presented at a level of analysis which presupposes the initial reduction of the Said to the Saying. This partly explains why much of the content of both chapters is interchangeable. However, we must be careful not to allow the element of repetition, which is a central feature of Levinas' style, to obscure the fact that there is an important difference of emphasis between them. In broad terms, their difference may be stated thus: Proximity describes the primordially passive and as it were, "uninflected", ethical condition: substitution. on the other hand, depicts the, so the speak, non-affirmative affirmation or iteration of this aboriginal and absolutely passive condition. We shall attempt to demonstrate this distinction and its critical implications through a commentary on each chapter in turn.

Levinas introduces the notion of proximity with reference to two other terms, those of "psyche" and "maternity". Both of these expressions are to be found in TI, where they are presented in isolation from one another. In the earlier work, "psyche" denotes the "interval of separation" occupied by the "atheist will", "prior to both affirmation and negation of the divine" (TI 59), while "maternity" signifies the "recourse" to a transcendent 'past', concretely produced through the procreation of children (TI 278).

In OBBE, these two descriptions are fused into a singular notion of the other-in-the-same:

> The one-for-another has the form of sensibility or vulnerability, pure passivity or susceptibility, passive to the point of becoming an inspiration, that is, alterity in the same, the trope of the body animated by the soul, psyche in the form of the hand that gives even the bread taken from its own mouth. Here the psyche is the maternal body. (OBBE 67)

This transformation of the usage of the two terms bears out our contention that OBBE condenses the results of the stratified analyses of TI. In TI the movement is from the unredeemed time of the "psyche" to the redeemed time of the child; by contrast, in OBBE the non-erotic ethical relation made possible by the union of will and feminine alterity is present from the beginning.

At one level, the evocation of the maternal figure is evidently analogical. Levinas is saying that the ethical self stands in the same 'relation' to the Other as a pregnant woman is placed with respect to her expected child: Just as the mother must both endure all the pain of purturition and accept this pain as wholly her pain, so, too, the ethical subject must assent to its non-chosen obligation to the Other, to the point of taking responsibility for the Other's responsibility for inflicting suffering upon itself. Yet, it would nonetheless be an error to interpret Levinas' use of the notion of maternity simply in analogical terms; for it must not finally be read either analogically, metaphorically or literally but as an overdetermination of all these discursive tropes. To construe the term as an analogy or a metaphor is to rob it of all its affective force, while to interpret it in literal terms would be to return it to

ordinary discourse where it would be subject to empirical qualification. The whole point of Levinas' use of the superlative style, is to obviate the temptation to collapse the essential element of undecideability into either its figurative or literal pole, and to induce the reader to stay with the diachronic aporia. This is why all along we have felt justified in insisting that Levinas' discourse is essentially Hegelian in provenance. Indeed, in what follows, we shall explore a clearly discernible parallel between Levinas' statement of the relation between proximity, substitution and infinity, and Hegel's account of the movement, within "Revealed Religion", from the "appearance" of God, to the death of God and "His" re-birth in the spiritual community. However, though the lines of their development are parallel, they do not ultimately converge, and it is the element of divergence between Hegel's and Levinas' respective understanding of the speculative relation which will provide us with a critical insight into the essential deficiencies of Levinas' notion of ethical transcendence.

According to Levinas, then, proximity is the union of psyche and maternal body and as such it:

> ... is not a metaphor, but, if we can put it thus, a designation of the irreducible paradox of intelligibility: the other in the same, the trope of for-the-other in its antecedent inflexion. (OBBE 70)

We may elucidate Levinas' point by saying that this psychic-maternal compact is the conjunction, as it were, of pure thought, i.e. a trans-intentional mode of cognition, and pure being, i.e. a trans-apperceptive intuition of formless sensibilia. Proximity or the

"other-in-the-same" is, therefore, the speculative unity of transcendence and immanence in the incarnate subject.

Now, lest it be said that we are here inadmissibly subsuming Levinas' categories under a Hegelian "grid", let us follow the way in which Levinas himself presents the notion of the maternal-psyche in the chapter Three of OBBE. In Levinas' own words:

> The sensible-maternity, vulnerability, apprehension - binds the node of incarnation into larger than the apperception of the self. I am bound to others before being tied to my own body. (OBBE 76)

Thus the self is ethically bound to the Other even prior, so to speak, to its entry into being. In this respect, the maternal-psyche is a "pre-birth" and a "pre-nature" (OBBE 75). Yet, Levinas is equally insistent that the element of alterity definitive of the self "has also to contain a passage to the physico-chemical physiological meanings of the body" (OBBE 70). Hence proximity is at one soul and soma, preternatural and natural, transcendent and immanent, the union of that which is farthest and infinitely near.

As said, in our view, a precedent for Levinas' notion of proximity is to be found in Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit, in the penultimate section entitled the Religion of Revelation (die Offenbar Religion). Hegel states:

> Of this Spirit which has abandoned the form of substance and enters existence in the shape of self-consciousness it may therefore be said - if we wish to employ the relationships derived from natural generation - that it has an actual mother but an implicit father. (Phen. Para 755)

Before we proceed to relate this passage to Levinas'
understanding of the maternal-psyche we must first place it within
its overall context. In the section on "Religion" in the
Phenomenology. Hegel is presenting what may be described as a
noumenology of consciousness. since religious consciousness has
implicitly transcended the standpoint of the Understanding
(Verstand) from its very inception.[1/] Hegel is claiming here that
within the overall history of religious consciousness, the notion of
the transcendent-immanent unity is first apprehended in its
speculative, i.e. non-representational, form in the "phenomenon" of
the historical Jesus. According to Hegel, this is the historically
contingent yet logically necessary "moment" when the absolute
Other is directly and intuitively apprehended, not through the via
media of symbol and mythus, but as immediately incarnate in the
world. However, we must keep distinct the question of the veracity
or otherwise of Hegel's speculative reconstruction of the history of
religion, on the one hand, from the separate question of the logical
content that manifests itself for the first time in the Christian
dogma of the incarnation, on the other. In our view, the
phenomenological reconstruction of the history of religion and
religious consciousness is a transitive knowledge, and, as such, is
infinitely revisable; while the movement towards the conceptual
unification of the transcendent and immanent is a logical
necessity, and, therefore, an intransitive knowledge which, as
such, cannot in any sense be constructed but only more deeply
discovered. In other words, there is no inconsistency involved in
accepting the philosophical validity of Hegel's notion of speculative
necessity and at the same time dissenting from his particular

reconstruction of the recollection (Erinnerung) of Spirit. This is why, notwithstanding Hegel's "Christology" and Levinas' "Judaism", an immanent Hegelian reading of Levinas is not ruled out ab initio.

We contend, therefore, that, from a logical point of view, Levinas' conception of the maternal-psyche incarnate in the ethical subject corresponds mutatis mutandis to Hegel's notion of an implicit Father (i.e. pure thought, pure transcendens) and an actual Mother (i.e. pure materiality) incarnate in a singular being. We may develop this parallel still further. At Paragraph 758 in the Phenomenology, Hegel deepens his speculative commentary on the incarnation when he states that insofar as:

> Spirit is immediately present as a self-conscious Being, ie. as an actual man, that the believer is immediately certain of spirit, sees, feels and hears the divinity. Thus this self-consciousness is not imagination, but is actual in the believer. Consciousness, then, does not start from its inner life, from thought, and unite within itself the thought of God with existence; on the contrary, it starts from an existence that is immediately present and recognizes God therein. (Phen. Para 758)

This whole passage may be faithfully explicated in Levinasian terms: the other-in-the-same is immediately present or in "proximity", not as the object of an intentional act or a figurate conception, but as there, while, paradoxically, remaining absolutely other. To use Hegel's phrase, the self has an immediate intuition of the Other as the "content-less object of sensuous consciousness". (Phen. Para 757).

For Hegel, this, shall we say, non-empirical immediacy, represents the first stage of speculative knowledge or the Notion implicit. He spells this out at Paragraph 761:

> This <u>unity</u> of Being and essence, of Thought which is immediately Existence, is both the <u>thought</u> of this religious consciousness, or its <u>mediated</u> knowledge, and equally its <u>immediate</u> knowledge; for this unity of Being and Thought is <u>self</u>-consciousness and is itself immediately <u>present</u>, or the <u>thought</u> unity has at the same time this [existential] shape of what it is. (Phen. Para 761)

Is not Levinas' central notion of the face to face an instance of this self same logical moment? Take, for example, the following formulation of the 'face' in OBBE:

> A face is a trace of itself, given over to my responsibility, but to which I am wanting and faulty. It is as though I were responsible for his mortality and guilty for surviving. A face is an anachronous immediacy more tense than that of an image offered in the straight-forwardness of an intuitive intention. (OBBE 91)

Levinas' statement that the face (existence) is a trace (thought, psyche) of itself (absolute otherness), or that it is an "anachronous immediacy" that has a presence more present than a sense perceptum, is exactly equivalent to Hegel's notion of the immediate Notion: the speculative unity of Thought (alterity) and existence (subject) in a singular being.

Perhaps it will be objected that we are pushing our analogy too far; after all, has not Levinas explicitly precluded the idea that the relation between the other and the same can be read as a coincidence between substance and subject? (OBBE 103)[2/]

Moreover, is it also not the case that the reason why Levinas introduces the term "obsession" in OBBE, is precisely to rule out any notion of a symmetry between the infinite Other and the finite self? Witness the following statement:

> The subject affected by the Other cannot think that the affection is reciprocal, for he is still obsessed by the very obsession that he would exercise over him that obsesses him. (OBBE 84)

Levinas pointedly precedes this statement with the preamble that: "obsession ..... is not a notion that could be introduced here to express, according to a well-known ritual, proximity as the unity of identify and difference", but rather denotes "difference as non-difference" (OBBE 83) and therefore appears to anticipate and preclude precisely the interpretation we are seeking to foist upon his work.

These elements of asymmetry and non-coincidence are integral to Levinas' whole notion of ethical individuation; for it is the absolute moment of non-reciprocity which is the basis of each individual's irrecusable obligation to the other, or as Levinas puts it "in the responsibility which we have for one another, I have always one more response to give, I have to answer for his very responsibility" (OBBE 84). In sum, then, Levinas' objections to the speculative construal of his work are essentially threefold, (a) that Hegelian speculation is based on an immanentist fusion of substance and subject without remainder, (b) that this necessarily destroys the essential asymmetry of the infinite-finite relation, and (c) this in turn altogether vitiates the me-ontological basis of ethical responsibility. We shall address the first two points here while

leaving the last to our consideration of Levinas' treatment of the nature of "substitution" below.

The first thing to be said in defence of Hegel's speculative Notion is that Levinas' criticism to the effect that it is immanentist and totalising relies on a patent misreading of Hegel's notion of "self-consciousness", insofar as it presents the latter as a species of intentionality or "consciousness-of". Yet the whole of Hegel's phenomenological labours are devoted to demonstrating that the self cannot achieve a full sich-verhalten through representation or reflective thinking, but must transcend this standpoint in an absolute direction. Quentin Lauer succinctly sums up Hegel's stance as follows:

> The absolutely self-conscious object is also the object of self-consciousness, since that means that to be fully conscious of self is to be conscious of the divine. For Hegel, then, religious consciousness is indispensable in the march toward adequate self-consciousness; it is at once consciousness of the divine and consciousness that to be adequately conscious of self is to be conscious of the divine - without self-consciousness ceasing to be human.3/

When this "relation" between the infinite and the finite is raised to the level of pure speculative thought and the last vestiges of figurative conception are sublated, then the absolute Other is no longer an "object", standing over and against a subject, but is immediately present as spirit. But this does not mean that the divine and human are now synonymous; on the contrary, the otherness of the absolute Other has not been negated; rather it has been thereby concretised. It falls to Hegel himself to give the most

compelling description of this accomplishment. In the 1821 Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion. Hegel writes:

> I raise myself in thought to the absolute ... thus being infinite consciousness; yet at the same time I am finite consciousness ... Both aspects seek each other and flee each other ... I am the struggle between them.4/

We see therefore that Levinas' first two objections to speculative thinking are essentially baseless. First, Hegel's understanding of the relation between substance and subject preserves the notion of transcendence in and through its conceptualisation via an immanent critique of all forms of representational thought. Second, the necessity to think the absolute does not, as Levinas avers, wholly negate the asymmetry of the absolute with respect to the finite, since the possibility of thinking the absolute is necessary to maintaining its very exteriority. Speculative thought stays with the aporia presented by this paradox.

There are two cardinal aspects of Levinas' notion of proximity which we cite as conclusive evidence of our claim that he is providing a speculative account of the absolute ethical relation which has been foreshadowed in Hegel's reconstruction of the religion of revelation. The two aspects in question are Levinas' redeployment in Chapter III of OBBE of the terms "hypostasis" and "fraternity".

The term "hypostasis", like the notion of "insomnia" is one which Levinas' utilises throughout his philosophical career. In

OBBE, however, it appears to undergo a radical modification vis a vis its earlier incarnation in EE. In EE "hypostasis" designated a pure act of self-positing through which the "I" liberates itself from the <u>there is</u> and literally comes into being by providing itself with a base and a position amidst the elements;[5/] in OBBE, it refers to the unchosen assignation of the self to undergo a primordial or "an-archic" responsibility for-the-other, that is antecedent to its ontological condition as a substantial or self-reflective being. However, as we have shown, the radicality of the transformation of the term is largely in appearance only, since it represents a <u>fusion</u> of categories which have previously been deduced in isolation from one another (in TI and the early works and essays) rather than a wholesale repudiation of these prior analyses.

Incidentally, Levinas would no doubt concede, as would Hegel, that the personal pronoun "I", along with other indexical expressions such as "here" and "there", can have no reference to an object which is not the function of a contextualising speech situation. Levinas' point, and one again in this respect he is here in accord with Hegel, is that the symbolic structures through which the social self is constructed presuppose an underlying pre-linguistic ethical matrix of meaning and responsibility for their orientation and sense. Levinas expresses the point thus:

> The exception of proximity to a rational order, tending in principle to a system of pure relations, is the hypostasis of the relationship into a subjectivity obsessed with a non-reciprocatable obsession, by the neighbour. This obsession is not reducible to an intersection of these relations, which would count by virtue of its "universal essence". Subjectivity counts by virtue of hypostasis, showing itself in the said, not to be sure under a name, but nonetheless,

> like entities, as a pro-noun. It is both the
> relation and the term of the relation. But it is as
> subject to an irreversible relation that the term
> of the relation becomes a subject. (OBBE 85)

The last sentence in this extract brings us to the nub of the real difference between Hegel and Levinas, for what divides our two thinkers is not that Hegel is an "immanentist" and Levinas a "transcendentalist", or that Hegel is an ontologist and Levinas a me-ontologist etc., all these distinctions refer to the level of representational thinking which both thinkers claim to have surpassed; the philosophical difference at stake here is between two different conceptions of the same speculative "relation" of the infinite to the finite. Levinas' use of the term "hypostasis", particularly in the form in which it is presented in OBBE, provides the clue to just how close he is not merely to the speculative form of Hegel's discourse but also to its content.

The origin of the term "hypostasis" reflects the pervasive influence of classical Greek philosophy on the early Church Fathers. The notion was used to formulate the orthodox statement of the relation between God and Christ at the Council of Chalcedon in 451, which declared that in Christ there is one Person (Divine) and two natures (one divine and the other human).6/ This formulation was arrived at by a long and tortuous route which partly revolved around the extent to which Aristotle's philosophy of substance could be made to serve the exigencies of Christian dogma. In Metaphysics Z, Aristotle treats the notion of substance as an equivocal and aporetic category. On the one hand, substance denotes primary ousia, that is to say, an indivisible "thisness" (tode ti) which subsists in itself ('kath' hauto) and which

therefore constitutes the substance or subject (hupokeimenon) which underlies accidental qualities and attributes and in which they inhere; on the other hand, it also refers to the essence of "whatness" (quiddity) of an entity insofar as it defines the to ti en einai. literally its "what-it-was-to have been", the past tense here specifying the eidos which renders it actual in proportion to the extent that it functions as a predicamental of a species or genus. These three elements or aspects of substance - qua "whatness" (existentia), qua subsistence (subjectum) and qua definition (essentia) - correspond to three different levels of hypostasis. Aristotle designates the first two as primary ousia while he refers to the third, nominal notion of substance, as secondary ousia.

Boethius is credited with having "dignified" the notion of hypostasis-as-subject when he gave the classical definition of "person" as the individual substance of a rational nature (rationalis naturae individua substantia).7/ This reformulation of hupokeimenon as rational individual or person placed the Aristotelian 'theory of being' at the disposal of Christian philosophical theology. The results are evident in the Chalcedonian definition. On the one hand, the doctrine of the "two natures" presents the relationship between Father and Son as that between primary ousia (thisness, tode ti) and secondary ousia (divine essence, Logos) in a single divine-and-human nature; on the other hand, the ontological analogy implicit in this formulation, which suggests that Father is related to the son of man as the individual man is related to the human species, is corrected by the spiritual analogy explicit in the terms used. Just as in a natural filial relation father and son (ideally) relate to one another on the

basis of mutual love and respect, so, the relation between the two divine "natures" stands as a perfected example of the filial bond, one which attains to an absolute love, through a unity and distinction in two persons.

This brief stretch of the genesis of the term hypostasis throws some light on Levinas' use of the term and its relationship to the notion of fecundity, both in the Chapter under consideration and in his work as a whole. First, we note that there is a certain symmetry between the evolution of the term hypostasis from EE to OBBE, and the general transformation the notion has undergone within the philosophical tradition. As we have just seen, in Western thought the notion of hypostasis passed from denoting a primary ousia or hupokeimenon and ended designating the union of the divine-and-human in the incarnate Christ; the parallel being that in Levinas' works the term hypostasis to begin with denotes the auto-posited independent subject, and ends, in OBBE, indicating the union of the "other-in-the-same" in an incarnate ethical subject.

Of course, defenders of Levinas will be quick to point out the patent disanalogy involved here. It will be protested that the notion of hypostasis in Patristic thought is an eminently onto-theological concept, depicting the union of the ens infinitum, deus with the ens infinitum, creatura, and, as such, it is, as it were, simply by-passed by Levinas' me-ontological re-working of the term. However, this objection serves to bear out our general thesis that Hegel is Levinas' precursor here in developing a post-critical philosophy of the Infinite. As we have already seen, Hegel breaks

with the substantialised notion of the divine-human relation as conceived by the early Fathers and the Scholastics (which, it must be said, even in its ontological form of presentation is nonetheless a speculative doctrine) by re-conceptualising it as a spiritual relationship. In essence, this is also Levinas' mode of procedure. It is no argument against Hegel that he draws upon ontological concepts to express the speculative content of the Notion, for this reflects the universal constraint imposed by the finitude of human language; the very same constraint that obliges Levinas to adopt such traditional concepts as "hypostasis" and to draw upon natural generational terms like "paternity" and "filiality" in order to communicate his notion of ethical transcendence.

In this last respect, however, there is a significant divergence between Hegel and Levinas. Hegel quite explicitly states that the speculative truth of religion, even of the "consummate" religion, ultimately transcends its representational form and content. Consequently, Hegelian speculation is not absolutely bound to the given forms of symbolic media through which religious truth has been historically transmitted down the ages; this, of course, is not to say that the symbolic inheritance is a matter of indifference; but only to point out that speculative thought, in the last analysis, has the spiritual power to sublate (aufheben) religious rite and representation; moreover, this is a power which extends to the annulment of the gender-specific characterisation of religious dogmas, including the Trinity and the incarnation. Hegel does not draw this inference in his treatment of the "consummate religion" in his Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion because there he is engaged on a speculative-logical reconstruction of the history of

theological science and consequently he presupposes the figurate conceptions which the tradition has bequeathed up until the time of the delivery of his lectures in Berlin in 1824, 1827 and 1831. In a similar vein, Hegel's notorious remarks in the Philosophy of Right (16 Zusatz) with respect to the role and status of women in relation to marriage, family, education and society are another instance where Hegel's method of logical reconstruction of received forms, this time of the tradition of political science, lead him to endorse conclusions which clearly contradicted his own notion of speculative rationality.[8/] The elimination of such contradictions from the System does not entail its wholesale repudiation; on the contrary, the application of speculative reason to Hegel's own works is an essential element of the 'labour of the negative' required to bring about its completion.[9/]

By contrast, Levinas' presentation of the ethical relation retains an ineliminable element of fixed biological determination, which renders it impervious to speculative reconfiguration. Thus in TI, Levinas states that sexuality provides the "example" of the way in which ethics is "accomplished before being reflected on" (TI 120), and this is a point that is fundamental to the understanding of the production of "infinite time" through the engenderment of the child in 'fecundity' as may be illustrated by this comment by Levinas on the relation between fecundity and filiality:

> If biology furnishes us the prototypes of all these relations, this proves to be sure, that biology does not represent a purely contingent order of being, unrelated to its essential production. (TI 279)

In OBBE, however, Levinas takes a different tack. Here the notion of "fraternity" is conceived without reference to eros and the family. Here, "Fraternity" may be stated only in an indirect form "for when it becomes conscious, that is, thematized, the indifferent approach destroys this kinship" (OBBE 82). In the non-erotic ethical relation, then, the self is placed in an unconditional obligation to the other, or as Levinas puts it:

> I am bound to him before any liaison contracted. He orders me before being recognised. Here there is a relation of Kinship outside of all biology 'against all logic'. It is not because the neighbour would belong to the same genus as me that he concerns me. He is precisely <u>Other</u>. The community with him begins in obligation to him. The neighbour is a brother. (OBBE 87)

We see therefore that here the ethical relation is conceived "outside of all biology" whereas in TI sexual difference is a necessary moment in the production of fraternity.

In keeping with our general interpretation of the interrelation between TI and OBBE, we will show above that the later statement does not supersede but rather complements the earlier formulation. If, for the minute, we consider Levinas' notion of fraternity as set out in <u>OBBE</u> by itself, that is in its pure non-biologically conditioned sense, then it is apparent that it corresponds <u>mutatis mutandis</u> to Hegel's speculative account of the appearance of the sensuous presence of the God-man, "the monstrous compound, which directly contradicts both representation and understanding" (LPR III: 457), which is to say, it instantiates the <u>immediate</u> identification of the absolute Other in the same or self, wholly in the passive mode. Logically speaking, it

is the reception of the union of <u>thought</u> (the unity of active and passive <u>transcendens</u> or "maternal-psyche") in an absolutely indeterminate, and hence "infinite", subjectivity. This is the "moment" where Hegel and Levinas' philosophical thought is completely convergent. It is essential to understand this if we are to comprehend the <u>real</u> differences between the two thinkers. These differences are fundamentally disclosed in Levinas' presentation of the notion of <u>Substitution</u> in Chapter IV of OBBE and it is to their consideration that we now turn.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1/   Jean Hyppolite, <u>Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit</u>. pp. 541-542 "Even before absolute knowledge, religion is already the moment in which phenomenology is transformed into noumenology, in which absolute spirit reveals itself as such, "<u>makes itself manifest to itself in manifesting itself to man</u>".

2/   Cf: OBBE p. 103: "The reduction of subjectivity to consciousness dominates philosophical thought, which since Hegel has been trying to overcome the duality of being and thought, by identifying, under different figures, subject and substance."

3/   Quentin Lauer S.J. <u>A Reading of Hegel's Phenomenology</u> (New York, Fordham University Press) pp. 258-259. See also Lauer's explication of Hegel's concept "what Hegel is saying is that the human spirit adequately conscious of itself is conscious of an object which is divine, which is not to say that 'human' and 'divine' are synonymous" (p. 258).

4/   LPR I Spiers and Sanderson p. 65. Cited in Fackenheim p. 31.

5/   Cf: EE, Chapter V. Here, Levinas defines the "hypostasis" as "the transmutation, within the pure event of being, of an event into a substantive" (p. 73).

6/   (ed). H. Bettenson. <u>Documents of the Christian Church</u>. (London, Oxford University Press) p. 51. For a discussion of the theological evolution of the concept of hypostasis in early Patristic thought see J.N.D. Kelly, <u>Early Christian Doctrines</u>. especially Chapter XII "The Christological Settlement" (London, Adam and Charles Black, 1977).

7/   See Henry Chadwick. <u>Boethius</u>: <u>The Consolations of Mystic. Logic and Philosophy</u> (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1981) p. 193.

8/   See above. Part Three. Chapter Four.

9/   What Hegel says of the Logic in the 'Introduction' to the <u>Science of Logic</u> may be applied to the system as a whole: "I could not pretend that the method which I follow in the science of Logic - or rather which this system in its own self follows - is not capable of greater completeness, of much elaboration in detail, but at the same time I know it is the only true method" SL 63.

CHAPTER SIX

DIVINE TRANSCENDENCE

Levinas poses the following question and comment at the beginning of Chapter IV of OBBE on substitution:

> How in consciousness can there be an undergoing or passion whose active source does not, in any way, occur in consciousness? This exteriority has to be emphasised.

From our reading of Levinas hitherto, we know that the "active source" of this "exteriority" is neither nothingness qua nothingness nor an immaterial substance; but the "maternal-psyche", the unity of pure sensibility and pure thought incarnate in the ethical subject. Now it is the modality of the approach to this exteriority that Levinas sets out to communicate in the chapter in question. That is to say, substitution describes, so to speak, the iteration or re-saying of the unassumable ethical obligation detailed in the antecedent analysis of Proximity.

Levinas' favoured term for what we have designated as the "iteration" of the primary ethical condition is that of "recurrence". He introduces this "concept" in the following way:

> The recurrence to oneself refers to the hither-side of the present in which every identity identified in the said is constituted. It is already constituted when the act of constitution first originates. (OBBE 105)

The "oneself" that is arrived at as a result of this 'reversion' is evidently not that of a merely sentient being stripped of its cognitive faculties. Levinas is not describing a regression to a child-like state. As he expresses it, later in the same chapter, this "flight out of concepts" i.e. representations, is not a descent into "the naivety or blindness of non-thought" (OBBE 126). To the contrary, it is a reduction to the alterity of the created state, which requires an imageless conceptuality to positively produce its accomplishment.

This recurrence to the 'pre-original' state is, according to Levinas, dirempted into two "moments". On the one hand, it is a recoil to the hypostasis or "pro-noun", without mask or personae, a predicateless and hence: "pre-synthetic, pre-logical, and in a certain sense atomic, that is, in-dividual, unity of the self, which prevents it from splitting, separating itself from itself so as to contemplate or express itself" (OBBE 107). Yet, on the other hand, this very movement by which the absolute ipseity of the subject is confirmed is at one and the same time the moment of its disintegration and fragmentation in which it is exposed to "the anguish of contraction and break-up" (OBBE 108), and through which it is opened to receive the other beyond itself.

The "coincidence" of these moments is nothing less than the "union" of activity and passivity in their absolute sense, and the redemption of passivity by activity. Levinas' own formulations confirm our interpretation. Levinas describes the approach to absolute passivity thus:

> The active source of this passivity is not
> thematizable. It is the passivity of a trauma, but
> one that prevents its own representation, a
> deafening trauma, cutting the thread of
> consciousness that could have welcomed it in its
> present, the passivity of being persecuted. The
> face of the neighbour in its persecuting hatred
> can by this very malice obsess as something
> pitiful. (OBBE 111)

Levinas' essential point here is that the approach to absolute passivity transfigures the primary accusation against the self into an unconditional love for others. This is perhaps the critical moment in the whole of Levinas' oeuvre. Here the self passes from proximity to substitution, "from the outrage undergone to the responsibility for the persecutor, from suffering to expiation for the other" (Ibid). The reversion to passivity assumes the "active" moment of transcendent exteriority; the self does not merely endure its own creaturely status but iterates it, and thereby expiates for the other. In Levinas' words, this is "the ab-solution that reverses essence" (Ibid).

The parallel with Hegel's speculative re-telling of the myth of the incarnation is evident. We will explore this parallel on two levels. First we shall examine the relationship between Hegel's account of the "death of god" and Levinas' treatment of "substitution". Second, we will recapitulate this relation from the point of view of Hegel's Logic, that is to say, from the Notional 'standpoint', free from all representational residue.

In the previous section we maintained that there is a connection between Hegel's statement of the initial appearance of the God-man or Das Ist, prior to His crucifixion, and Levinas'

notion of proximity, the immediacy of the "other-in-the-same". We now suggest that there is a further convergence between the two thinkers, that is to say, Hegel's presentation of the speculative significance of the death of the God-man, and Levinas' description of the expiation for proximity in substitution, represent two separate elucidations of the same redemptive movement. Since we have already reviewed Hegel's account of the "death of God" above, we shall proceed by providing a brief summary of the cardinal moments of Hegel's presentation which will then serve us as an aid to a comparison with Levinas on substitution.

Levinas' statement that the expiation for the other in substitution effects an "ab-solution which reverses essence" is foreshadowed in Hegel's reading of Good Friday, when he says that "With the death of God ... the reversal of consciousness begins" (LPRIII: 322).   Christ was the God-man who had human nature "even unto death" (Ibid). Hegel adds:

> Death is the most complete proof of humanity, of absolute finitude; and indeed Christ has died the aggravated death of the evildoer: not merely a natural death, but rather a death of shame and humiliation on the cross. In him humanity is carried to its furthest point. (Ibid)

The significance of the humiliation suffered by Christ is that it represents not merely an extreme case of human abjection but an absolute identification with the separatedness or "evil" of the created human condition. Thus Hegel states:

> This finitude, however, on its own account (as against God) is evil, it is something alien to God. But he has taken it [upon himself] in order to put it to death by his death. As the monstrous

> unification of these extremes, this shameful
> death is at the same time infinite love. (LPR III:
> 324)

The death of God therefore is a universal expiation; in his dying for us, we are implicitly released from the anxiety and negativity of death, into life. But only on condition that we also die to ourselves, that is, surrender all intentional relations to the absolute other as object and "relate to the other as absolute" (Ibid). The death of "God" is therefore the prerequisite for our rebirth in spirit. In Hegel's words:

> The death of the natural has in this way a
> universal significance: finitude and evil are
> altogether destroyed. Thus the world has been
> reconciled; by this death it has been implicitly
> delivered from its evil. In the true understanding
> [Verstehen] of death, the relation of the subject
> as such [to death] comes into view in this way.
> Here any merely historical view comes to an end;
> the subject itself is drawn into the process. The
> subject feel the anguish of its own estrangement
> which Christ takes upon himself by putting on
> humanity, while at the same time destroying it
> by his death. (LPR III: 305)

We are now in a position to locate the precise point at which Hegel and Levinas converge and diverge. As we shall see, the iteration and proximity in substitution is the speculative unity of identity and absolute otherness. In other words, the "recurrence" of the self to the hither-side of itself, is, at one and the same time, a response to the "contraction" of the infinite withdrawal of the Other which makes the absolute autonomy of the self possible in the first instance. [1]/ As Levinas expresses it:

> Then the recurrence to oneself cannot stop at
> oneself, but goes to the hither-side of oneself; in
> the recurrence to oneself there is a going to the
> hither-side of oneself. A does not as in identity

> return to A, but retreats to the hither-side of its
> point of departure. (OBBE 114)

Here we see the analogue to Hegel's account of the infinite's identification with and withdrawal from the finite. In the 1827 Lectures, Hegel cites Corinthians 2 5:18-19, "In His death Christ has borne the sins of the world and has reconciled God [with the world] (LPRIII: 324). Likewise, for Levinas, the reversion to the "hither side" represents an absolute moment of individuation that possesses a universal significance:

> The ipseity, in the passivity without arche
> characteristic of identity, is a hostage. The word
> I means here I am, answering for everything and
> for everyone. (Ibid)

The ethical self is therefore the absolute embodiment of a universal expiation for the primary separation of our createdness. As this "sub-jectum: it is under the weight of the universe responsible for everything" (OBBE 116).

Franz Rosenzweig in the Star of Redemption interprets the words "Here I am" as the confession by the self that it has hitherto been unloved.[2/] In contrast, Levinas reads it as signifying the subject's assent to its divine moral assignation. In TI this was expressed as denoting the "extreme consciousness" in which the subject though claimed by death yet has time to be against death by being for-the-other (TI 239). In the chapter on substitution Levinas states that the response to the ethical call is an approach which "inasmuch as it is a sacrifice, confers a sense on death. In it the absolute singularity of the responsible one encompasses the generality or generalization of death. In it life is no longer

measured by being, and death can no longer introduce the absurd into it" (OBBE 129). In other words, by means of an absolute expiation for creation, both individually and universally, the ethical self transcends the reciprocity of ego and alter ego that conditions intersubjective relations at the level of being and essence. As a result:

> Impassively undergoing the weight of the other, thereby called to uniqueness, subjectivity no longer belongs to the order where the alternative of activity and passivity retains its meaning. We have to speak here of expiation as uniting identity and alterity. (OBBE 118)

May we read Levinas' formulations as a speculative restatement of the "death of death" and of the reconciliation between the divine and the human? We must be careful not to beg the question with respect to the issues at stake here by inadmissibly importing pre-philosophical conceptions taken from Levinas' confessional texts. When approached from a purely philosophical point of view we shall see that Levinas both affirms and denies the actuality of redemption and reconciliation, as does Hegel. The difference between them may be reduced to their respective understanding of the nature of the "relation" between the affirmative and negative poles of this absolute aporia.

To answer our question, then, we must first ascertain precisely what Levinas means by designating substitution as an expiation uniting identity and alterity. The following statement by Levinas may further illuminate the process under discussion. The "recurrence" from ego to self leaves the subject at the point where:

> At the limit of passivity, the oneself escapes
> passivity or the inevitable limitation that the
> terms within relation undergo. In the
> incomparable relationship of responsibility, the
> other no longer limits the same, it is supported
> by what it limits. (OBBE 115)

The self therefore expiates for creation by "returning" to the pure sensibility "before" and "beyond" all apperception, and thereby substitutes itself for the Other without quitting the locus of its own incarnation. This is an infinite movement in which all limits are superseded. As Levinas puts it, this absolute patience has "effaced the distinction between being accused and accusing oneself" (OBBE 125).

To avoid unnecessary misunderstanding on this critical point we must analyse further the meaning of the term 'substitution'. Clearly, Levinas does not mean by it that I become the other person, in the sense of duplicating their identity. Nor is it a case of "leaping-in" rather than "leaping-ahead" in Heidegger's sense.[3/] Finally, it is not an act of altruism borne from a freely given commitment on the part of the I. Perhaps the notion of substitution may best be described as an act of grace. In Levinas' words: "The ego is not an entity 'capable' of expiating for the others: it is the original expiation. The expiation is voluntary for it is prior to the will's initiative (prior to the origin)" (Ibid). 'Grace' is the only word that will suffice to describe a voluntary act that does not arise from a finite volition but from an infinite resolution.[4/] The assumption of absolute responsibility is, according to Levinas, "without deliberation" (OBBE 120). That is to say, it is the result of an unmotivated, spontaneous and gratuitous acceptance of the burden of answering for the universal susceptibility for pain and

suffering, even to the point of accepting responsibility for the responsibility all the others bear for the primary diremption brought about by the creation ex nihilo.

We may say therefore, without exaggeration, that the notion of substitution signifies the appearance of the speculative Christ-motif in Levinas' philosophy. Substitution is the reversion to oneself which is equally a transcendence of the self towards the absolute Other and the reception of the absolute Other in the self. This "transitivity" has already been described by Levinas in TI in terms of the 'overflowing' of the "idea of infinity" in consciousness, such that the subject encounters an ideatum which surpasses its idea (TI 49). It is the "event" of the absolute recognition of the self in absolute otherness wherein the subject finds itself by losing itself (OBBE 11). By taking on or iterating the an-archic, "passive synthesis", the ethical subject overcomes the separation between alterity and death, such that death ceases to be absolute; for "in this trauma the Good reabsorbs or redeems the violence of non-freedom" (OBBE 123). Henceforth, life has a meaning beyond death. As a consequence, in substitution the self is not called upon to die for the Other, only to bear witness to him; but it is the overcoming of death in principle which renders it ethically necessary and meaningful to sacrifice one's own life in preference to murdering an innocent.

We see therefore that in all essentials Levinas' account of substitution appears congruent with Hegel's speculative commentary on the death of Christ. However, we have, of course, so far only dealt with one side of Levinas' treatment of the infinite

"recurrence". For we must never allow ourselves to overlook the fact that Levinas does not waver in his insistence upon the asymmetry of the ethical relation: the substitution of the self for the Other cannot bring about the substitution of the Other for the self. Indeed, in OBBE, he is perhaps even more emphatic than usual on this point:

> My substitution - it is as my own that substitution for the neighbour is produced ... No one can substitute himself for me, who substitutes himself for all. (OBBE 126)

This statement marks the critical juncture where Hegel and Levinas divide. We may express their essential divergence thus: for Hegel, redemption and reconciliation are identical terms; whereas for Levinas, redemption is synonymous with non-reconciliation. We shall now offer an explication of this distinction.

In the previous chapter we traced Hegel's speculative commentary on the doctrine of the incarnation. According to Hegel's speculative reconstruction of the sacred narrative the death of Christ on the cross signifies the coincidentia oppositarium of the infinite and the finite, inasmuch as it is a representation of the actual culmination of a double movement wherein the finitized infinite has "overarched" absolute finitude and then withdrawn back into the pure transcendens of the infinite, leaving behind, as it were, an infinitized finite, which, by virtue of retaining a trace of the infinite within itself, is implicitly reconciled with both the infinite and the world. As a result, the finite self is, in principle, spiritually released from the power of death to a life of freedom. In Hegel's words, the crucifixion symbolises the "in-breathing of

Spirit, whereby substance becomes Subject, by which its abstraction and lifelessness has died, and substance therefore has become actual and simple and universal self-consciousness" (Phen. Para 785). The crucifixion therefore is the salvific crisis which accomplishes the absolute forgiveness of finitude via the negation of absolute negativity; in short, it is the event through which "the wounds of the Spirit heal" (Phen. Para 669), once only and thereafter every day in the witness of the ethico-spiritual Kingdom. As Hegel expresses it: "death becomes transfigured from its immediate meaning viz the non-being of this particular individual, into the universality of the Spirit, who dwells in his community, dies in it, and is daily resurrected" (Phen. Para 784).[5/]

We have already noted how Hegel, in the Phenomenology. presents the appearance of the God-man as the unity of an implicit father (transcendence) with an actual mother (immanence). However, Hegel goes on to say that the death of God and his daily resurrection in the Spiritual life of the redeemed community brings about a radical inversion of the initial transcendent-immanent relation; henceforth, the community has its own "deeds and knowing" for its actual father, while its previously ultramundane mother is, so to speak, "de-actualised"; for she is transfigured, via her elevation into the ethereal beyond, into a transcendent archetype of eternal (i.e. maternal, non-erotic) love. This development, in turn, re-introduces a fresh diremption between transcendence and finitude. The fate of freedom is thus determined: it consists in overcoming the newly arisen antithesis between an implicit mother and an actual father. The end of freedom therefore is the accomplishment in universal self-

consciousness of a fully transparent relation to absolute alterity such that the finite self will come to have both an <u>actual</u> father <u>and</u> an <u>actual</u> mother.

In deliberate contrast to Hegel, Levinas refuses the "moment" of the overarching or intersection of the infinite and the finite. For Levinas, there is no <u>coincidentia oppositorium</u>. and hence there is no reconciliation; the lesion remains exposed. This is the whole meaning of "substitution", for, in Levinas' words, "when this relation (i.e. substitution) is really thought through, it signifies the <u>wound that cannot heal over</u> of the self in the ego accused by the Other to the point of persecution, and responsibility for its persecutor" (OBBE 126) (emphasis added). Levinas' view therefore is that the non-reconciliation of the divine and the human is <u>necessary</u> to the production of the ethical relation. If the movement unto the Other were to take a reciprocal form then the redemptive "relation" would assume a soteriological rather than a genuinely ethically transcendent character. That is to say, it would remain primarily oriented towards <u>personal</u> salvation from which moral duties would then be derived, as it were, at second remove. Ethical transcendence, on the other hand, is being for the Other <u>ab initio</u>. and hence it is <u>presupposed</u> by the merely moral or pious self. The <u>non</u>-coincidence of the self and the Other in the midst of their <u>proximity</u> is the essential element that makes the ethical relation possible. Levinas succinctly states his understanding of this dynamic thus:

> The fact that in its Goodness the Good declines the desire it arouses while inclining it toward the responsibility for the neighbour, preserves <u>difference</u> in the non-difference of the Good,

which chooses me before I welcome it. (OBBE
123)

To sum up; for Hegel the infinite must identify with the finite
and <u>then</u> withdraw in order to permit the self to be for itself <u>in</u>
absolute otherness; for Levinas, on the other hand, the finite must
make an infinite approach to the Other, an approach which is
maintained in the measure that the moment of reconciliation is
refused, since the refusal of reconciliation prevents the full
coincidence between substance and subject which would negate
the "non-indifference in difference" essential to the production of
the ethical relation. Of course, Levinas seriously distorts Hegel's
notion of the unity of substance and subject by representing it
purely monologically, and thereby ignoring the latter's stress on the
non-coincidence of the terms. When Hegel's notion of the unity of
substance and subject is correctly read as a speculative
proposition, then, the difference separating him from Levinas is not
so chasmic as first appears. Hence it is not that the system
constitutes an immanent totality while Levinas' philosophy is a
philosophy of absolute otherness. Rather, the System presents the
<u>speculative unity</u> of the infinity and totality, while Levinas'
philosophy presents the <u>speculative non-unity</u> of the infinity and
totality.

That is to say, for Hegel, the redemptive relation <u>has been</u>
accomplished and <u>is</u> accomplished through its <u>re</u>-accomplishment;
whereas, for Levinas, the redemptive relation <u>never has been</u>
accomplished since it "is" accomplished <u>ab initio</u> and <u>ab extra</u> prior
to Being itself, and so an-archically accomplishes itself through its
incessant <u>non</u>-accomplishment or in the very failure of its

accomplishment. A speculative interrogation of these differences might well conclude that there really is nothing to separate these two positions once they are elevated to the level of pure thought. Although Hegel speaks of the redemptive relation <u>having been</u> accomplished, he also adds that this singular reconciliation was at once dirempted; thence it follows that the work of re-accomplishing the accomplished redemptive relation is an infinite goal, and one that we must necessarily <u>fail towards</u> as we seek to perfect it. This would appear to be essentially compatible with Levinas' view that the ethical relation calls for the infinite witness of ethical service to-others which succeeds to the extent that it approximates to its end without ever fully accomplishing its goal.

However, this would be a superficial conclusion since from a speculative standpoint it is by no means a matter of indifference that for Levinas the ethical relation is oriented by a trace "in" the finite of an infinite that <u>never has been</u>. while, for Hegel it is oriented by a trace or spiritual memory "in" the finite self of an infinite reconciliation that <u>has been</u> and has then been withdrawn. This is a <u>conceptual</u> rather than a merely representational distinction. We shall now seek to show how Levinas' formulation of the ethical relation commits him to a philosophically incoherent position in so far as it results in what we shall call a <u>speculative contradiction</u>. We will then go on to demonstrate in part two and three of the present study how this Notional inconsistency has deleterious consequences for Levinas' account of subjectivity, his notion of ethical community, and his conception of the relationship between ethics and politics.

We must first clarify what we do not mean when we charge Levinas with falling into speculative contradiction. We are not saying that Levinas' use of ontological language to convey a meontological and transfinite conceptuality entails eo ipso that the form of his philosophical presentation fatally vitiates its content. This is the Derridean objection which Levinas is able to meet. Indeed, as said, it is Levinas' claim that his notion of 'ethical language' is able to overcome the constraints imposed upon philosophical expression by natural language that qualifies his philosophical work as a species of speculative discourse.

To back up our contention on this point we shall cite examples from the text of OBBE where Levinas explicitly affirms the capacity of his own philosophical language to transcend the limitations of the finite categories of the understanding, or, in his own parlance, the Said. In the chapter on Proximity, writing with respect to his use of the first-person indexical to signify the irrecusable nature of the ethical assignation, Levinas states that "It is indeed true that this I has already become a universal in the present exposition itself. But I am capable of conceiving a break with this universal" (OBBE 139). Despite appearances to the contrary, Levinas is not arguing in the circle here since the "I" which appears in each of these two sentences has a different point of reference corresponding to a distinction between the noumenal and the phenomenal self. Levinas, following Hegel, is maintaining that the noumenal self may be conceived. This is why Levinas is able to state that "the ethical reduction to saying, "the indescribable is described" (OBBE 53). Moreover, Levinas contends that his own text concretely reproduces and articulates this

transcendence of finite terms. OBBE he asserts "has exposed the signification of subjectivity in the extraordinary everydayness of my responsibility for other men" (OBBE 141). He repeats this claim in Chapter V of the work:

> And still I interrupt the ultimate discourse in which all the discourses are stated, in saying it to the one that listens to it, and who is situated outside the said that discourse says, outside all it includes. That is true of the discussion I am elaborating at this very moment. This reference to an interlocutor permanently breaks through the text that the discourse claims to weave in thematizing and enveloping all things. (OBBE 170) (Emphasis added)

We are now in a position to formulate the speculative contradiction at the heart of Levinas' notion of the ethical. Levinas contradicts himself when he holds that, "diachronically" speaking, at one and the same time, it is possible (a) to conceive the relation between the infinite and the finite and that (b) the conception of this "relation" does not bring about an implicit reconciliation between the infinite and the finite. In effect, Levinas is inadmissibly and inconsistently thinking together the unity and difference of alterity and identity and then, as it were, subtracting the fact of this thought, as if it were merely his own subjective contribution. But it is precisely by thinking the thought of the absolute relation that the ethical self is able to transcend the psychological and phenomenal conditions and limits of its own finitude. In so far as the finite self is able to think the thought of the infinite it cannot remain wholly apart from it. We must be careful to repeat that the speculative contradiction we are here attributing to Levinas does not obtain at the level of the Understanding but arises in the realm of pure ideation. In other

words, we are referring to an absolute mode of cognition which has transcended the intentional relations characteristic of phenomenological consciousness. An example of this is Levinas' reformulation of the ontological argument, where consciousness in its attempt to think the idea of infinity 'thinks more than it can think' and thereby transcends the conditions of its own finite cognition to attain to an absolute mode of thought. It must as a result be at least partially reconciled with the absolute other.

It seems to me that the only way Levinas would be able to resist the force of this conclusion would be if her were to maintain that he has access to a special mode of conceptuality which, notwithstanding all the formal features it shares with speculative discourse, nonetheless articulates a noumenological content in a manner which is altogether outside of thought in its Notional sense. However, Levinas himself eschews such an intuitionist and quasi-mystical stance.6/ He is only too well aware that to adopt such a position would be tantamount to renouncing his claim for the philosophical intelligibility of his notion of ethics. Moreover, it would clearly vitiate the performative meaning of his own texts, particularly OBBE, which derive their illocutionary force from the way in which "ethical language" does not obviate the philosophical lexicon but signifies itself through its received terms.

In conclusion, then, Levinas' claim that the non-coincidence of the infinite and the finite is absolutely originary is belied by his own analysis and presentation. It is not possible to think the unity of alterity and identity as a non-reconciliation since the very possibility of the non-identity of these terms is predicated on their

prior identity and non-identity _in_ thought. Thought is the necessary _tertium quid_ in the absolute relation, and Levinas' works testify to this fact. We must therefore take the latter's contention that the non-reconciliation of the infinite and the finite is "an-archic" to be derivative. That said, the question still remains as to whether or not Levinas' insistence on the non-reciprocity of the ethical relation is justified on the basis that the notion of an absolute reconciliation would result in a reversion from alterity to egoism which would have the effect of negating ethical witness by replacing it with a self-centred religiosity?

A Hegelian response to this question would refuse the implicit opposition contained within its terms between love of the Other and love of self. For Hegel, the possibility of divine love presupposes self love, and love of self in turn is predicated on a complete socio-historical, political, aesthetic, religious and philosophical _Bildung_. In short, it requires an education in and for freedom. But this is precisely what is ruled out by Levinas' notion of the ethical. We may say that the Heglian objection to Levinas is not that he falls into a 'bad infinity', but that he remains fixated on the purely passive moment of the _affirmative_ infinity. That is to say, having thought through the infinite "ground" of finitude, Levinas reinstates the hiatus between absolute alterity and the finite by refusing to allow the "active" moment of the infinite other to overarch the finite self. In short, the divine-human 'encounter' is not permitted to _release_ the self; on the contrary, redemption takes the form of a reconfirmation in bondage. As Levinas puts it in OBBE:

> For subjectivity to signify unreservedly, it would
> then be necessary that the passivity of the
> exposure to the other not be immediately
> inverted into activity, but expose itself in its
> turn; a passivity is necessary, and in the glory of
> the infinite ashes from what an act could not be
> born. (OBBE 143)

In so far as the Levinasian ethical self is perpetually obligated to fulfil the conditions of its own divine election it is not in a position to enter into the social, political and historical existence necessary for the accomplishment of its full self-potential and hence equally necessary for the assumption of an absolute relation to the absolute.

Therefore, the speculative-logical criticism that Levinas refuses to think Thought through to its end in infinite alterity is at one and the same time the central ethical objection to his notion of ethical transcendence. Ironically, Levinas' denial of reciprocity in the divine-human relation entails that ultimately there is no transcendence of the finite in his philosophy. Finitude is redeemed but not set free. Although, following Hegel's description of the early Christian community, the Levinasian self may be said to have an actual father - the ille of illeity for its "own doing and knowing", its iteration in substitution places its relation to its ultramundane mother - the 'maternal-psyche' forever outside its reach.

Hence the terms of the ethical relation as Levinas defines it foreclose on the possibility of this implicit dimension being made explicit, either in the life of the ethico-religious society or in the life of the world, in a way that is ruinous to both. The ethical community is thereby fated to be corrupted by its rigid antithesis

to the temporal realm, while the world is denied the spiritual memory of its divine redemption.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER SIX

1/ TI 104: "Infinity is produced by withstanding the invasion of a totality, in a contraction that leaves a place for the separated being. An infinity that does not close in upon itself in a circle but withdraws from the ontological extension so as to leave a place for a separated being exists divinely."

2/ Franz Rosenzweig Star of Redemption 178-179.

3/ Martin Heidegger Being and Time Section 122.

4/ In "The Paradox of Morality: an Interview with Emmanuel Levinas" Tamra Wright, Peter Hughes, Alison Ainley. Translated by Andrew Benjamin and Tamra Wright included in (ed) Robert Bernasconi and David Wood. The Provocation of Levinas (London and New York, Routledge 1988) pp. 168-180, Levinas defines grace as a gratuitous act: The idea of the face is the idea of gratuitous love, the commandment of a gratuitous act. Commanding love. Commanded love signifies recognising the value of love in itself (p. 176).

5/ John Smith, 'Hegel's Reinterpretation of the Doctrine of Spirit and the Religious Community' in (ed) D. Christenson, Hegel and the Philosophy of Religion (Martinus Nighoff. The Hague, 1970).

6/ Cf: TI 77: "The metaphysical relation, the idea of infinity, connects with the noumenon which is not a numen. This

noumenon is to be distinguished from the concept of God possessed by the believers of positive religions ill disengaged from the bonds of participation, who accept being emerged in a myth unbeknownst to themselves."

PAGINATION ERROR

PART TWO

THE GENESIS OF THE SOCIO-

HISTORICAL WORLD

CHAPTER SEVEN

INTRODUCTION: TRANSCENDENCE AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

In TI, Levinas stipulates two grounds for the face to face relation. First, it is based on a radical symmetry between the terms of its "relata". Second, notwithstanding this fact, it is also accomplished through the unreserved giving by the I of material things to the suffering and needy Other. Indeed, the whole substance of Levinas' critique of Buber's dialogical conception of the ethical is that it fails to fulfil either of these two conditions. The asymmetry of the I and the Thou, on the one hand, and the material dimension of the ethical relation on the other, are both lost sight of in the notion of the "encounter" which reduces the face to face relation to the status of an ethically neutral "spiritual friendship" (TI 69).[1]/

We are not concerned with the details of Levinas' relation to Buber here.[2]/ We mention it merely to highlight the importance of economic justice to Levinas' understanding of ethics. Levinas is quite emphatic on this point throughout TI. In the opening section, he proclaims that the face to face "does not exhaust itself in the formalism of abstract thought. It is accomplished in the plenitude of economic existence" (TI 60). In so far as the ethical relation presupposes giving to others then the ethical self must have something to give: "no human or interhuman relationship can be enabled outside of economy, no face can be approached with empty hands and closed home" (TI 90). In other words, ethics requires

real generosity, the donation of things: "I speak a word, that in the measure that it welcomes the other as other, offers or sacrifices to him a product of labour, and consequently does not play above economy" (TI 92). In short, the command in the face of the Other consists not only in the interdiction: "Thou shalt not kill me", but also contains the positive injunction: "Thou must give me bread"; as Levinas puts it: "Before the hunger of men responsibility is only measured 'objectively'; it is irrecusable" (TI 201). Levinas succinctly summarises his understanding of the material element in the ethical relation in the following statement: "I can recognise the gaze of the stranger, the widow, the orphan only in giving or refusing; I am free to give or to refuse, but my recognition passes through the interposition of things" (TI 77).

However, is there not a definite tension in Levinas' account between the emphasis on absolute symmetry and the requirement of material donation and service? If ethical expression is necessarily mediated through the 'interposition of things' how can it avoid incorporation into a world of phenomena and reciprocity where the asymmetry of its point of departure will inevitably be negated, since on Levinas' own account all social interaction in-the-world is inherently and absolutely reified? In his own words:

> action does not express. It has meaning but leads us to the agent in his absence. To approach someone from works is to enter into his interiority as though by burglary; the other is surprised in his intimacy like the personages of history, he is, to be sure exposed, but does not express himself. Works signify their author, but indirectly in the third person. (TI 66-67)

The sincerity of good intentions is always liable to subversion through the indeterminacy of interpretation. This possibility is ramified under conditions of market exchange. As Levinas says, in commerce and trade the "Other can dispossess me of my work, take it and buy it, and thus direct my behaviour. I am exposed to instigation" (TI 227). A hiatus is thereby opened up between the producer and his product, with the result that "at a given moment the producer no longer <u>follows</u> up, remains behind" ...

> This inexpressive character of the product is reflected positively in its market value, in its suitability for others, in its capability to assume the meaning others will give it, to enter into an entirely different context from that which engenders it. (TI 227)

In short, the problem that presents itself is this: Either the ethical relation is entirely divorced from any empirical ethical deed (which would contradict Levinas' own insistence that "the transcendence of the face is not enacted outside of the world" (TI 171) or, it is indeed situated within the world, where <u>ex hypothesi</u> it must be subject to alienation and reification.

Levinas however refuses the terms of this disjunction. In effect, he maintains that, yes, this either/or would indeed be insuperable if being-in-the-world exhausted all human relations; but this is not the case for their "exists" within-the-world an "order" that is not <u>of</u> the world.

> What inward existence lacks is not a being in the superlative, prolonging and amplifying the equivocations of interiority and its symbolism, but an order where all the symbolisms are deciphered by beings that present themselves absolutely - that express themselves. (TI 178)

But where is such an order to be found? Levinas' answer to this further question is that it is to be found in <u>Religion</u>. in his own especial sense of the term. Levinas defines <u>Religion</u> in contrast to "politics",

> Politics tends to reciprocal recognition, that is toward equality; it ensures happiness and political law concludes and sanctions the struggle for recognition. Religion is Desire and not struggle for recognition. It is the surplus possible in a society of equals, that of glorious humility, responsibility and sacrifice, which are the condition for equality itself. (TI 64)

This separation of religion from politics strongly recalls Kant's distinction between an ethical kingdom of ends, understood as a universal republic of autonomous subjects devoted to moral principles, and a political community arising contractually out of a state of nature. However, notwithstanding superficial similarities, there are decisive reasons why Levinas' account of the relationship between ethics and politics cannot be assimilated to a Kantian paradigm. For the <u>religious society</u> of which Levinas speaks cannot be entered by a shift in perspective from the phenomenal world of causality to a noumenal realm of ethical autonomy;[4]/ since - and this again discloses Levinas' proximity to Hegel - the non-formal nature of "<u>ethics</u> as first philosophy" demands an institutional context for its accomplishment, viz, the family and the "nation" conceived as a community of families, incorporating, natural resources, labour, property, money, education and political and religious institutions. Now, it is by positing the existence of this ethico-religious community <u>in</u> time but outside of history, that Levinas is able to contend that ethical deeds may be expressed in

the world through the mediation of things without becoming alienated in the process.

In the remainder of this study we aim to demonstrate, on the basis of a critical Hegelian reading, that the deduction of the ethico-religious community set out in TI commits Levinas to an essentially pre-modern, particularist, sectarian, patriarchal and theocratic notion of community.

We concede that it is by no means obvious from the text of TI that Levinas frames his ethics within an institutional matrix. Therefore we will have to meet the charge that we are reading into Levinas' works a notion of a visible community which is not in the texts themselves. Consequently, it is incumbent on us to provide a detailed textual substantiation of the interpretation of TI and OBBE sketched out above.

Levinas' presentation of the genesis of civil society and the state may be analysed in terms of four definite stages. First, the elemental realm or "state of nature". Second, the moment of simple production. Third, the constitution of civil society on the realm of appearance, and fourth and finally, in the relation between war and the state. We shall critically examine Levinas' exposition of each of these stages in chronological order.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER SEVEN

1/ TI 69.

2/ For a comprehensive overview and evaluation of Levinas' relationship to Buber, see Robert Bernasconi's essay "'Failure of Communication' as a Surplus: Dialogue and lack of Dialogue between Buber and Levinas", collected in (ed) Bernasconi R and Wood D, The Provocation of Levinas: Rethinking the Other (1988).

3/ Immanuel Kant. Metaphysical Elements of Justice, translated by John Ladd. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill).

4/ Henry Allison Kant's Theory of Freedom, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) for a statement of a "two aspects" theory which treats the noumena-phenomena distinction as "two distinct ways in which objects of human experience may be "considered" in philosophical reflection" (p 3-4).

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE TRANSITION FROM THE ELEMENTS TO THE WORLD OF REPRESENTATION

Levinas' account of the 'sincerity of intentions' in EE brings to mind Rousseau's vision of the state of nature (in the <u>Discourse on Inequality</u>).   In TI, this parallel is further developed and concretised. Just as Rousseau holds that the condition of man in the state of nature is almost unimaginable from the educated perspective of civil society; Levinas likewise maintains that the realm of the elements is inconceivable from the reified standpoint of Western ontology.[1/] It requires a radical ontological epoché to gain access to this, most primordial, state of created life.

Once the reduction is accomplished we gain insight into a pre-moral and pre-political world beyond all technical finality. As in Rousseau, the state of nature is essentially innocent. All privation within this state is predicated on a primary plenitude. In Levinas' words:

> At the origin there is a being gratified, a citizen of paradise. The "emptiness" felt implies that the need which becomes aware of it abides already in the midst of an enjoyment - be it that of the air one breathes.   It anticipates the joy of satisfaction, which is <u>better</u> than ataraxy.   For from putting the sensible life into question, pain takes place within its horizons and refers to the joy of living. (TI 144-145)

The elements, therefore, like the solitary individuals[2/] that populate Rousseau's natural state are occupied by autochthonous

beings possessed of an essentially benign disposition.[3] Each "I" is both immersed in and yet separated from, the "milieu" of the non-I: "The non-I feeds enjoyment; the I needs the world that exalts it" (TI 144). The I, therefore, does not stand in an intentional relation to the elements, rather: "Every relation or possession is situated within the non-possessible which envelops and contains without being able to be enveloped or contained" (TI 131). Thus, the I in this paradisal state of "happy dependence" exhibits a primary "love of life". Even the disturbances occasioned by want, pain and suffering derive their acuteness from the fact that subsistence in its original mode is fundamentally "agreeable" (TI 149).[4]

One final Rousseauian resonance is that for Levinas the I in enjoyment is amour de soi. This is implicitly contrasted with the factitious amour propre which arises in civil society.[5] At the basis of Levinas' analysis of the relation between enjoyment and the elements is the ancient prejudice that 'true' pleasures are essentially natural and simple ones.

Eventually the autochthonous self is cast out from this Edenic idyll by a compound of desire and fear. On the one hand, the I transcends its natural status: "Having recognised its needs as material needs, as capable of being satisfied, the I can henceforth turn to what it does not lack" (TI 117). On the other hand, the separated being has a first experience of "disquietude" within the element of enjoyment. The elements are pure, non-predicated qualities, they come from nothing, that is to say, "from an apeiron distinct from the infinite which is synonymous with "the disintegration of becoming, that time prior to representation -

which is menace and destruction" and which "opens up an abyss within enjoyment itself" (TI 141). As Levinas' puts it "the element extends into the there is (TI 142). In other words, it is as if the Rousseauian state of innocence is overtaken by the Hobbesian state of nature.

Levinas makes it clear that the ejection of the separated I from its elemental existence is not a contingent occurrence but a necessary development. As he puts it: "Within the very interiority hollowed out by enjoyment there must be produced a heteronomy that incites to another destiny than the animal complacency in oneself" (TI 149). Labour is the agency through which this alternative destiny is effectuated. In order to escape the impending threat of dissolution in the eternal recurrence of the there is the separated being sets to work and acquires possessions. To use Locke's phrase, it is the "labour of the body and the work of the hands"6/ that leads the "atheist will" away from "the immediate relation with the non-I" (TI 157) in so far as it converts "the nothingness of the future ... into an interval of time in which labour and possession are inserted" (TI 146) and so secures the passage from "the instantaneousness of enjoyment to the fabrication of things" (Ibid), or from animal laborens to homo faber.7/

Hence, on closer examination of the text of TI, we see that the transition from the elements is in fact subject to a double derivation, the nature of which may be made clear by simply juxtaposing the following two passages from TI:

> In order that the future arise in its signification as a postponement and a <u>delav</u> in which <u>labour</u> by mastering the uncertainty of the future and its insecurity and by establishing <u>possession</u>. delineates separation in the form of economic independence, the separated being must be able to recollect itself [<u>se recuelir</u>] and have representations. <u>Recollection</u> and <u>representation</u> are produced concretely as <u>habitation in a dwelling</u> or a <u>Home</u>. (TI 150)

> The animal fabricating tools frees itself from its animal condition when its momentum seems interrupted and broken, when instead of going of itself to its goal as an inviolable will it fabricates tools and fixes the power of its future action in transmissible and receivable things. Thus a political and technical existence ensures the will its truth, renders it objective (as we say today), without opening upon goodness, without emptying it of its egoist weight. (TI 242)

The contrast here is between the <u>dwelling</u> as the <u>concrete</u> source of recollection and representation and the "political and technical" world founded on <u>abstract</u> forms of media. The turn to labour by the atheist will therefore results either in its <u>withdrawal</u> into the <u>dwelling</u>. where the I is confirmed in its inviolability, or, in its transition to a fabricated world where its future is fixed exclusively in terms of things. Now, the <u>dwelling</u> is not <u>produced</u> by labour; rather, labour is transcendentally <u>conditioned</u> by the dwelling. Hence to the extent that <u>homo faber</u> proceeds to construct a world in ignorance of its primary orientation in the <u>dwelling</u>. it subsists in a realm of phenomena and illusion.

Corresponding to this double movement from the elements, out of the primacy of the home on the one hand, or directly into the formation of a formless world on the other, there is also a double derivation of property in TI. These two deductions roughly correlate with an idealist and a materialist theory of property-right.

Levinas in effect maintains that materialist conception of property adequately explains the emergence of the property-form in the world, while reserving an idealist deduction of property for the other worldly ethico-religious community. We return to this point below.

Levinas states that the movement from the state of nature to civil society involves a transition from an original communism ("the non-possessible which envelops and contains without being able to be enveloped and contained") to a derivative state of private ownership ("the postponement of enjoyment makes accessible a world-being lying escheat, but at the disposal of whoever will take possession of it" [TI 157]). Hegel in the Philosophy of Right ($41) also contends that there is a justified right to original acquisition, but this right is not grounded in the contingent fact that possession is a means to the satisfaction of material need but in the necessity that a person possess an external sphere for the embodiment of his will so that he may recognise and be recognised by other persons. Levinas eschews such a derivation of property in-the-world, reducing all such property-right to a purely instrumental justification.

In accordance with his overall materialist conception of worldly property, Levinas defines labour as a praxis in the Marxian sense of the term. That is, he conceives labour as at once an epistemological and a practical subject. Through labour the elements are aufgehoben. In Levinas' terminology: "appropriation and representation add a new event to enjoyment" (TI 139). In other words, labour is the power of externalisation of the will in

nature via the appropriation and internalisation of objects. The primary agent of this formative activity is the hand, which in the service of animal laborens is "no longer a sense organ ... but is mastery, domination, disposition ... which do not belong to the order of sensibility" (TI 161). It is the work of the hand that "suspends the independence of the element: its being" (TI 158). And a possession is just this: "an existent that has lost its being" (Ibid). Therefore, in so far as labour-power has the capacity to remove being from change it is also 'the power over time' that "posits the product of labour as what remains permanent in time, a substance" (TI 160). The appropriative activity of labour executed through the hand "delineates a world by drawing what it grasps from the elements, delineating definite beings having forms that is solids; the informing of the formless is solidification, emergence of the graspable, the existent. support of qualities" (TI 161).

In short, labour produces and constructs a stable world of forms. Things are named and take on an identity and this in turn allows for the repetition, recognition and recollection of phenomena over time, essential to both the ontological and the social order:

> The world of perception is thus the world where things have an identity. The subsistence of the world is visibly possible only through memory. The identity of persons and the continuity of their labours project over things the grill through which they find again identical things. (TI 139)

However, the stability of this world of forms is of a strictly relative character. Since it is based on the formation of matter, the ontological edifice "does not close off the return of things to the elements" (TI 139). The existence that things possess is entirely

dependent on the mode in which they are perceived. They do not exist "in-themselves" but only as phenomena and appearance. Levinas says of the thing: "Strictly speaking it has no identity, convertible into another thing it can become money. Things have no face, convertible, 'realisable', they have a price" (TI 140). Hence, things have only a temporary durability, they are equivalent to "movable goods" or "furnishings", which lack intrinsic solidity. Although private property appears to institute "permanence in the pure quality of enjoyment", this too "disappears forthwith in the phenomenality of money" (TI 162).

Two "substantial" forms of property stand counterposed to property in the commodity-form. On the one hand, there is the sacred property which has its origin in the "pagan 'moods', in the enrootedness of the earth" (TI 47) and deriving from the Il y a: on the other hand, there is the dwelling. which we shall analyse further below. In keeping with the order of Levinas' presentation, however, we shall now go on to detail the immanent development whereby labour outside the dwelling is integrated into the illusory realm of commodity exchange definitive of civil society.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER EIGHT

1/ Jean Jacques Rousseau 'A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality' <u>The Social Contract and Discourses</u>. Translated and edited by GDH Cole (London. Dent. 1973) p. 38: "It is still more cruel that as every advance made by the human species removes it still further from its primitive state, the more discoveries we make, the more we deprive ourselves of the means of making the most important of all. Thus it is, in one sense, by our very study of man, that the knowledge of him is out of our power."

2/ Ibid p. 59: ... "in this primitive state, men had neither houses, nor any kind of property whatever; everyone lived where he could, seldom for more than a single night; the sexes united without design, as accident, opportunity or inclination brought them together, nor had they any great need of words to communicate their designs to each other, and they parted with the same indifference".

3/ Ibid. p. 72 ... "neither standing in need of his fellow creatures nor having any desire to hurt them, and perhaps not even distinguishing them from one another ..."

4/ Essentially the same point is made by Hannah Arendt, <u>The Human Condition</u>. New York, Anchor Press, 1959, 92-93 "The 'blessing or the joy' of labour is the human way to experience the sheer bliss of being alive which we share with all living creatures ...."

5/ For the distinction between <u>amour de soi</u> and <u>amour propre</u>. see Rousseau's <u>Discourse On Inequality</u>. p. 166 and editors Footnote (Ibid).

6/ John Locke, <u>Two Treatise of Government</u> (ed) P. Laslett (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991) Section 26.

7/ The distinction between <u>animal laborens</u> and <u>homo faber</u> is, taken from Hannah Arendt's <u>The Human Condition</u> p. 120. The analytical terms perfectly fit Levinas' contrast between labour in the elemental realm and work in the world of representation, reciprocity and exchange.

8/ For example, see TI 166: "The ambiguity of the body, by which the I is engaged in the other but comes always from the hither-side is <u>produced</u> in labour". For the Marxian definition of praxis, see Karl Marx <u>Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts</u> in <u>Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society</u>. Translated by Loyd B. Easton and Kurt H. Guddat. (New York, Anchor Books p. 308). For a commentary on Marx's analysis in relation to Hegel see Georg Lukács. <u>The Young Hegel</u> pp. 547-559.

CHAPTER NINE

ILLUSION AND APPEARANCE

Central to Levinas' description of the evolution of civil society is the inseparable connection between <u>homo faber</u> and the philosophy of reflection, (in Levinas terms, "idealist representation"). Work and representation have this in common: they are both essentially univocal in nature. As such, they are isomorphic: "In labouring possession reduces to the same what first represented itself as other" (TI 175), while the structure of representation is essentially "the non-reciprocal determination of the other by the same" (TI 126).

For Levinas, labour, as the "first moment of economy is in fact egoist - it is not transcendence; it is not expression " (TI 157). It "defines matter without recourse to the idea of infinity" (TI 159). Hence it does not reach the other <u>qua</u> other. In Levinas' words, it: "grapples with the fallacious resistance of nameless matter, the infinity of its nothingness. Thus in the last analysis labour cannot be called violence: it is applied to the faceless, to the resistance of nothingness" (TI 60). Labour therefore, entirely in terms of Levinas' own account, may be faithfully described as the negation, the nothingness of matter through its 'internalisation' in a solitary subject.[1/] This in turn generates the transcendental illusion wherein a conditioned being mistakes itself for an originary subject <u>constituting</u> being:

> Representation is conditioned. Its transcendental pretension is constantly belied by

> the life that is already implanted in the being that representation claims to constitute. But representation claims to substitute itself <u>after the event</u> for this life in reality. (TI 169)

Now it is not difficult to see that Levinas' entire analysis has been to school in Hegel's <u>Logic</u>. The whole of the "Doctrine of Essence" in the <u>Greater Logic</u> consists of a demonstration of the manner in which the philosophy of reflection re-posits that which has been pre-posited in unreflected being. Levinas' critique of "idealist representation" closely parallels Hegel's attacks on Kant's "subjective idealism". In the <u>Lesser Logic</u>. Hegel takes Kant to task for seeking to reduce the whole of being to the categorial determinations of the Understanding:

> Still, though the categories, such as unity, or cause and effect, are strictly the property of thought, it by no means follows that they must be ours merely and not also characteristic of objects. Kant however confines them to the subjective mind, and his philosophy may be styled subjective idealism: for he holds that both the form and the matter of knowledge are supplied by the Ego - or knowing subject - the form by our intellectual, the matter by our sentient ego. (Enz I: 42)[2]/

Levinas, therefore, is in essential agreement with Hegel's contention that transcendental philosophy is not originary but is itself the emergent <u>result</u> of a primary elevation from being. As Hegel famously expresses it, Essence "is past - but timelessly past- being" (SL 389).[3]/

In charting this movement from being to essence, Hegel is essentially reconstructing, at the level of pure thought, the "subjective turn" taken by modern philosophy from Descartes to

Fichte.[4/] The most primitive form of reflection is that of illusory being (Schein). Here: "Essence is <u>sublated being</u>. It is simple equality with itself, but only in so far as it is the <u>negation</u> of the sphere of being in general. Essence thus has immediacy confronting it as an immediacy from which it has become and which in this sublating has preserved and maintained itself" (SL 394). That is to say, the determination which reflection takes to be immediate is in fact not immediate but the re-positing of its own presupposition, and hence a "reflected immediacy" (SL 397). Locke's analysis of the notion of substance may serve to elucidate Hegel's point. In a famous passage in <u>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</u>. Locke acknowledges the sceptical implications of his corpuscularian ontology. Since we can have no intuition of substance but only of sensible qualities, it follows that substance is a "something, I know not what".[5/] For Hegel, this philosophical conclusion exemplifies the moment of illusory being. Reflection constitutes itself through the negation of its own presupposition and then relates to the result of its own negative activity. It is no longer related to being but to the semblance of being:

> Consequently, becoming is essence, its reflective movement, is the movement of nothing to nothing and so back to itself. (SL 400)

However, illusory being (Schein) is not <u>mere</u> illusion, for it is the union of guise and disguise - it is both expression and mask.[6/] In this way, the negated immediate determination of being is <u>aufgehoben</u> - cancelled, preserved and elevated - in the sphere of reflection.

Perhaps it will be objected that Levinas has anticipated and explicitly precluded our attempt to assimilate his analysis to Hegel's logical categories when he states in Section II.E.3 of TI, "Phenomena and Being", that: "Being, the thing in itself, is not, with respect to the phenomenon, the hidden. Its presence presents itself in its word. To posit the thing in itself as hidden would be to suppose that it is with respect to the phenomenon what the phenomenon is to appearance. The truth of disclosure is at most the truth of the phenomenon hidden under the appearances; the truth of the thing in itself is not disclosed" (TI 181).

In other words, the "idealist" reduction of the other to the same does not simultaneously reveal and conceal the "thing-in-itself" (the other qua other). Rather, it simply negates the faceless element and relates to its own negation. In its true signification "the thing-in-itself" remains <u>absolutely</u> exterior to the powers of transcendental apperception and only manifests itself <u>in</u> consciousness as the 'idea of infinity'.

Now this reading of Levinas, which we believe to be a faithful one, does not contradict but confirms our contention that his analysis is, as it were, internal to the categorial development of Hegel's <u>Logic</u>. First, Levinas' statement of the relation between the element, phenomenon, and representative thinking conforms with, allowing for differences in terminology, Hegel's exposition of <u>illusory being</u>. Second, Levinas' criticism of the philosophy of reflection would only count as a refutation of Hegel if the latter entirely endorsed the reflective standpoint. But as we have seen with

reference to his critique of Kant, Hegel explicitly rejects the ultimacy of this position. Moreover, Hegel demonstrates how the deficiencies of illusory being cannot be overcome by somehow "lifting the veil of phenomena" or by per impossibile abstracting from subjective reflection in order to apprehend the object in its purity. There is no backward movement; no possible 'reduction', the conceptual movement must continue its own immanent momentum forward so as to comprehend the object in the totality of its categorial determinations.

The categories of reflection receive their complete articulation in the stages of "Appearance" and "Actuality" respectively. The stage of "Appearance" repeats the moments of the dialectic of illusory being at a higher, that is, more concrete level of development. At this higher stage the Notion has got beyond the transience of phenomenalism, and the object has attained to the "shape of immediate self-subsistence" (SL 500). Here "Appearance" is not mere appearance. Finally, the relation between substance and appearance is comprehended as "actuality": "the unity of essence and existence" (SL 529). "Actuality" therefore encompasses and completes the criticism of the totality of ontological thought-determinations.[7]

However, "Actuality" is not identical with the Notion. The transition to "Subjective Logic" reveals the strictly relative nature of all ontological determination. The Notion as the unity of Being and Essence is not reducible to the status of an ens, not even a 'supreme' ens. It is beyond Being and Essence whilst being "reflected in" Being and Essence.[8] Therefore, the movement of

categorial determinations always stands in relation to a "third" which itself eludes categorial definition. This "third" stands 'in-between' the diremption of concepts into universal and particular determinations, for it is <u>infinite individuality</u> or the true "thing-in-itself" which manifests itself, not to be sure through the negation of immediate being, but in the negation of the negation of immediate being (SL 596). In short, it is the "concrete individual" or the infinite self which is absolutely recognised in its otherness. In Hegel's words:

> The universal is therefore <u>free</u> power; it is itself and takes its other in its embrace, but without <u>doing violence to it</u>; on the contrary, the universal is in its other, in peaceful communion with itself. We have called it free power, but it could also be called <u>free love</u> and boundless blessedness, for it bears towards its other as towards <u>its own self</u>: in it, it has returned to itself. (SL 603)

The "return to self" of which Hegel speaks here, does not denote a recoil into a finite ego devoid of all determination, but a return to the infinite-in-the-self.[9/] That is, to the absolute Other that overarches and reveals itself within the individual finite being.

In Part One, we noted how Levinas' understanding of the ethical relation falls short of this movement: though the I transcends its 'ontological' self towards the infinite; the infinite does not overarch and embrace the finite self. Notwithstanding this critical difference between Hegel and Levinas, it is apparent that Hegel's Notion of the Notion transcends the ontological standpoint of the philosophy of reflection, or expressed in Levinas' terms, it goes beyond the 'Totality' and the 'Said'.

It follows, therefore, that "Doctrine of Essence" exemplifies the movement of the absolute method which must:

> ... combine in our process of enquiry the actions of a form of thought with a criticism of them. The forms of thought must be studied in their essential nature and complete development: they are at once the object of research and the action of that object. Hence they examine themselves: in their own action they must determine their limits, and point out their defects. (EL 41. Zusatz)

Accordingly, Hegel is not endorsing the standpoint of reflection in the Logic. rather he is criticising it; while at the same time acknowledging its necessity. This allows for the comprehension in pure thought of the intrinsic connection between the negative activity of labour and the constitution of a world of semblance, form and appearance. Hegel notes how this connection is preserved in the very etymology of thinghood:[10]/

> ... the thing is reflection-into-itself: for it is an identity which is also distinct from the difference ie its attributes. In many languages 'have' is deployed to denote past time. And with reason: for the past is absorbed or suspended being, and the mind is its reflection-into-self. (Enz. I: 125)

The extent to which the overall development of TI reproduces the immanent categorial movement of the sphere of essence is reflected in the central division within the work between "Interiority" and "Exteriority". As we have already noted, the movement of essence is, broadly speaking, from illusory being (Schein) through to "appearance" and "actuality". In Hegel's Realphilosophie these categories are socio-historically concretised

in the transition from simple subsistence production through to a commodity economy. Now, in TI there is a parallel evolution. In the sphere of "interiority" animal laborens is depicted as an essentially solitary being standing in a univocal relation to nature and other wills (illusory being), while, as we will shortly see, in the sphere of "exteriority", the separated being has transformed itself into homo faber, and is approached on the basis of its works (appearance).

In TI, the sphere of "exteriority" is continuous with life in civil society. Levinas sums up this societal existence in unremittingly pejorative terms. He informs us that herein:

> Separation is embedded in an order in which the asymmetry of the interpersonal relation is effaced, where I and the Other become interchangeable in commerce, and where the particular man, and individuation of the genus man, appearing in history, is substituted for I and the Other. (TI 226)

Within this impersonal world the will is subject to a kind of fatum: "The way a will plays a role in history is has not willed marks the limits of interiority: the will finds itself caught up in events that will appear only to the historian" (TI 228). The will of the worker is divorced from its life-activity. This results in an almost total reification: "since works take on the anonymity of merchandise, and anonymity into which, as wage-earner, the worker may himself disappear" (TI 226), until finally the "Will itself thus takes on a meaning of the other, as though it were a thing" (TI 229).

Levinas however is careful to note that notwithstanding this reduction to a reified and alienated state: "The relation does not resemble that which characterises labour: in commerce and war the relation with the work remains a relation with the worker" (Ibid). That is to say, in "exteriority" the will has transcended its solitary existence in simple production and entered into the societal sphere of intersubjective relations. But, in so doing it has merely exchange one form of solitariness for another; for the abstract recognition the will receives as a person still amounts to the non-recognition of its concrete singularity as an ethical being.

Now, this whole analysis once again bears the imprint of Hegel. It is now generally agreed that Hegel was the first modern thinker to fully grasp the inherent dynamic of civil society both in its positive and negative dimensions.[11/] In his early System of Ethical Life, Hegel presents a conceptual exposition of the manner in which the industrial revolution and its concomitant division of labour and specialisation of tasks had resulted in the overthrow of an economy based on the production of use-values and its replacement by an economic order geared towards the self-expansion of capital through commerce. The economic sphere of civil society constructs a system of mutual interdependence in which each individual no longer labours to satisfy his own particular needs but the needs of all and where, conversely, the satisfaction of each individual's needs is the work of countless others. Since labour is now an abstract category it requires an abstract medium to represent it: "money is this materially existing concept, the form of unity, or the possibility of all things needed" (S.E.L. 249).

Within civil society therefore the universal and the particular will are related to one another only through the abstract medium of the cash nexus. Intersubjective relations are situated within a system of merely _formal_ recognition. Civil society constitutes this "Relative Ethical Life". In terms strikingly similar to those later employed by Levinas, Hegel shows how the diremption of the universal and the particular in civil society results in the "subsumption" of intuition (particularly) under the concept (abstract universal):

> Need and labour, elevated into this universality then form on their own account a monstrous system of community and mutual interdependence in a great people; a life of the dead body, that moves itself within itself, one which ebbs and flows in its motion blindly, like the elements, and which requires strict dominance and taming like a wild beast. (Ibid)

Hegel therefore anticipated Levinas' rhetorical description of the de-personalising tendencies at work within civil society. Where they differ, as we shall see, is that Levinas extends the element of reification to include the totality of social and political relations within the State, while Hegel maintains that the reification of social reactions is in principle overcome through the immanent development of additional social and political institutions which transcend and relativise the sphere of commodity-exchange.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER NINE

1/ Levinas' analysis at this point coincides with Hegel's exposition, in the Phenomenology of Spirit. of immediate desire, where consciousness relates to the Other qua object rather than qua subject "certain of the nothingness of this Other, it explicitly affirms that this nothingness is for it. the truth of the other; it destroys the independent object and thereby gives itself the certainty of itself as true certainty" (Phen Para 174). Levinas erroneously makes this description of immediate Desire paradigmatic for the movement of the Notion as a whole, for example, see TI 36-37: "Hegelian phenomenology, where self-consciousness is the distinguishing of what is not distinct, expresses the universality of the same identifying itself in the alterity of objects thought and despite the opposition of self to self .... the difference is not a difference, the I, as Other, is not an "Other"." Perhaps Levinas' reading is distorted by the reception of Hegel in French thought through the prism of Kojeve's influential lectures.

2/ For example, in TI 127-128, Levinas states "To doubt that the form that stands out in profiles on the horizon or in the darkness exists, to impose on a chunk of iron that presents itself a given form so as to make of it a knife, to overcome an obstacle or do away with an enemy: to doubt, to labour, to destroy, to kill - these negating acts assume objective exteriority rather than constitute it. To assume exteriority is

to enter into a relation with it such that the same determines the other while being determined by it."

3/ Hegel's <u>Logic</u> therefore cannot be interpreted along constructivist lines as a consistent Kantianism. But neither is it a reversion to a pre-critical standpoint. In truth, Hegel decisively breaks with the Kantian project first by showing that transcendent illusion is not merely a regulative ideal but is in fact constitutive of reason itself, in a speculative sense, and, second, by rendering the resultant unified concept of reason (Notion) <u>relative</u> to an absolute otherness which transcends it, yet which is reflected within it (Idea). Thus, in Hegel's <u>Logic</u> neither the otherness of God nor the otherness of nature is deemed to be constituted by the synthesizing activity of transcendental consciousness. In the words of Robert Stern <u>Hegel, Kant and the structure of the Object</u> (London, New York, Routledge, 1990), Hegel "frees the unity of the object from the synthesizing activity of Kant's transcendental subject; for on Hegel's account, (to put it simply), the object does not need <u>us</u>, because as the exemplification of a substance - universal, it is no longer treated or reducible to the kind of atomistic manifold that requires this synthesis" (p. 5). Stern's recognition of Hegel's commitment to a residual realism allows him to discern the true relationship between the Idea, Spirit and Nature in the System. In his commentary on Hegel's final syllogistic statement of their interrelation in Part III of the Encyclopaedia, 575-577, he notes: "Hegel states clearly that the role of spirit as mediator is <u>not</u> to determine or structure

Nature through the Idea itself. but merely to recognise or discern (erkennen) this structure as it already exists in Nature. For, as Hegel stated in the first syllogism, Nature is in-itself the Idea: the task of Spirit as mediator is to make this implicit structure explicit. and thereby to enable Nature to mediate between itself and Logic. It follows from this that the place of Spirit in Hegel's system is not to determine Nature itself, but rather to bring to light the extent to which Nature is already determined by the Idea. Unlike Kant's idealism, therefore, Mind for Hegel is not ontologically active, in structuring and determining Nature, although it is active in determining the structure of the Idea in its otherness. In short, Mind brings out the presence of the Idea, even as it exists in its other, and in recognising the structure of the Idea in this way, it establishes the implicit existence of the Idea in nature" (p. 117). Stern sums up his interpretation by saying: "for Hegel it is not Mind that brings together Idea and Nature but ultimately the Idea that makes possible the unity of Nature and Mind" (p. 118). A similar understanding of the relationship between Idea, Spirit and Nature is also to be found in Fackenheim, The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought p. 85. Ironically, Hegel's critique of transcendental idealism for subsuming the intuition under the concept has been consistently overlooked, and he himself has been read as a Fichtean. For example, see Theodor Adorno, Negative Dialectics. translated by E.B. Ashton (London, Routledge, 1973) "The principle of absolute identity is self-contradictory. It perpetuates non-identity in suppressed and damaged form. A trace of this entered into Hegel's effort to have non-identity

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absorbed by the philosophy of identity, indeed to define identity by non-identity. Yet Hegel is distorting the state of facts by affirming identity, admitting non-identity as a negative - albeit a necessary one - and misconceiving the negativity of the universal. He lacks sympathy with the utopian particular that has been buried underneath the universal - with that non-identity which would not come into being until realised reason has left the particular reason of the universal behind" (p. 318). We see the same misguided attempt to reduce the Absolute Idea to a "work-model" of activity in Levinas (see previous footnote).

4/   Stanley Rosen, GWF. Hegel: An Introduction to the Science of Wisdom (New Haven and New York. Yale University Press, 1974) p. 64.

5/   John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding. edited with a Foreward by P.H. Nidditch (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1975) II xxiii Section 15, p. 305.

6/   Cf: Daniel O. Dahlstrom, "Between Being and Essence: Reflection's Logical Disguises" in (ed) G. de Giovanni, Essays on Hegel's Logic. (New York, State University of New York Press, 1990) pp. 99-111. "Essence as the reflection on being represents the overcoming of being as mere immediacy. From the standpoint of immediately distinctive beings (Dasein), essence is other than being. But from the perspective of what is essential, being's simple immediacy is a guise. Moreover, insofar as the guise is considered a guise

of being (ie as belonging to, and of the character of <u>sein</u>) the guise is a <u>disguise</u>."

7/ SL Introduction 63.

8/ Cf: SL 596: "The frequency consideration of the Notion shows it to be the unity of <u>being</u> and <u>essence</u>. Essence is the first negation of being, which has thereby become <u>illusory</u> <u>being</u>: the Notion is the second negation, or the negation of this negation, and is therefore <u>being</u> once more, but being that has been restored as the infinite mediation and negativity of being within itself". The <u>movement</u> of Hegel's thought exceeds the form of his own substantialist terminology. Although Hegel speaks of a "restoration" of being in the Notion, he is careful to distinguish the <u>supersensible</u> being of the latter from the immediate and illusory being found in the ontological domain of being and essence. The Notion as infinite, supersensible 'being' transcends ontology and, as such, constitutes the speculative unity of being and essence. See also footnote 9 to Part One, Chapter Three above.

9/ Merold Westphal "Hegel's Theory of the Concept" pp. 3-18 collected in <u>Hegel. Freedom and Modernity</u> (New York, State University of New York Press, 1992). See below. Part One, Chapter Six.

10/ For a discussion of Hegel's concept of the thing, see Gillian Rose, <u>The Dialectic of Nihilism: Post-Structuralism and Law</u> (Oxford and New York, Blackwell, 1984) p. 56.

11/ Shlomo Avineri <u>Hegel's Theory of the Modern State</u> (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1972) acknowledges Hegel's originality in this respect, p. 51.

CHAPTER TEN

ETHICS AND THE STATE

For Hegel, the birth of civil society is at once an historical and an eschatological event, insofar as it repeats the desacralisation of nature immediately accomplished in the death of God and his rebirth in the spiritual community of the elect, in the secular world as a whole. Civil society therefore constitutes the appearance of the Idea in the realm of actuality. But qua appearance it is immediately dirempted into a restless unity of centripetal and centrifugal forces.

Economic relations found the infrastructure of civil society - the "system of needs" - upon which is built a superstructural system of [formal] recognition. This distinction however is an analytical one, since within the system of needs both economic and social relations instantiate the commodity-form. As a result, the universal has a dead existence external to the individual, who does not determine his ends for-himself but has them given to him in the shape of commodities; a relation Hegel expresses concisely when he says, "A need is created not so much by those who experience it directly as by those who seek to profit from its emergence" (PR 191 Addition). The socialisation of need and desire leads to a bad infinity of insatiable wants, in which goods are acquired for the sake of their acquisition rather than for any intrinsic satisfaction they may offer. This process is, in turn, bound to the polarisation of society into extremes of wealth and want:

> The tendency of the social condition towards an indeterminate multiplication and specification of needs, means and pleasures - ie <u>luxury</u> - a tendency which like the distinction between natural and educated needs has no limits [<u>Grenzen</u>], involves an equally infinite increase in dependence and want. [PR 195]

Hegel was perhaps the first social theorist to understand that poverty, and the attendant creation of what is now known as an "underclass", is not an incidental feature of a society ruled by capital but is rather endemic to its very structure and operation:[2]/ he vividly sums up the central paradox of civil society (when the latter is construed solely as a sphere of economic mediation) thus: "despite an <u>excess of wealth</u>, civil society is <u>not wealthy enough</u> - i.e. its own distinct resources are not sufficient - to prevent an excess of poverty and the formation of a rabble" (PR 245).

Yet the classicalist tone of Hegel's condemnation of excess wealth and luxury must not mislead us into thinking that Hegel is calling for the restoration of some form of pre-modern polity. On the contrary, Hegel expressly affirms the penetration of the money-form through all spheres of social interaction to be an agent of liberation as well as corruption. He notes that within the modern state "money is not in fact one <u>particular</u> resource among others; on the contrary it is the universal aspect of them all, in so far as they express themselves in an external existence (<u>Dasein</u>) in which they can be apprehended as <u>things</u>. Only at this extreme point of externality is it possible to determine services <u>quantitatively</u> and so in a just and equitable manner" (PR 299). In the <u>Zusatz</u> to the same paragraph, Hegel goes on to contrast this state of affairs with

pre-modern forms of economic justice based on ascribed role-allocation, fixed remuneration and ties of personal dependence, and to identify the deficiency of such social relations as being their lack of "the principle of <u>subjective freedom</u> whereby the individual's substantial activity ... is mediated by his own particular <u>will</u>" (PR 299 Zusatz). In other words, subjective freedom is an <u>appearance</u> but by no means a mere <u>illusion</u>. For it is the assertion of the rights of subjectivity which brings about the dissolution of all traditional bonds: "Civil society tears the individual (<u>individuum</u>) away from family ties, alienates the members of the family from one another, and recognises them as self-sufficient persons" (PR 238). It "substitutes its own soil for the external inorganic nature and paternal soil from which the individual (<u>der Einzelne</u>) gained his livelihood" and subjects it "to dependence on civil society and contingency" (Ibid).

It is important to note that the Aristotelian dimension to Hegel's ethics, which is profound, is reconstructed on the basis of the realisation of the idea of freedom in the modern world, and this in turn is immediately grounded in the historical transition to a civil society based on legal relations of abstract right. Therefore, Hegel's critique of the social dysfunctions of excessive wealth and luxury is not advanced from a standpoint that seeks to oppose putative 'real' needs to supposed false ones. Hegel understands that within civil society all needs are 'artificial', i.e. social. Rather his substantive point is the bad infinity of desire as a means to further desires and so on and on, does not derive from any intrinsic properties of the objects desired but in the failure on the part of the conative subject to integrate the plurality of its desires

within "a rational system of volitional determination" (das Vernunftige System de Willenbestimmung) (PR 19). That is to say, specific desires are only a source of unfreedom when they are not chosen deliberately as the result of a second order will to will in accordance with an overall rational life-plan. Hegel is therefore not opposed to consumption per se. not even to conspicuous consumption; only to passive consumption.

The contrast with Levinas' understanding of the relation between enjoyment and need at this point reveals the latter's anti-modern bias. We noted below how Levinas makes an implicit distinction between real and illusory pleasures. 'Real' enjoyment derives from life in the elements - that is in a lived relation to natural goods outside of their reference to any instrumental or utilitarian framework. Furthermore, Levinas also maintains that the distinctive feature of this elemental enjoyment is its non-intentional character. The self-in-enjoyment is passive; it is immersed within the elements "from which" it lives. In sum, whereas Hegel's account of the aufgehoben of the pre-social egoism of the [univocal] desiring subject within a "system of needs" mediated by reciprocal formal-legal recognition, demonstrates that within civil society the possibilities of enjoyment and pleasure are massively augmented rather than attenuated; by contrast, Levinas' analysis of the relation between need and enjoyment in the pre-social "elements" and in civil society respectively, merely juxtaposes a soi-disant authentic mode of satisfaction with its supposedly etiolated and alienated counterpart. Of course, Levinas is not saying that life in civil society is joyless; but he is implying that the basis of all 'real' enjoyment that is to be found therein is not

generated from within its own resources but has its source in the pre-social, <u>simple needs</u> of elemental life, which the subject cannot actively produce but only passively receive. When Levinas' analysis is inserted within the contemporary context of existing power relations from which it is abstracted its potentially pernicious anti-libertarian implications become all too apparent. For what authority is to determine what counts as a need if not the desiring subject itself?

Hegel however is all too aware of the limitations placed on the ideal of a rational self-determination by the economic structures that underpin social relations within civil society. Liberation from parochialism places individuals at the mercy of market contingencies. The complexity and dynamic of economic transitions is such that when aggregated they become subject to a logic which is beyond the rational calculation and control of the economic agents making decisions in the market place. The result is that the economic cycle is frequently punctuated by crises of overproduction and the collapse of financial markets followed by recession and mass unemployment. Moreover, as noted above, Hegel understood how this element of "blind chance" at play in the market rapidly produces great disparities in individual fortunes, which, once established, quickly become entrenched and self-reinforcing. The inevitable outcome is a polarisation in wealth, income and status and the resultant creation of a whole social class that is materially (though not formally) excluded from social life and, <u>a fortiori</u>. from civic responsibility. In short, the dialectic of civil society produces a large "underclass" without [substantive] rights and, therefore, equally, without duties to the State.

Hegel proposes no direct solution to the problem of poverty, notwithstanding some rather dubious comments expressed <u>obiter dicta</u>.3/ This is in keeping with the fundamental aim of the <u>Philosophy of Right</u>. which sets out to provide an exposition of the concept of Right and to present its full actualisation (PR 1). From the Notional "standpoint" the significance of the problem of poverty is that it identifies the basic contradiction within the economic infrastructure of civil society; viz, that the exercise by <u>all</u> free persons of their universal right to enter into contractual agreements with other wills results in a social situation where <u>some</u> persons lose their capacity to enter into such relations on a free and equal basis, which, in turn, contradicts the presupposition upon which social relations within civil society are based. As a result, the sphere of economic interdependence is not a real but only an <u>abstract</u> universal in so far as the totality of individuals that comprise it are not all recognised within it, or, more precisely, it constitutes a <u>formal</u> system of recognition which actually misrecognises the reality of dominance and subordination underlying the economic mediation of interpersonal relations. The fact of poverty therefore provides an immanent proof, as it were, that commodity exchange alone is not a sufficient basis upon which to ground social interaction within civil society since it contradicts its own formal presuppositions, and this in turn demonstrates the necessity for additional institutions to negate this negation by cancelling the destruction of personality wrought by the social evil of poverty and destitution.

The additional institutions required, are on the one hand those internal to civil society: the administration of Justice, the Welfare State and the Corporation, and on the other, the moments of the Constitutional State: the legislature, the executive and the sovereign. Now a contemporary Hegelian exposition of the State would necessarily proceed on the basis of making a distinction between the speculative-logical form of Hegel's deduction, which retains all its validity, and the institutional content of his deduction, which needs to be revised in the light of changes in historical circumstances.4/ This clearly entails that the content of Hegel's Philosophy of Right may be consistently criticised form within the Hegelian System.

Within Civil Society, in addition to the sphere of economic mediation, two further institutional structures are required. On the one hand, a plurality of voluntary associations representing promotional and sectional interest groups, and, on the other, an administrative, judicial and welfare state machinery, providing for the legal rights and material and emotional needs of civilians. Two points must be noted here; first, from a contemporary perspective, voluntary associations within civil society can only partially play the role that Hegel reserved for "Corporations" in the Philosophy of Right: "estates" in Hegel's sense of the term have been altogether abolished and replaced by "classes", the latter conforming more to a Weberian rather than a Marxian definition; two, the administrative and welfare state, no matter how broadly defined, cannot substitute itself for the political institutions of the state proper. The political organs of the State transcend the associative and administrative welfare institutions of civil society. Whereas the

primary function of the Welfare State, taken in its widest sense, is to secure the rights of person, property and well being of all members of civil society, the state's <u>raison d'etre</u> is to provide the institutional structures necessary for the universal participation of all citizens in (self) government.

Therefore, the extra-economic organisations of civil society - both public and private - possess a double function; on the one hand they exist, as we have said, to provide for the <u>subjective needs</u> of private persons, but on the other hand they are the <u>objective means</u> through which the institutions of government may be devolved and distributed throughout society so enabling and instituting <u>self</u>-government.[5/] Conversely, the political autonomy of the state is upheld through direct elections of the legislature and the sovereign with the result that civil society is, so to speak, <u>sublated</u> in the State. Thus, the state is neither reducible to civil society nor is it divorcible from it.[6/]

In contrast with the richness and depth of Hegel's theory of the state, Levinas' treatment of the subject in TI is simplistic and banal. Levinas classifies all political regimes under two categories - the irrational and the rational. The irrational state supposedly derives directly from a pagan participation in the <u>there is</u>. National socialism is taken to be its modern exemplar.

The rational state, on the other hand, is said to be founded on an identification of will and reason and constitutes a closed totality ruled exclusively through formal-legal rationality. This two-

fold distinction is presented as an exhaustive typology of all states and political regimes.

The rational state is an extension of the delay and postponement of the there is first introduced through labour and work. The state therefore simply extends the alienation of the subject, effected through commerce, into the political realm. As Levinas expresses it: "Objective judgement is pronounced by the very existence of rational institutions... It consists in the submission of the subjective will to universal laws which reduce the will to its objective signification" (TI 242). He continues: "Henceforth, it exists as though it [the Will - AG] were dead", for its subjective existence merely amounts to "the after effect of its animality" (Ibid). The fear of the there is now gives way to another tyranny, "a tyranny of the universal and the impersonal, an order that is inhuman though distinct from the brutish" (Ibid). Levinas contends that political and social existence is not merely neutral in respect to the ethical relation but positively inimical to its expression: "formal reason is incarnate in a being only in the measure that it loses its election and is equivalent to all the others" (TI 246).

But within this general repudiation of civil society and the principle of subjectivity upon which it is grounded, we find an alternative, more affirmative, embracement of some of its institutional features. For example, Levinas approvingly cites Hegel in support of the proposition that "the good will by itself is not a true freedom as long as it does not dispose of the means to realise itself" (TI 242). In similar vein, he states that "freedom is

not realised outside of social and political institutions" because "an existence that is free and not a velleity for freedom, presupposes a certain organisation of nature and society" (Ibid).

These remarks, taken from TI, recall observations which Levinas had already had occasion to make in his essay "The Ego and the Totality", which may be considered as a draft for TI. In this work he states the following:

> Justice can have no other object than economic equality. It does not come to birth out of the very play of injustice; it comes from outside. But it is an illusion to suppose that, originally outside of economic relations, it could be maintained outside them in a kingdom of pure respect. (CP 44)

Significantly, Levinas goes on to connect the question of justice to a metaphysical analysis of money and exchange value (a theme he subsequently drops in TI). He defines money as an ethical category. In an analysis which strikingly recall Hegel's treatment of the subject in the Philosophy of Right, he states that money is: "the abstract element in which is brought about the generalisation of that which has no concept, the equating of that which has no quantity. It is an ambiguous medium where persons are integrated into the order of commodities, yet where they still remain persons, since the order of commodities (which is not equivalent to the order of nature) does presuppose persons. Persons thus remain inalienable even in the transactions in which they sell themselves" (CP 45). Because money is an "element in which the person is maintained while being quantified", it does not "purely and simply mark the reification of men" (Ibid). In turn, this

presupposes "men who have time at their disposal, who are present in a world which endures beyond momentary contacts, men who trust one another and form a society" (Ibid).

The dilemma confronting Levinas then is this: how can labour, property, money, contracts, and social and political institutions be at one and the same time prerequisites of the ethical relation when it is these very same institutions which negate the ethical relation qua ethical? As we have seen, it is not open to Levinas to follow Hegel seeking to demonstrate that the destructive dynamic or civil society may be aufgehoben in the state since he views the latter as simply an extension of the egoism of civil society. He avoids the dilemma by implicitly maintaining that the potential for alienation within civil society is already overcome in the life of the ethico-religious community.[7/] In effect, Levinas displaces what for Hegel is the central ethical contradiction within civil society - its capacity to both degrade and elevate the human subject - into an opposition between the state, on the one hand, conceived as a realm of total reification in which the social experience of freedom is pure illusion - and, on the other, the ethico-religious community - wherein individuals relate face to face in a wholly ethical existence, notwithstanding their interpolation in a social world mediated by exchange value.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER TEN

1/ Joachim Ritter. <u>Hegel and the French Revolution. Essays on the Philosophy of Right</u> translated by Richard Dien Winfield (Cambridge, M.I.T. Press, 1982) p. 51.

2/ On this point, see Allen Wood <u>Hegel's Ethical Thought</u> (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990) pp. 58-60.

3/ PR 245 Zusatz where Hegel admits he has no solution to the problem and concludes that perhaps the best remedy "is to leave the poor to their fate and to direct themselves to beg from the public".

4/ Richard Dien Winfield <u>Reason and Justice</u> (New York, State University of New York Press, 1988) attempts to provide just such a contemporary reconstruction of the Hegelian Idea of the State on the basis of Hegel's systematic method. Winfield successfully identifies the central areas of Hegel's deduction of the institutions of the State which are marred by the inclusion of arbitrary, natural determinations which have been conceptually superseded at a Notional level. However, the weakness of Winfield's reconstruction is that his emphasis on the immanent development of the logical Notion in the systematic deduction of the State leads him to divorce the Notion from its phenomenological genesis. This results in an over-formalised and abstract presentation of the relation between the state and civil society.

5/   For a contemporary reconstruction of the State - civil society relationship along these lines see Andrew Arato. "A Reconstruction of Hegel's Theory of Civil Society" pp. 301-320 in <u>Hegel and Legal Theory</u> (ed) Drucilla Cornell; Michel Rosenfeld, David Gray Carlson, (London, Routledge, 1991). Arato identifies the following antinomy running through Hegel's System of Right: "a contradiction between systematic philosophy and social theory, expressed politically as the antinomy of etatic and anti-etatic positions to be found in the doctrines of both civil society and the state. Hegel's social theory presents modern society both as a world of alienation, and as an open-ended search for integration. His philosophical system on the other hand announces that this quest has ended in the modern state, though it is never entirely clear <u>whether</u> he meant a possible and desirable state, <u>or</u> a not-yet existent state but necessary state, or an actually existing state" (p. 301).

However, Gillian Rose <u>Hegel Contra Sociology</u> (1981) demonstrates that this ambiguity is not the result of confusion on Hegel's part, as Arato implies, but is an essential element of Hegel's speculative and aporetic discourse. In Rose's words: "Just as the theoretical distinction between finite and infinite is contradictory, so is the practical distinction between morality and legality. Just as the theoretical dichotomy implies a unity which is present, but not pre-judged in the two senses of pre-judge, so the dichotomy of morality and legality implies a unity which is present but not prejudged. <u>Sittlichkeit</u> 'ethical life'

refers to the unity of the realms of morality and legality, and the 'absolute' to the unity of the infinite and the finite" (pp. 46-47). According to Rose, therefore, for Hegel, ethical life is 'implied' by the prevailing antimonies of modern social and political life but is not yet 'actual'. Speculative thinking 'stays' with this diremption, refusing both an abstract utopian solution or an uncritical endorsement of the status quo. As Rose puts it "if ethical life is abstract, then it can only be recognised by recognising its abstractions, the cobwebs, and their determination. In this way actuality is recognised and another indeterminate, non-actuality is not posited" (p. 203). The Philosophy of Right therefore is neither a functional analysis of the existing state nor is it a counterfactual presentation of an ideal political community. As Rose cogently argues Hegel "could not 'justify' in a Kantian sense the idea of absolute ethical life; we could not provide any statement of it apart from the presentations of the contradictions that imply it. For an abstract statement would make manifest that this ethical world does not exist in the modern world. This would be to turn ethical life into an abstract ideal, a Sollen. which would be completely 'unjustified' because not implied by the contradictions between political consciousness and its social and historical bases. Hegel's solution to this dilemma was to emphasise the presence of ethical life, not the task of achieving it. Ironically, as a result, the Philosophy of Right has been read as a speculative justification (sic) of a status quo. instead of a speculative (dis)guise to commend the unity of theory and practice" (pp. 50-51). The critical standpoint of this study

attempts to combine a Hegelianism which "emphasises the presence of ethical life, and not the task of achieving it" with a speculative reading that underlines the lack of identity between the rational and the real.

6/   Andrew Arato "A Reconstruction of Hegel's Theory of Civil Society" P. 316 argues that Hegel "works out a modern republican theory" based on a reconceptualisation of the relationship between the state and the public sphere.

7/   Jacques Derrida <u>Violence and Metaphysics</u> notes en passant that if Levinas' notion of ethical language is to transcend the sphere of violence and negativity, then "the eschatology which animates Levinas' discourse would have had to have kept its promise already, even to the extent of no longer being able to occur within discourse as eschatology. as has the idea of peace "beyond history". The 'messianic triumph' 'armed against evils revenge would have to have been ushered in' (130). As we shall show in Part Three of this work, Levinas contends that, in a certain sense, the "promise" <u>has</u> already been kept, insofar as the "infinite time" of the ethical community constitutes a middle point between the beginning of creation and the "messianic triumph" (cf: TI 285).

CHAPTER ELEVEN

WAR AND SELF-SACRIFICE

For Levinas, the absolute singularity of the self is negatively attested in war, since war dissolves the social forms through which individuals relate to one another as persons in civil society:

> In war beings refuse to belong to a totality, refuse law; no frontier stops one being by another, nor defines them. They affirm themselves transcending the totality, each identifying itself not by their place in the whole, but by itself. (TI 222)

This statement closely parallels what Hegel has to say about the relationship between war and subjectivity in the Philosophy of Right.[1]/

> War is that condition in which the vanity of temporal things [Dinge] - which tends at other times to be merely a pious phase - takes on a serious significance, and it is accordingly the moment in which the ideality of the particular attains its right and becomes actuality. (PR 324)

However, whereas Hegel understands the significance of war through its relation to the Idea of the State, Levinas theorises it in terms of its bearing upon the life of the ethico-religious community.

For Hegel, the warrior in the services of the state is a: living contradiction: "the supreme self-sufficiency of being-for self, which at the same time exists in the mechanical service of an external order" (PR 328). The soldier thus embodies the dialectical unity of absolute independence and total subservience to the whole. The

mere fact of risking one's life has no ethical significance in itself - to assert the contrary would be to conceive adventurers, murderers and robbers as moral agents (PR 328 Zusatz) - but to stake one's life for an ethical ideal confers the highest ethical value on courage. Such ethical service confers a universal value on the particular deed, so that it no longer counts as the action of a particular individual but as an action of the State as a whole. Conversely, the "object" of this aggressive action - a term faithful to the reification of the other inherent in war - is not the particularity of the other but his universal signification as a member of the enemy in general. Hegel notes how the invention of the gun provides a felicitous expression of the impersonality of modern warfare where, for the most part, warriors no longer engage in hand to hand combat, face to face, but kill one another at a distance.

In short, Hegel understands war as the contradiction between absolute individuation and total objectification. On the one hand, War demonstrates the essential finitude of all things: property, possessions and, most of all, human mortality. On the other hand, this negative absolute individuation is deprived of a reflective form, insofar as the will of the soldier is rendered mindlessly obedient to the cause of the State. The warrior therefore is only implicitly ethical. To become ethically actual, two further conditions need to be satisfied. First, the soldier must will the will of the State as his own will; which entails that he relate to the State not merely in a martial capacity but as a citizen. Second, the state must have just cause for war before the citizen can rationally will its prosecution. However, even with these conditions

in place, the ethical cannot be fully actualised in war since war is essentially a means to peace and can never be an end-in-itself.

Whereas Hegel in the Philosophy of Right expounds the relation of the individual to war within the context of the external relations of the State, Levinas' treatment of the subject is wholly abstract. Levinas ignores the collective framework of modern warfare and instead views it as a multiplicity of single combats. In the fight to the death, warriors are brought face to face, not simply with the possibility of their own negation, but with a presence "between" being and non-being, that is "beyond being", but, as it were, this-side of nothingness. Levinas describes this "phenomenon" thus:

> In war death is brought to what is moving back, to what for the moment exists completely. Thus in war the reality of a time that separates a being from its death, the reality of a being taking up a position with regard to its death, that is, the reality of a conscious being and its interiority, is recognized.

This absolute recognition presupposes the asymmetry of the Other with respect to me. While it is a condition of my finitude that I may be annihilated by my enemy, I cannot annihilate him. The face of the Other expresses an alterity that is absolute. Since the Other transcends the limits of my powers, it accomplishes the revelation of the idea of infinity in me: In Levinas' words, it produces "a transcendence of the Other with regard to me, which, being, infinite, does not have the same significance as my transcendence with regard to him" (TI 225).

Now it is the very alterity of the Other revealed in the struggle-to-the-death which shows the relative nature of the virtue of courage. Even a noble suicide cannot confirm the absolute sovereignty of the will. In seeking to escape the designs of the Other through suicide I may unwittingly fulfil them. Moreover, the meaning of my suicide to posterity may assume a significance wholly different to that which I intended it to have. Levinas observes how these ineliminable contingencies prove nihilism to be the logical extension of Stoicism, since the only way such unintended consequences can be ultimately obviated is if my self-destruction were to be made coincident with the destruction of the world. This is the desire of Macbeth "who wishes that the nothingness of death be as total as that which would have reigned had the world never been created" (TI 231).

Hegel in the Phenomenology also notes a connection between Stoicism and nihilism. In seeking to gain total independence from all worldly determination the Stoic consciousness merely delivers itself over to the world as it is. In Hegel's words, "the Notion as an abstraction cuts itself off from the multiplicity of things, and thus has no content in its own self. but that given to it" (Phen Para 200). Hence, "withdrawn from existence only into itself, it has not there achieved its consummation as the absolute negation of that existence" (Phen Para 201). Latent in the desire for the abstract termination of all existence is a fury at all determination, since the latter appears to limit its freedom. Since the stoic consciousness cannot succeed in abstracting itself completely from the world it turns the world into an enemy which it strives to annihilate.

Now, for Hegel it is this stoical nihilism - in all its historical manifestations - that has to be negated by being faced. This necessitates a dying-to-self that brings the subject into "relation" with otherness beyond death, an "encounter" from which it returns spiritually reborn into the life of a spiritual community. However, this only represents an implicit reconciliation with absolute alterity. In order that the implicit accomplishment become explicit, it is necessary for the Idea of Freedom to be fully actualised within the State and Absolute Spirit. Now, it is in the defence of this ethical ideal that the citizen-soldier must risk death.

For Levinas, war also induces an absolute experience which separates the will form its works and threatens it with "betrayal" at the hands of an alien will. But, in Levinas' words, the "will becomes aware of this betrayal and thereby keeps itself at a distance from it" (TI 231). The command of the face of the Other is an authority before which the self apologises for its spontaneous freedom. The apology removes the I from the judgement of history and places it under the direct judgement of God, as Levinas puts it, "the will is under the judgement of God when the fear of death is inverted into fear of committing murder" (TI 244). The I is then elected into a "religious order" (TI 242) which, contrary to Hegel, is entirely divorced from the state and its justice:

> In reality, justice does not include me in the equilibrium of its universality; justice summons me beyond the straight line of justice. (TI 243)

However, this transcendent justice though extramundane is not extraterrestial. The "inner life" which is the basis of ethical

election "cannot forgo all visibility" (TI 247). Ethical election takes the visible form of participation in the life of the ethico-religious community. Hence, for Levinas, "The freedom of the I is neither the arbitrariness of an isolated being nor the conformity of an isolated being with a rational and universal law encumbent on all" (TI 252). The ethico-religious community is the <u>tertium quid</u> that stands between these two alternatives. Levinas concludes that "In my religious being I am <u>in truth</u>" (TI 253). And what should happen if violence should seek to silence the [ethical] subjectivity "without which truth could not be <u>produced</u>?" (Ibid). Levinas provides s Socratic answer to his own question: it is better to suffer evil than inflict it:

> The subjectivity could not only accept to be silent, but could renounce itself by itself, renounce itself without violence, cease the apology for itself. This would not be a suicide nor a resignation, but would be love. (TI 253)

However, this raises further questions: what if the ethico-religious community <u>as a whole</u> were to be attacked by enemies? Is a communal act of self-defence ethically admissible? Indeed, would it not be merely admissible but absolutely imperative since in defending the ethico-religious community one would be defending nothing less that the very possibility of ethics in the world? To die in defence of the possibility of goodness, is this not the supreme form of ethical self-sacrifice? To our knowledge Levinas nowhere directly confronts the implications of his ethical pacifism. In what follows we shall attempt to construct a response to these questions on the basis of a full statement of his understanding of the relationship between the ethico-religious community and the State.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER ELEVEN

1/ For sympathetic readings of Hegel on war see D.P. Verene, "Hegel's Account of War", in (ed.) D. Verene, <u>Hegel's Social and Political Thought</u>. and Shlomo Avineri, <u>Hegel's Theory of the Modern State</u>. Chapter 10.

PAGINATION ERROR

PART THREE

<u>THE ETHICAL COVENANT</u>

<u>AND ITS CRITICISM</u>

CHAPTER TWELVE

HEGEL AND LEVINAS IN CONTEXT

A central tenet of the interpretation advanced in this study is that the 'face to face' is not reducible to an individual ethical imperative but presupposes a whole form of life that exists as an a-historical enclave alongside the socio-historical world. In Levinas' account, as we shall see, this community is founded on the basis of an original ethical covenant that is established entirely independently of the emergence of historical societies from out of a putative state of nature. The ethical covenant has two essential elements. On the one hand, it is based on an absolute and asymmetrical obligation on the part of a created self to the absolute Other (Lord, Master, Teacher, Father); an obligation moreover that is discharged through ethical service to the neighbour. On the other hand, it is also founded on an erotic union between the masculine self and feminine other which engenders the child and so perpetuates the life of the community. For Levinas, these two elements presuppose one another: my neighbour is also my brother and kinsman, since the erotic union is from the beginning contracted under the name of the Father.

We shall now complete our immanent critique of Levinas' philosophy by placing his account of the ethical covenant within the critical conspectus of Hegel's System.

Before we do this, it is first necessary to consider a potential objection to our overall interpretation which threatens to vitiate the

critical analysis we are seeking to develop. This possible line of dissent might proceed by suggesting that we have imported a dualism into TI which is simply not found in the text. Our misconception may be traced to an over-hasty dismissal of Levinas' adherence to the Husserlian method. No doubt, the objection might continue, Levinas radicalised the phenomenological deduction by making ethical signification rather than theoretical eidos its prime determinant, but nonetheless he retains its formal principle of construction, in which successive strata are successively deduced as standing in a regressive relation of founding to founded contents. The upshot of this is that TI is not structured around the parallel deduction of two separate ontological orders. as we appear to contend, but rather consists of a successive series of ontological reductions that ultimately reveal a "substrata" of ethical meaning standing in a supervenient relationship to a single ontological totality. Has not Levinas said as much in the Preface to TI in the oft-quoted statement that the "totality is reflected within the totality and history, within experience"? (TI 23).

Our response to this criticism is that it is no part of our contention that TI expounds an interrelation between two ontological orders. We fully concede that the relationship or infinity to totality is one between a me-ontological ethical noumenalism and an onto-phenomenological continuum. But, it is precisely the very heterogeneity of these two "planes" that precludes the extension of Husserl's phenomenological method beyond its theoretical axiomatic to the primacy of ethical proximity, in Levinas' sense of the term. To proceed on the assumption that

there is a continuity between Husserl's and Levinas' methodology is
to belie the radicality of the hiatus between ethics and ontology
upon which Levinas is so insistent. It is not difficult to see why
this is so.   Insofar as transcendental ethical philosophy (or
"metaethics") presupposes a succession of gradations linking a
conditioned determinans to a conditioning determinar. It
necessarily negates the ethical transcendence or the discontinuous
alterity from which Levinas' ethics lives. (This is why we have
insisted throughout this study that a speculative form of exposition
is alone capable of expressing the paradoxical heterogeneity of the
ethical relation. as Levinas conceives it.)1/

Now, in our view, it follows from (1) that the ethical relation
is radically discontinuous with the onto-phonomenological order
and (2) from the requirement that the ethical relation assume a
material and substantive form of expression, that, (3) ex hypothesi
there has to be a separate, as it were, noumenological social and
economic community existing parallel to the socio-economic
totality, in order for the ethical, as Levinas conceives it, relation to
be possible.

Perhaps it will be objected that what Levinas means by the
term "society" in TI is simply the pluralisation of the face to face
relation. Hence it is best understood as an ethical modification of
the totality and consequently there is no need nor warrant for
construing it as constituting a tangibly separate and exclusive form
of communal life.   However, such an interpretation is not
consistent with Levinas' own premises. The visible transcendence
of a self-enclosed ethical community must have lexical priority over

the expression of the face _in_ the totality, because, as Levinas' own genetical deduction of the world of phenomena shows, if there were no such visible community then there would be no way to avoid the incorporation and thus cancellation of the ethical relation in the phantasmagoria of civil society and the rational-legal state. Moreover, this interpretation also tallies with the structural relationship between TI and OBBE. The exposition of the _indirect trace_ of the saying in the Said in OBBE is predicated upon the _direct_ expression of the face to face _within_ the ethico-religious community, as detailed in TI, and to which "illeity" _bears witness_ in-the-world. In summary, then, the a-logical universality of the ethical summons presupposes the equally a-logical particularity of a visibly transcendent society of elected ethical beings.

As a result, there arises a further surprising correlation between Hegel's and Levinas' respective "systems". The interrelation between TI and OBBE parallels, _mutatis mutandis_, the structural relationship between Hegel's _Phenomenology of Spirit_ - and the _Philosophy of Right_. In the _Phenomenology_ the section on "Morality" concludes with a transition to "Religion" which, in turn, culminates with an exposition of the 'spiritual community'; similarly, in TI, the penultimate section "Exteriority and the Face" ends with a transition to "Beyond the Face", an extended description of the familial basis of the ethico-religious society. In the _Philosophy of Right_ on the other hand, the section on "Morality" concludes not with a transition to "Religion" and the spiritual community, but to _Sittlichkeit_ and its tripartite divisions of family, civil society and the State; likewise, in OBBE, the penultimate section "Substitution", is followed not by a transition

to the ethico-religious society, but to an account of the relation of
proximity to the institutional structures of civil society and the
state. Both systems therefore culminate in a movement beyond
individual morality to a wider context encompassing the
interrelationship between ethics, religion and the political order.

To our mind, these parallels are not accidental. Rather we
take them as further confirmation of our general thesis that Hegel's
system overarches Levinas' philosophy from the inside, so to speak.
In the introduction we defined the system-proper as being based on
the three-cornered relation between the Phenomenology. the
Science of Logic. and the Philosophy of Right. To recap briefly: the
Phenomenology narrates the recollection [Erinnerung] of the
recognition and misrecognition of the infinite in history. The
narrative remembers and interiorises the experiences through
which self-consciousness transcends the figurative Understanding
to enter into an absolute (i.e. trans-representational) relation with
the Absolute. This emancipation from representational thought
(Vorstellungen) - and so from all previously given contents and
presuppositions - constitutes "absolute knowledge". The Science of
Logic. in turn, presupposes this result as the presuppositionless
beginning for the immanent, constructive-deductive, self-movement
of pure thought-determinations,[2/] which, in their manifold
interconnection, constitute the Notion of the Notion or the Absolute
Idea. To complete the trinity, the Philosophy of Right presents the
concretisation of the Idea as a self-grounding, self-determining
system of Sittlichkeit or "Objective Spirit". Finally, the speculative
relationship between "Objective Spirit" and "Absolute Spirit"
signifies the completion of philosophy and the actualisation of the

Idea of the Good, which, in Hegel's ringing phrase: "is eternally accomplishing itself in the world: and the result is that it need not wait upon us, but is already by implication, as well as in full actuality, accomplished" (LL 212 <u>Zusatz</u>).

How may the contents of TI and OBBE be said to be 'integrated' within the Hegelian architectonic? Essentially in two ways: first, from a phenomenological "standpoint", the ethico-religious community is a necessary element in the development of self-consciousness towards absolute knowledge. Second, from a logical "standpoint" the ethico-religious community constitutes a necessary moment in the <u>concrete</u> actualisation of the absolute idea in the idea of the state (as deduced in the <u>Philosophy of Right</u>).

In Hegel's system, phenomenologically speaking, Levinas' notion of ethical religion is essentially contained within the first stage of the penultimate section of the <u>Phenomenology of Spirit</u>. <u>CC Religion</u>. Indeed, it may be even more precisely 'situated' as corresponding to the first phase of this stage "Natural Religion", the first moment of which is: "God as Light". The stage of "Religion" marks the moment in the itinerary of consciousness where phenomenology passes over into noumenology.[3]/ The development of consciousness hitherto is recapitulated under the "meta-category" of the successive, historically emergent, forms of religious life. Herein, the divine-man relationship is comprehended under the double aspect of a noumenological-phenomenological unity. This is to say, the succession of religious shapes <u>through</u> which self-consciousness 'ascends' towards the Absolute equally count as

progressive moments in the self-determination of the Absolute as it 'descends' into human consciousness.

How, it is somewhat misleading of Hegel to include the first moment of "Religion", viz: "God as Light", within the overall category of "Natural Religion", since this first religious shape is founded upon the workshop of creation prior to all [natural] determination.[4/] Hence it is a profoundly anti-natural religion that is not to be mistaken for a primitive form of pantheism. Within Hegel's system as a whole, it corresponds to the first moment of the self-othering of the Idea. As such, it is in the initial unity of the withdrawn infinite and wholly undifferentiated finitude. As Hegel expresses it, it is: "the pure I, which in its externalisation has within itself as universal object the certainty of its own self, or in other words, this object is for the I the penetration of all thought and reality" (Phen Para 685).

Hegel's description of "God as Light" anticipates and comprehends three salient elements of Levinas' characterisation of the ethical relation. First, Hegel notes that the initial unity of absolute transcendence and undetermined immanence is depicted as the opposition between transcendent light and a chthonic realm of pure night:

> This 'shape' is the pure, all-embracing essential light of sunrise, which preserves itself in its formless substantiality. Its otherness is the equally simple negative, darkness. (Phen Para 686)

This description essentially encapsulates Levinas' contrast between a transcendent epiphany - the light before the light (TI 192) - and the nocturnal, preternatural order of the there is.

Second, Hegel details the way in which this absolute antithesis between light and darkness places the infinite and the finite at the further possible remove from one another, and how, notwithstanding this, the absolute relation is nonetheless wholly transparent, since it is apprehended, so to speak, prior to the emergence of a fully determined phenomenal order. This unity of asymmetry and immediacy is described by Hegel thus:

> Spirit beyolds itself in the form of being, though not of the non-spiritual being that is filled with the contingent determinations of sensation, the being that belongs to sense-certainty; on the contrary, it is being that is filled with spirit. It also includes the form which appeared in immediate self-consciousness, the form of lord and master over against the self-consciousness that retreats from its object. (Ibid)

In short, in this original stage of religion, consciousness 'beholds itself' not in the other qua phenomenon - a relation which only emerges at the level of sense-certainty - but in the other qua other, that is, qua spiritual being, which is there before it in all its sheer, intransigent, ultraempirical immediacy. This description corresponds with Levinas' designation of the face as the Kath'auto that "is by itself and not by reference to a system" (TI 74-75).

Third, the passage cited above also prefigures Levinas' emphasis on the dysymmetry between the I and the Other. For Hegel, the religion of light represents, in a spiritually sublimated form, the natural asymmetry between lord and bondsman that

results from the primary life and death struggle for recognition, through which consciousness gains its first awareness of the absolute. However, from a Notional "standpoint", this spiritual subordination of the finite to the infinite is even more regressive that its phenomenological counterpart; for it inhibits the emergence of the self actualising subject necessary to the accomplishment of Ethical life and the absolute relation. Levinas' contention that the finite self is confirmed in its absolute ipseity through a wholly passive identification with the passivity of created being entails that any attempt on the part of the latter to become a self-determining subject, by assuming the roles of legal personality, civilian and citizen, is tantamount to an act of ethical apostasy. As a consequence, like the immediate religious being, the ethical subject, "merely ascends. without descending into its depths to become a subject and through the self to consolidate its distinct moments" (Phen Para 687).

We sought to show in Part One how the ultimate difference between Hegel and Levinas is that for the former the asymmetry between the infinite and the finite is only an initial stage which is subsequently mutually sublated through their reciprocal interaction, with the result that the absolute Other or 'master' is shown to be the inmost truth of the finite subject or, as Hegel himself puts it: "The immediate being in which it stands in antithesis to its consciousness is itself the negative power which dissolves its distinctions. It is thus in truth the self; and spirit therefore passes on to know itself in the form of self" (Phen Para 688). For Levinas, however, the relation between the infinite and the finite is a fixed antithesis and must remain so. The asymmetry

characteristic of the first stage of religion must precisely <u>not</u> be allowed to 'pass on'. Rather the subject must incessantly purge itself of all determination. In Levinas' words, "For subjectivity to signify unreservedly, it would then be necessary that the passivity of its exposure to the Other not be immediately inverted into activity, but expose itself in turn; a passivity of passivity is necessary, and the glory of the Infinite ashes from which an act could not be reborn anew" (OBBE 142-143).

However, even for Levinas, the self cannot remain absolutely passive or else it would be unable to become sufficiently individuated to be capable of giving unto others. Indeed the very possibility of a 'passivity of passivity' is predicated upon the emergence of a hypostasised self from out of the elements <u>via</u> labour and the dwelling. This is why the ethical relation must presuppose the prior existence of an ethical community in which the self can develop as a self without having to renounce its ethical vocation as a consequence. A further corollary of this necessity is the fact that the ethico-religious community positively <u>requires</u> the continued non-redemption of the world as a negative condition of its own ethical witness.

The reaffirmation of passivity as the ground of the ethico-religious community has a double-aspect corresponding to the noumenological-phenomenological distinction outlined above. On the one hand, the ethical community is, as we have seen, discontinuously 'reflected' within the socio-historical totality; though this implication is very much a one-way street: the ethical community exerts the profoundest influence on the secular world,

but the secular world does not impinge in any way upon the internal life of the ethical community. On the other hand, <u>individual</u> members of the ethical community happen to find themselves in the midst of a society which has evolved modern legal-rational forms of economic, social and political institutions. We say 'happen to find themselves' herein since Levinas provides no account of the interrelation between the ethico-religious community and the emergence of modernity. He simply assumes historical evolution as a given. Nonetheless, as we shall see below, the conditions of the ethical covenant that found the ethico-religious community are such that each member of the ethical element must bear witness not only to their immediate neighbour or indeed to their neighbour's neighbour but to the whole of humanity.

In summation, then, first the ethico-religious community deduced in TI is 'anticipated' within Hegel's <u>Phenomenology</u> as corresponding to the first stage in the noumenological development of sacred history. Second, the exposition in OBBE of the relation between the ethical subject and the secular world, falls within Hegel's speculative-logical deduction of the idea of the State, as presented in the <u>Philosophy of Right</u>.

Levinas' postulation in TI of a 'static' community removed from the vicissitudes of historical change is vulnerable to a Hegelian critique in two salient respects. First, it reproduces the <u>petitio principii</u> of all state of nature theorists, viz, that of presupposing the normative vision of society it purports to justify. Second, the contents of this <u>soi-disant</u> original community, which

include reference to money, property, contract, family and other (unspecified) social and political institutions, on closer examination prove to be not originary at all, but rather to have been abstracted from the modern social and political forms they presuppose. Yet from a Levinasian point of view, this is an impossibility since ex hypothesi the ethico-religious community is sui generis, and therefore altogether removed from any dialectical interrelation with the socio-historical world. To adapt a barbed comment Hobbes made against state of nature theorists to our present purposes, we may say that individuals exist within Levinas' ethical community "as if but now sprung out of the earth, like mushrooms, and come to full maturity without any kind of engagement to one another".5/

No doubt Levinas would respond to this criticism by returning the charge of question begging to his would be Hegelian critic. The substance of this riposte boils down to the argument that Hegelianism cannot envisage an 'outside' to the system, and hence cannot relate to the other qua other, because its commitment to the ultimacy of the Logos necessarily leads it to identify freedom with the Good, with the result that freedom as a supreme value remains unquestioned. In short, the System is an Egology. The gist of this counter-critique is summed up by De Boer. Though his comments are directed at Rousseau they may (from a Levinasian point of view) be extended with equal felicity to Hegel:

> For Levinas, the problem is not the limitation of freedom, but freedom itself, that is, its injustice. What must be abandoned in the social contract, or better, in the dialogue that enters into community is not freedom, but its arbitrariness.6/

For Levinas, the difference between liberty in the state of nature and freedom in the State is one of degree rather than kind. From the ethical standpoint they both constitute equally unjustified forms of capriciousness. To transfer one's liberty to the general will is merely to exchange one form of arbitrariness for another. Whether I live spontaneously in the state of nature or I am duped into believing that in obeying the laws of the state I am willing my will in its objective appearance, the net result is the same: the ultimate value of freedom remains beyond doubt. The Levinasian conclusion then, is that the community founded on alterity rather than self-sameness is simply beyond the ken of Western ontology and a fortiori Hegel, its paradigmatic thinker.

However, this response merely distracts attention from the substantive point of the Hegelian objection. The ethico-religious community as presented in TI is not in any sense deduced; it is rather simply and dogmatically posited. Moreover, the counter-claim that Hegel identifies freedom and the Good within the System is unfounded. Hegel's speculative understanding of the relation between freedom and the Good may be captured by assimilating it to Michael Theunissen's formulation of Hegel's account of the relation between freedom and love. Theunissen states that for Hegel freedom equals a "being-in-the-other with oneself" whereas love is "being-in-oneself in the other".[7] Analogously, freedom does not receive its ultimate justification in the State - for this would amount to a mere self-justification, which is ultimately no justification at all - but from Absolute Spirit. That said, however, only an autonomous self-determining subjectivity is able to attain

and so receive "pure self-recognition in absolute otherness". Therefore, the accomplishment of the absolute relation to the absolute presupposes the full self-actualisation of the subject and this, in turn, is predicated on the actualisation of the Idea of freedom in the State. But freedom, though an absolutely necessary prerequisite for the accomplishment of the Good, is not ultimately synonymous with the Good in itself.

The essential Hegelian objection to Levinas is not that he posits a transcendent community outside of history, but that he holds that the latter remains in a non-reciprocatable relation to history. For Hegel, as we have seen, there is a spiritual community whose fate is irreducible to the contingencies of historical development, but which nonetheless is only able to fulfil its vocation by undergoing a long process of historical education. The coming into being of a non-natural religious community is the beginning, but only the beginning, of this formative process, whose end is the union of Sittlichkeit and "Absolute Spirit".

In conclusion, then, our analysis has sought to demonstrate that from the premise that (i) The Philosophy of Right contains, in a sublated form, the necessary moments of the phenomenological genesis of the modern state and religion; and from premise (2) that, Notionally speaking, Levinas' exposition of the relation between ethics and politics is prefigured, as it were, in Hegel's phenomenological deduction; then we may conclude (3) that the contents of Levinas' system are to be found aufgehoben in Hegel's Wissenschaft, and specifically within the conceptual framework provided by the Philosophy of Right.

We shall now seek to validate our contention by subjecting Levinas' account of the primacy of the ethico-religious community and its relation to the state, to a brief but comprehensive criticism in accordance with the central divisions of the <u>Philosophy of Right</u>: (a) Abstract Right; (b) Morality; (c) Family, and (d) the State. (We refer the reader back to Part Two for our consideration of Levinas' derivation of civil society.)

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER TWELVE

1/   Steven G. Smith, "Reason as One For the Other: Moral and
      Theoretical Argument in the Philosophy of Levinas", pp.53-72
      in R.A. Cohen (ed.), Face to Face with Levinas (New York.
      State University of New York 1986) notes that "Levinas
      expressly disavows the transcendentalism that seeks the
      fixed foundation of things in the architectural sense" (p.66).
      Levinas is clearly making both a transcendental and an
      empirical claim vis a vis the face to face.   Robert John
      Scheffler Manning, Interpreting Otherwise than Heidegger
      (Pittsburgh.   Duquesne   University   Press   1993),   p.239,
      confirms that this is a reading held by the majority of
      Levinas   scholars,   including,   in   addition   to   Smith,
      Bernasconi, Lingis, Lyotard and Blum.

2/   See William Maker, "Beginning", pp.27-44, and Robert Dien
      Winfield, "The Method of Hegel's Science of Logic, pp.45-58,
      in (ed.) George di Giovanni, Essays on Hegel's Logic.

3/   Jean   Hyppolyte,   Genesis   and   Structure   of   Hegel's
      Phenomenology of Spirit. op.cit.

4/   Walter Jaeschke, Reason and Religion: The Foundations of
      Hegel's Philosophy of Religion.   Translated by J. Michael
      Stewart and Peter C. Holdgson.   (Berkeley and los Angeles
      University of California Press 1990. Jaeschke demonstrates
      that Hegel begins his phenomenology of religion with the
      religion of Israel, the religion of sublimity, and not as has

often been thought, the Iranian religion of nature. Jaeschke's findings are anticipated by Robert Solomon, <u>In the Spirit of Hegel</u> (New York and Oxford. Oxford University Press 1983), p.600.

5/ Thomas Hobbes, <u>De Cive</u>. in <u>The English Works of Thomas Hobbes</u>. (ed.) Sir William Molesworth, Vol.2 (London, 1839-44), p.109.

6/ Theodore de Boer, "An Ethical Transcendental Philosophy", in (ed.) R.A. Cohen, <u>Face to Face with Levinas</u>. p.103.

7/ Michael Theunissen, "The Repressed Intersubjectivity in Hegel's Philosophy of Right", in (ed.), Drucilla Cornell, Michael Rosenfeld and David Gray Carlson, <u>Hegel and Legal Theory</u>, p.13.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

PERSON AND PROPERTY

At first glance, it would appear that Hegel's presentation of the sphere of "Abstract Right" in the Philosophy of Right constitutes the antipodes of Levinas' notion of true sociality. Of course, in one sense this is absolutely the case. As we pointed out above for Levinas, civil society is a form of life founded upon the near total suppression of the 'face'. On the other hand, however, Levinas also maintains that these illusory forms of social interaction are underpinned by their concrete prototypes, internal to the ethico-religious community. This parallelism takes the following analogical form: For Hegel, the element of "abstract right" has two prerequisites: (i) The existence of individuals who have attained to a sufficiently advanced state of phylogenetic and ontogenetic development to enable them to enter into freely willed reciprocal forms of social interaction (Hegel provides a deduction of this formal requirement in Part Three, Section One, "Subjective Spirit", of the Encyclopaedia): (ii) a socio-historical evolution culminating in the liberation of individuals from all natural determination, with the result that they no longer relate to one another in terms of sex, class, gender or nationality, but simply qua wills, on the basis of the mutual recognition and respect by all of the rights of person and property of each, and vice-versa. Now, Levinas' derivation of the ethico-religious community also has a number of prerequisites. First amongst these is the need for (i) an 'autochthonous' self, which is not simply an 'attribute' of the Infinite. Second, before this separated self may enter into the

ethical relation it must have a home in which to welcome the stranger and sufficient resources to provide him with food, clothing etc. This is Levinas' Biblically picturesque way of saying that a condition of the ethical relation is that the self attains to a certain minimal level of psychological and economic development, an essential element of which is that it has the capacity to acquire property. However, (ii) there is no analogy with the second prerequisite of "abstract right" set out above. Whereas Hegel contends that the evolution of the self qua legal person is the work of the whole of history. Levinas believes the ethical relation is always - already accomplished within the segregated life of the ethical community. On these grounds, Levinas is able to explain how the self-actualisation necessary for the completion of the ethical relation does not expose the ethical community to a dialectically reciprocal relationship to history.

By contrast, Hegel contends that with the advent of the sphere of "abstract right" history is, in principle, at an end, insofar as this revolution accomplishes the "transition from the natural state of humanity to a truly ethical condition" (PR 57 Addition). The rational-legal community of persons sublates the natural asymmetry of the master-slave relation within a universal self-consciousness founded on symmetrical and reciprocal forms of recognition.

There is a further analogy here between the desacralisation of nature accomplished in the historical advance to a society founded on "abstract right" and, from a phenomenological standpoint, the negation of nature effected through the coming into

being of the first nonnatural religious community. In the original religious configuration, the finite being is liberated from all natural determination and is thus brought face to face with (i.e. stands in a non-phenomenal relation to) the infinite transcendence of the Other. This initial preternatural form of individuation is precisely that described by Levinas in TI as the "atheist will", standing in the elements and assailed by intimations of Desire. Now, notionally speaking, the natural asymmetry of the master-slave dialectic <u>and</u> the nonnatural asymmetry of the infinite-finite relation are both <u>aufgehoben</u> in the figure of the denatured legal personality, devoid of all content, save its capacity to objectify its will in a given property and have this act of self-externalisation recognised by others. Therefore, just as the "atheist will" undergoes a process of experiential formation <u>within the ethical community</u> in order to emerge as a fully concrete ethical self, so too, the abstract legal personality undergoes a process of self-actualisation by willing its own participation in the progressively more complex structures of morality, family, civil society and the State. These inverse parallels provide the rationale for Levinas' adaptation of the term Hegel uses to designate the will, <u>bei sich selbst</u>, to characterize the "atheist will" as <u>chez soi</u>.

We shall now proceed to further explore this isomorphism under three sub-headings: first, the infinity of the will, second, the inalienability of personality and third, the dynamic of social recognition.

In the "Introduction" to the <u>Philosophy of Right</u>, Hegel defines the first moment of the will as the "limitless infinity of absolute

abstraction" (PR 5). In the <u>Addition</u> to the paragraph he offers the following clarification of this phrase: "It is inherent in the element of the will that I am able to free myself from everything, to renounce all ends, and to abstract from everything. The human being alone is able to abandon all things, even his own life: he can commit suicide" (PR 5 Addition). Levinas essentially concurs with this definition, as the following citation from TI evinces: "The will marks, in the general economy of being, the point where the definitiveness of an event is produced as non-definitive" (TI 166). For Levinas, this power of infinite distanciation is embodied in labour (in <u>animal</u> <u>laborens</u>. <u>not</u> in <u>homo</u> <u>faber</u>): "Labour characterises not a freedom that has detached itself from being, but a will: a being that is threatened but has time to ward off the threat" (TI 166). The mention of time here is a reference to the infinite time of the ethico-religious community which permits a unique form of social interaction, one that though necessarily conducted through the mediation of things nonetheless remains <u>wholly</u> non-reified. This is possible according to Levinas because "Labour comes from a being that is a thing among things and in contact with things, but, within this contact, coming from its being at home with itself" (TI 165); hence, it is not "produced in the ether of abstraction but as all the concreteness of dwelling" (TI 166). The <u>dwelling</u> is, so to speak, the first moment of the ethical community. We see then that though for both Hegel and Levinas the will is an "abstractive infinity", for the former it must further determine itself in being in and through the dialectical interrelation between the spiritual community and the socio-historical world, whereas for the latter it must remain 'outside' being, i.e. outside history, within a separate, though parallel, ahistorical community.

As said, for Levinas, the 'dwelling' is the first prerequisite of the ethical relation within the ethico-religious community. As such, it is 'beyond' the phenomenal order. In Levinas' words:

> We may not see in it the counterpart of the presence of things, as though the possession of things, as a presence to them, dialectically contained the withdrawal from them. (TI 170)

Although the "home as a building, belongs to the world of objects" (TI 154), it is "not a possession in the same sense as the movable goods it can collect" (TI 157). In this sense, it is more substantial than the transferable property it contains. Yet it is not fixed; on the contrary, it "indicates a disengagement, a wandering [errance]" (TI 172) and is therefore "the very opposite of a root" (Ibid).

This equivocation between transcendence and immanence - unlimitedness and limitation - corresponds mutatis mutandis to Hegel's definition of personality as "at the same time the sublime and the wholly ordinary; it contains this unity of the infinite and the utterly finite, of the determinate boundary and the completely unbounded" (PR 35 Addition). Moreover, Hegel's and Levinas' shared conception of the negative infinity of the will also accounts for the convergence of their views on the ultimate inalienability of the self. For example, Hegel states that "Those goods, or rather substantial determinations which constitute my own distinct personality and the universal essence of my self-consciousness are therefore inalienable and my right to them imprescriptable. They include my personality in general, my universal freedom of will,

ethical life and religion" (PR 66). Henry Brod shows how Hegel's stress on inalienability follows from his rejection of the Lockean argument that we have rights in our body for Hegel:

> A person by nature is the kind of entity over which no entity, even oneself, can have property rights. Rather than speaking of rights in our bodies, it would be more appropriate to say that we have rights through our bodies.[1]/

According to Hegel, a person cannot rightfully be enslaved, either by coercion or voluntarily, for this would be to treat a spiritual being as if it were merely a natural entity and so negate the very possibility of a free personality. Similarly, in TI, Levinas states it is only permissible to speak of the body as a possession in the sense that it is "at home with itself" (chez soi) (i.e. qua will and not qua object). He adds, the 'naked body' is "not the first possession, it is still outside having and not-having" (TI 12), because "the body is its ontological regime and not an object" (TI 230).

The concurrence of Hegel and Levinas on this point is further corroborated by their respective anti-individualist approaches to the question of suicide. For Hegel, there can be no right to suicide because as "this individual, I am not the master of my life, for the comprehensive totality of activity, i.e. life, is not something external to personality" (PR 70 Addition). Thus, he continues, "it would be a contradiction to speak of a person's right over his life, for this would mean a person had a right over himself" (Ibid). In a parallel formulation, Levinas states that "Before defining man as an animal that can commit suicide it is necessary to define him as capable of

living for the Other and being on the basis of the Other who is exterior to him" (TI 149).

A final area of identity and difference between Hegel and Levinas is their social conception of property. For Hegel, mere possession will not suffice to ground a right to property. The subjective act whereby I embody my will in an object must be objectively validated within a legal community, through deed or contract, before I can convert my claim to possession into an existent right. From the outset then possession refers not only to things but to other wills. In Hegel's words "my will can only be for the will of another person" (PR 71). The sphere of "abstract right" constitutes an elementary stage of justice, since it establishes a domain of formal equality regulated in accordance with the maxim "be a person and respect others as persons" (PR 36). Now, of course, it is the very impersonality of the legal sphere that Levinas condemns as unethical. Nonetheless he endorses a parallel formulation of the relation between property and possession, albeit in abstraction from a contractual context, when he states that: "possession itself refers to more profound metaphysical relations. A thing does not resist acquisition; the other possessors - those who one cannot possess - contest and therefore can sanction possession itself. Thus possession of things issues in discourse" (TI 162).

As said, the reference to "discourse" purports to refer to a wholly non-reified sphere of exchange relations counterposed to the abstract legal relations appertaining to civil society. But we have sought to show that the possibility of such a non-reified form of

social recognition and indeed of its opposite, is already _implicit_ within the sphere of "abstract right", which contains a sublimated form both the bellicosity and the irenicism of the Hobbesian and the Rousseauian states of nature, respectively. Levinas' own deduction simply abstracts the positive moment from the rational-legal sphere which it presupposes, and transcendentally projects in it onto an imaginary ethical community. This not only results in the factitious notion of a wholly ahistorical community, but also, as its obverse, produces an over-simplistic, one-dimensional, and misleading identification of the state with egoism _simpliciter_. that takes no account of the manner in which the state's institutional forms positively _enable_ freedom and justice.

To be sure, "abstract right" as an elementary form of just interaction is still far removed from the ethical "immediacy" of the face to face relation. Intersubjective relations within these spheres are mediated through contractual relations with the result that each will stands in an external relation to very other will. The artificial nature of legal recognition is powerfully exposed by crime, particularly by murder and assault. For Hegel, the category of crime instantiates the speculative-logical "negative infinite judgement" in as much as the criminal does not simply violate my personal rights but my capacity for rights _per se_.[2/] This leads to a sudden re-emergence of the prepolitical combat to the death within the midst of civil society. However, such temporary instances of social breakdown also allow for the repetition of the primary ethical dialectic between transgression of the law of life and the reconciliation of fate. But, from an abstract-legal point of view, what matters is not the struggle between two (or more)

unencumbered selves, but the fact that one legal person has cancelled the rights of another legal person. In the first instance, justice demands this negation must be negated in turn through the exaction of penal sanctions on the criminal, in order that the balance of rights and duties pertaining within the legal community be restored to its former equilibrium. An indication of the measure to which the sphere of "abstract right" transcends the natural order is the additional requirement that the punishment be determined on an objective basis by an authorised magistrate rather than be dictated by the subjective need for revenge. Through the experience of crime and punishment, then, individuals come to recognise that it is not enough to relate to one another merely as right-bearers. In addition, they must develop a subjective disposition to do right in general and to assume responsibility for their own actions. In short, they must learn to relate to one another not merely as persons but as moral subjects.

In conclusion, the sphere of "abstract right" is not opposed to the ethical relation as Levinas contends, but, paradoxically, includes it while at the same time being a necessary step towards its full accomplishment.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1/ Henry Brod, Hegel's Philosophy of Politics: Idealism, Identity and Modemininity (Boulder Colorado. Western Press 1992), p.69.

2/ Enz 1. 173 Zusatz, "Crime may be quoted as an objective instance of the negatively infinite judgement. The person committing a crime, such as a theft, merely deny the particular right of some one definite thing. He denies the right of that person in general, and therefore is not merely forced to restore what he has stolen, but is punished in addition, because he has violated law as law, i.e. law in general.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

MORALITY, RESPONSIBILITY AND THE GOOD

For Hegel, the element of "Morality, like that of its antecedent "abstract right", is a self-determined sphere of social interaction. Its first stage instates the principle that the subject is only imputable for these actions which lie within the scope of its immediate knowledge. Hegel calls this the "abstract or formal right of action" (PR 114). This limitation rests on Hegel's important distinction between an action (Handlung) and a deed (Tat).[1] Actions comprise a sub-set of deeds-in-general. A deed refers to any event which I am casually responsible for, whereas an action consists only in that part or aspect of the deed that I am consciously aware of at the time I perform it or the outcome of which I may reasonably be expected to foresee. These aspects of my deed comprise what Hegel calls my purpose (Vorsatz). He goes on to say that the "right of knowledge" (PR 117) entails that I am only responsible for those actions which form part of my purpose.

Hegel's endorsement of the "right of knowledge" clearly indicates that his ethics respect the principle of autonomy and is therefore thoroughly modern. The subjective principle represents an advance over ancient Greek ethics, in which the "causality of fate" renders individuals (Hegel cites the examples of Oedipus and Ajax) responsible for the totality of their deeds, whether or not they constituted part of their express purpose. Now Levinas in TI also upholds the "right of recognition" against the pagan idea of fate. The ethical relation, he maintains, excludes every signification

"unbeknownst to him who maintains that relation" (TI 79). He continues:

> When I maintain an ethical relation I refuse to recognize the role I would play in a drama of which I would not be the author or whose outcome another would know before me; I refuse to figure in a drama of salvation or of damnation that would be enacted in spite of me and that would make a game of me. (Ibid)

Despite this degree of concordance, Hegel and Levinas nonetheless give widely divergent reasons for taking the "right of knowledge" to be a necessary but not a sufficient condition for a complete account of moral responsibility. Hegel maintains that in addition to the direct and immediate responsibility an agent has for those actions within its purpose, it must also assume a certain degree of indirect responsibility for their mediate consequences. Hegel states the point thus:

> I ought to be aware not only of my individual action, but also of the universal which is associated with it. When it emerges in this manner the universal in what I have willed is my intention. (PR 118 Addition)

We see then that Hegel affords a wider scope to actions that fall under the category of "intention" (Absicht) than those that come within the ambit of "purpose". "Intention" denotes the essential underlying reason an agent possesses for wanting to execute a particular act in order to bring out a given state of affairs. Consequently, it extends beyond immediate subjective volition to include reference to the totality of circumstances and consequences in which a specific action is embedded. As such, it has an objective element that requires the rational agent to allow for contingency. From this point of view, the agent is imputable

not only for the results of its specific intent but also for the potential unintended consequences of its actions, and even, in certain circumstances, for those consequences which are contrary to its intention, to the extent that they are in principle, knowable, foreseeable and hence avoidable, as measured from a rational standpoint.

Fred Dallmayr helpfully elucidates Hegel's distinction between purpose and intention by mapping it on to Weber's contrast between an ethics of conviction and an ethics of responsibility.2/ The former corresponds to the moral agent who, in order to remain faithful to its intensional concept of the good, disclaims all responsibilities for the negative implications of her actions (in terms of an increase in human suffering) which may follow as a result of its display of moral rigour; the latter corresponds to the ethical agent, who possesses the capacity to adjust its subjective moral aims and values to an extensional notion of the good, by taking steps to ensure that her normative objectives have a reasonable chance of being realised and at an acceptable level of human cost.

It might be apposite, in order to bring out the contrast with Levinas, to say that Hegel is committed to a notion of infinite political responsibility: the more rational I am the more guilty I become and therefore the more responsible I am; this is also a responsibility that increases in the measure that it is assumed. But, of course, this only holds for the subjective will, where the good is posited though not realised. In Hegel's words: "In morality, self-determination should be thought of as sheer restless activity

which cannot yet arrive at something that is. Only in the ethical realm (Sittlichkeit) does the will become identical with the concept of the will and have the latter alone as its content" (PR 108 Addition).

The element of rational calculation inherent in Hegel's notion of political responsibility is simply anathema to Levinas. Indeed, does it not amply confirm his contention that: "Idealism completely carried out reduces all ethics to politics. The Other and the I function as elements of an ideal calculus, receive from this calculus their real being, and approach one another under the domination of ideal necessities which traverse them from all sides. They play the role of moments in a system, and not that of origin" (TI 216). Conversely, however from Hegelian point of view, does not Levinas' repudiation of any notion of political responsibility necessarily commit him to an ethics of conviction? Have we not in this opposition identified the ultimate difference between Hegel and Levinas?

There is no simple answer to this last question. In one sense it is true, in another not. First, Levinas is clearly not propounding a deontological ethics. Rather he is maintaining that an ethic of supererogation constitutes the fundamental structure of subjectivity. Hence, the ethical stance is not to be equated with adherence to an absolute moral rule, regardless of the consequences. Rather, for Levinas, qua ethical self, I am not simply responsible for my deeds - intended or otherwise - but I am ab initio responsible for the deeds of all the others; I am even responsible for their responsibility, to the point of accepting

responsibility for the persecution I undergo at their hands. Therefore, it follows, that <u>ethical</u> responsibility is not devoid of a consequentialist dimension. Levinas, as we have seen, is quite emphatic on this point. To reiterate his position we note once again this formulation form his essay "Ego and the Totality": "Justice can have no other object than economic equality. It does not come to birth out of the play of injustice; it comes from outside. But it is an illusion or hypocrisy to suppose that, originally outside of economic relations, it could be maintained outside of them in a kingdom of pure respect" (CP 44).

Nonetheless, we contend, that from a phenomenological point of view, Levinas' notion of the ethical relation must <u>appear</u> as an <u>ethics of conviction</u>. or, to be more exact, as an <u>ethics of pure conscience</u>. In a recent work, Zygmunt Bauman, has shown how Levinas' identification of the face with the command, when approached from within the phenomenal order, necessarily results in what he calls the "aporia of proximity". The aporia is this: the command <u>in</u> the face of the Other is necessarily a <u>silent</u> command, since the face "speaks" prior to language (in the sense of <u>la langue</u>). ordering me to attend to the condition of the Other, prior to any deliberation on my part. However, to respond to the command I must know what the condition of the Other is, and so give a <u>voice</u> to the command that commands me. But of course this introduces an element of <u>mediation</u> that is <u>ex hypothesi</u> antithetical to the ethical relation; for now it is <u>I</u> who says what the command commands, not the Other, and this opens the possibility that the Other may fail to recognise itself in the interpretation I place upon its silence and contest it; even so it would not necessarily follow

that I would have to abandon my interpretation of her command, since I may still feel obliged to include in my responsibility "a duty to overcome what I can see as nothing else but her ignorance, or misinterpretation of her 'best interest'". Bauman completes his statement of the difficulty by noting how:

> Following its own logic, inperceptibly and surreptiously, without fault of mine or ill-will, care has turned into power. Responsibility has spawned oppression. Service rebounds as a contest of wills. Because I am responsible and do not shirk my responsibility, I must force the Other to submit to what I, in my best conscience, interpret as her own good.

Bauman concludes pessimistically: "This is the genuine aporia of moral proximity. There is no good solution in sight".[4/] Though Bauman does not mention it, we can see that the aporia also holds, so to speak, the other way about. That is to say, if I interpret the command of the Other as a command to command my total self-sacrifice, how can I be sure that I am obeying the Other qua absolute Other and not simply placing myself in thrall to the designs of another will?

However, Bauman's practice of reading TI through the prism of OBBE deprives Levinas of his most cogent response to this "aporia". To see how this is the case we must examine in some detail a short but pivotal section in TI Section II B, 6 entitled "The Other and the Others".[5/] A careful reading of this section will show that the "aporia of proximity" is not fatal to Levinas' deduction of the ethical relation, since it is emergent only, as it were, a posteriori to the primary ethical encounter.

The most important point to realise about this section is that it describes the relation of the face to face to the third party <u>within</u> the ethico-religious community, in complete separation from the question of the relation of the face to the third party in the socio-historical world. Levinas discusses the latter relation in Chapter Five of OBBE; the section we are presently discussing is exclusively devoted to an exposition of social relations internal to the ethical community.

Levinas therefore begins his description by stating that the "presentation of the face puts me into relation with being" (TI 212). The existence of this being is "irreducible to phenomenality" and outside the sphere of causal relations. The face elicits not a "reaction" but a response, which abolishes the intermediaries between antecedent and consequent, and places the self in <u>front</u> of the Other. Nonetheless this <u>relation</u> cannot remain <u>entre nous</u>: rather everything that takes place here "between us" concerns everyone; the face that looks at it places itself in the full light of the public order (Ibid), with the result that: "The third party looks at me in the eyes of the Other - language is justice" (TI 213). It is impossible to understand this whole section if we fail to see that the "light of the public order" which Levinas makes reference to here is not the panoramic light of the totality, but the light before the light, the epiphanic light, <u>produced</u> by a society of faces.

The "society of faces", which we have hitherto termed the ethico-religious community, is <u>comprised</u> <u>of</u> <u>the</u> <u>plurality</u> <u>of</u> <u>asymmetrically</u> <u>related</u> <u>ethical</u> <u>beings</u>. Thus Levinas is able to assert: " the face in its nakedness as a face present to me the

destitution of a poor one" _and_ at the same time maintain that "the poor one, the stranger, presents itself as an equal" (TI 213). Now, in the light of the whole preceding development of TI, it comes as something of a surprise to hear Levinas speaking of the ethical relation as one of equality. Is not the definitive characteristic of the ethical relation the absolute _inequality_ between its _relata_? As Levinas himself puts it in a typical formulation taken from earlier in the text: "In _Desire_ are conjoined the movement unto the Height and unto the Humility of the Other" (TI 200). In other words, the Other is "above" me, as transcendent height and majesty, or "below" me, as destitute and needy, but he is never my _equal_. This passage therefore is indeed a pivotal point in the text insofar as it marks the moment when absolute asymmetry reverts into a symmetrical order. The dynamic of this reversion of the "poor one" from a condition of inequality to one of equality is described as follows:

> His equality within this essential poverty consists in referring to the _third party_, thus present at the encounter, whom in the midst of his destitution the Other already serves. He comes to _join me_. But he joins me to himself for service; he commands me as a Master. The command can command me only inasmuch as I am maser myself; consequently this command commands me to command. The _thou_ is posited in front of a _we_. (TI 213)

This extract contains Levinas "reply" to Bauman. First of all the command that commands me to serve the Other must, it is true, on Levinas' account, be, so to speak, "doubled", so that the exteriority of the command equally issues from my interiority, thereby inverting heteronomy into autonomy. Yet, there is no possibility for any "misinterpretation" of the command in the

course of its translation from exteriority into interiority, since it is ordained _in_ the ethical community, and so outside of the phenomenal world; at no point therefore does it pass through the mediation of _la langue_. In other words, the command to command is a pre-reflexive iteration that is equally as silent as its exterior origin.

There is moreover a special form of reciprocity involved in the iteration of the command to command. Within the ethical relation the Other _confronts_ me. Therefore, just as the Other commands me to command the command (to myself) to serve him, so to my face issues a command to him, not, to be sure to serve _me_ - for that would violate the asymmetry condition - but to serve _his_ Other, who stands to _me_ in the relation of a third party. This is how the Other comes to "join me" in the common task of ethical service. Only in this sense is the Other my equal. Paradoxically, then, it is through an absolute submission to the Other that I am elevated into a position of mastery over him. For Levinas, the command to command the Other constitutes the _positive_ moment of the ethical covenant. Its negative counterpart is the interdiction against murder that suspends the spontaneous powers of the I, bringing about the primary dispossession that makes the ethical community possible. In contrast, the positive injunction to serve the neighbour of my neighbour is pronounced "as Sermon, exhortation, the prophetic word" (TI 213). As such, it constitutes, according to Levinas, a wholly benign form of mastery that is altogether devoid of oppressive implications.

Prior to TI, in the essay Ego and the Totality, Levinas had already sought to show how the asymmetry of the ethical relation transcends the sphere of violence:

> To show respect is to bow down not before the law, but before a being who commands a work from me. But for this command not to involve humiliation - which would take away from me the very possibility of respect - the command I receive must also be a command to command him who commands me. It consists in commanding a being to command me. The reference from command to command is the fact of saying "we", of constituting a party. By reason of this reference of one command to another, "we" is not the plural of "I". (CP 43)

This passage illustrates Levinas' belief that there is no possibility of the asymmetry of the ethical relation assuming an abusive and exploitative form because it is primarily enacted within a community dedicated to ethical service. The Other who commands me is equally self-effacing before the Other who command him, etc. But this community is necessarily an inclusive one insofar as there comes a point where the neighbour's command to his neighbour will not be obeyed. For Levinas, this marks the boundary where the ethical community ends and the 'State' begins.

There are, then, two distinct senses in which Levinas deploys the term "we". On the one hand, it refers as above to the ethical community, in which the 'we' is not the plural of the "I" - in the sense of a series of indexicals - but rather consists of a society of ethically individuated beings. On the other hand, this is contrasted with the "we" of the State - "a humanity of interchangeable men, of reciprocal relations" (TI 300) - in which the self is "absorbed" within the abstract universal.

In its primary significance, the "we" designates a "society of infinity" or "fraternity". It is opposed to the "struggle of egoisms" which "results in a human city" (TI 214). As such, it has two "aspects": one, as said above, it consists of individuals whose "singularity consists in each referring to itself", and, two, it involves the "commonness of a father" (Ibid). The society of infinity constitutes a "human kinship", a genuine plurality as against the merely logical unity of belonging to a genus. However, kinship, though not reducible to biology, retains a biological fundament. The ethical being receives its election by dint of being <u>born</u> into the ethical community that is above nature. It is this fact that bestows real equality on its members as opposed to the merely abstract equality of personhood. The restriction of the ethical community on biological grounds necessarily entails that the ethical community is founded on exclusion.

This is a conclusion that Levinas does not shrink from. Again we turn to "Ego and Totality" for his most candid statement of the interrelation between the ethical elect and the world:

> The one respected is not the one to whom, but the one
> with whom one renders justice. Respect is a relation
> between equals. Justice presupposes this original
> equality. (CP 44-45)

In short, justice is first directly accomplished in the ethical community and then <u>indirectly</u> ministered to the world, as Levinas makes clear below:

> We are we because, giving commands from identity to
> identity, we are disengaged from totality and from

history. But we are a we inasmuch as we command one another to a work for which we recognize one another. To disengage oneself while accomplishing a work is to set oneself up not against but for the totality, to be at its service. To serve the totality is to fight for justice. (CP 44)

The point bears repeating that, for Levinas, the ethical community is not merely a postulate but has a visible form. The basis of its visibility is the family. The family in turn, as we have just observed, is the means through which ethical election is secured. The following passage sums up Levinas' thinking on this question so unambiguously that it demands to be cited in full:

Because of my position as an I is *effectuated* already in fraternity the face can present itself to me as a face. The relation with the face in fraternity, where in this turn the Other appears in solidarity with all the others, constitutes the social order, the reference of every dialogue to the third party by which the we - or the parti- encompasses the face to face opposition, opens the erotic upon a social life, all signifyingness and decency, which encompasses the structure of the family itself. But the erotic and the family which articulates it ensure to this life, in which the I does not disappear but is promised and called to goodness, the infinite time of triumph without which goodness would be subjectivity and folly. (TI 280)

The ethical community therefore constitutes a redeemed community in the midst of an unredeemed world.[6]/ In Levinas words, "It is conceived starting from an I assured of the convergence of morality and reality, that is of an infinite time which through fecundity is its time" (TI 306). Hence, the Good is not a mere ought-to-be, nor is it a matter of subjective conviction, for it is always already accomplished in the life of the "society of infinity".

Although Levinas may avoid the dilemma on which Bauman has sought to impale him, he may do so only at the expense of

exposing deeper problems concerning his whole notion of a <u>soi-disant</u> ahistorical ethical society. In effect, we have only been able to "solve" the "aporia of proximity" by displacing it onto a wholly noumenological plane. But insofar as this transcendental realm has a visible, worldly form, the question returns as to how there can be total unanimity <u>within</u> the ethical community with respect to the command of the face? The only possible answer is that the law of the face is simply <u>given</u>. At one point in TI, Levinas does appear to allow for some interpretation of the moral law when he states that "The school, without which no thought is explicit, conditions science. It is there that is affirmed the exteriority of the Master" (TI 200). However, this only goes to underline the point that in Levinas' version of the "right of knowledge", the subject's only right is to receive without question the revealed law as prescribed to it by an external authority. Although, according to Levinas, the moral law is to be obeyed because it is reasonable (and not merely because it is the law of God), he identifies reason with the total subjection of the self to the Other. It has no other content beyond this. Indeed, as we have said, any further determination of content, outside the institutional limits prescribed as legitimate within the ethical community, would <u>eo ipso</u> be unethical. In short, life within such a community would be so highly restrictive as to be practically devoid of all individual liberty. Therefore, Levinas' <u>ethics</u>. far from being post-modern, are decidedly <u>pre-</u>critical.

The contrast with Hegel could not be more complete. For Hegel, the good has no content prior to or outside of the normative relations which result from the free self-determination of the will to

will its relation to other wills in reciprocally enacted moral structures founded on the mutual recognition of the moral rights of each subject by all and of all by each. The first or <u>immediate</u> moral right is a right to subjective satisfaction and happiness. Again, we see here a further parallel with Levinas. Just as the latter emphasised the legitimacy of needs, Hegel states that the satisfaction of desire is entirely permissible for: "There is nothing degrading about being alive, and we do not have the alternative of living in a higher spirituality. It is only by raising what is present and given to a self-creating process, that the higher sphere of the good is attained" (PR 123 Addition). However, we see here also a significant difference between their respective understanding of the role of needs in the moral relation: for Levinas, the satisfaction of need is <u>bona fide</u> insofar as it remains at the level of the elemental; for Hegel, it is precisely by being elevated <u>above</u> the elemental realm that needs acquire ethical significance.

Nonetheless, Hegel predicates the individual right to satisfaction on the reciprocal recognition of the rights of others to the same.

> This universal moment, initially posited within this particularity itself, includes the welfare of others - or in its complete and wholly empty determination, the welfare of <u>all</u>. The welfare of <u>many</u> other particular beings in general is thus also an essential end and right of subjectivity. (PR 125)

In Rawlsian terms, for Hegel, right has lexical priority over well-being.[7] The formal requirement that my subjective welfare and happiness be congruent with the happiness of others, in the negative sense of not unduly restricting their possibility for well-

being as broadly defined by abstract right, provides the will with its first objective determination. By the same token, it elevates the will to the standpoint of formal universality. According to Hegel, this advance for moral consciousness is represented by the philosophy of Kant, and specifically in the latter's definition of the goodwill as the performance of duty for duty's sake. As Hegel puts it, "In doing my duty, I am with myself [bei mir selbst] and free. The merit and exalted viewpoint of Kant's moral philosophy are that it emphasised this significance of duty" (PR 133 Addition).

Now it is not our concern here to pursue the congency of Hegel's critique of Kant. Rather our aim is to show the role Kant plays in Hegel's account of the self-determination of the moral sphere.[8]/ From this point of view, what matters is not so much the detail of Hegel's reading (or misreading) of Kant but its result.

For Hegel, the Kantian standpoint essentially denotes a return, at a higher level, to the "abstractive infinity" of the pure will. He arrives at this conclusion by seeking to show that the universalisibility procedure underpinning Kant's deduction of the moral law is essentially defective with the consequence that the categorical imperative reduces itself to an empty formalism. The charge of formalism has two grounds: first, Hegel argues, the categorical imperative fails because it can generate no new moral maxims, and, second, because it can provide no adequate test of existing maxims. Hegel's critique is grounded in his interpretation of Kant's formula of universal law "So act that you can will the maxim of your action to be a universal law "as resting upon and being reducible to the (tautologous) law of noncontradiction (A

cannot be non-A). As a result, he contends the moral law is empty because it cannot articulate itself without presupposing a content externally given to it, since: "the criterion that there should be no contradiction is non-productive - for where there is nothing there is no contradiction either" (PR 135 Addition). However, by merely taking up, so to speak, morals maxims that are present to hand, the moral subject is allowing itself to be restricted by a heteronomous content not freely determined in accordance with the universal norms of its own self-legislating will.

In addition, Hegel also maintains that the formula of universal law is equally incapable of testing those maxims it must necessarily assume. To illustrate this deficiency, Hegel takes issue with Kant's application of the universal law test to the case of a man entrusted with the deposit of a person who has since deceased. The moral question involved here is ought the trustee return the deposit to the deceased's next of kin or keep it for himself? Kant says that the former maxim cannot pass the test of universability since it would involve the trustee in a volitional self-contradiction of willing to keep the deposit and negating the social practice (i.e. trust) that makes the practice of deposit-keeping possible. Hegel's objection is that this only amounts to a "contradiction" if we admit the additional premise that the abolition of the institution of private property - presupposed by the practice of deposit-keeping - involves a logical inconsistency. But since the existence or non-existence of private property is a contingent rather than a necessary truth, it follows that there is no contradiction whatsoever involved in willing maxims that would bring about its

destruction. Hegel concludes from all this that the formula of the universal law is a test any maxim can pass.

However, for Hegel, the failure of the Kantian deduction of practical reason does not signal a retreat to a pre-universalist standpoint; rather, it leads on to the shape of "conscience". Conscience is essentially a universal form of self-consciousness (in the negative sense that is entirely abstracted from all content) which nonetheless is unable to provide itself with a universal determination because it has no way of knowing whether its subjective insight corresponds to the good in its objective determination. In Hegel's words, it is "subjectivity in its universality reflected into itself" (PR 136)... "that deepest inner solitude with oneself in which all externals and all limitations have disappeared - it is total withdrawal into self (PR 136 Addition). Yet precisely because it embodies this negative infinity and has only its own subjective conviction to determine for itself what is good, it is equally capable of taking for its principle "either the universal in and for itself or the arbitrariness of its own particularity" (PR 139) and therefore has the power of "giving the latter precedence over the universal and realising its action, i.e. it is capable of evil" (Ibid).

We have seen how in the Phenomenology. Hegel shows how conscience may either remain withdrawn into itself, and adopt the life of "a beautiful soul", or else actively determine itself in a subjective manner, and so become the immoral "hero". The mutual confession of these two ideal-types inaugurates the transition to the spiritual community. In the Philosophy of Right. by contrast, the hiatus between conscience and objectivity is not immediately

healed. Within the moral sphere it manifests itself in the dissatisfactions of hypocrisy and the ironic standpoint. Nonetheless the "very subjectivity of pure self-certainty, melting away for itself in its emptiness, is identical with the abstract universality of the good" (PR 141). The perfection of the moral subject in the shape of conscience allows the transition to be self-determined totality of <u>Sittlichkeit</u> - the first stage of which is the Family - where, in principle, it will find its objective correlative.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1/   For a short but concise treatment of the relationship between
      Handlung and Tat in Hegel's Philosophy of Right see Allen
      Wood's Hegel's Ethical Thought. pp.140-142.

2/   Fred R. Dallmayr, G.W.F. Hegel : Moderninity and Politics
      (Newbury Park, London, New Delhi, Sage Publications 1993),
      p.113.   For the Weberian distinction see Politics as a
      Vocation in From Max Weber : Essays in Sociology.
      Translated and edited by H.H. Gerth and C. Wright-Mills
      (New York, Oxford University Press, 1958), pp.118-128.
      Allen Wood sums up the point of this distinction in Hegel's
      Ethical Thought. p.139, "If our intentions issue in actions
      that naturally produce bad results, then we have bad
      intentions. The moralists are guilty of hypocrisy when they
      squander all their regret on the external world leaving none
      for their own subjectivity".

3/   Zygmunt Bauman, Postmodern Ethics (Oxford.   Blackwell
      1993), pp.88-92.

4/   Ibid, p.91.

5/   My interpretation of this key section is indebted to Simon
      Critchley's careful reading of the passage in The Ethics of
      Deconstruction.   Derrida and Levinas (Oxford, Blackwell
      1992), pp.225-236, although, as will soon become clear, my

interpretation points in a direction quite different to that of Critchley's.

6/   See Appendix.

7/   John Rawls, <u>A Theory of Justice</u> (Cambridge MA., Harvard University Press 1971), pp.42-43.

8/   My summary of Hegel's critique of Kant is heavily indebted to Seyla Benhabib's <u>Critique Norm and Utopia</u> (New York, Columbia University Press 1986), pp.71-84.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

ETHICAL LOVE AND THE FAMILY

Hegel places the family at the very centre of the system of Right, after the derivation of "Abstract Right" and "Morality" and prior to the exposition of "Civil Society" and the "State". This order of presentation is in strict accordance with the immanent development of the Idea. Personality and property, on the one hand, and moral subjectivity, on the other, provide the material and spiritual prerequisites necessary to the formation of the familial bond. Richard Winfield sums up the conceptual justification for the centrality of the "family" in the deduction of the Idea of Right as follows: "property relations provide all the necessary resources for establishing common ownership. Morality, on the other hand, provides a framework of mutual accountability where individuals are obliged to act for the sake of one another's rights and welfare. As an institution of freedom, the family incorporates both these dimensions into the common household it establishes".[1]

For Hegel, therefore, the family constitutes the moment in which the moral self receives its first concrete embodiment and objective self-determination. Hence, although marriage pre-supposes two self-conscious individuals capable of entering into contractual relations and of fulfilling moral obligations, it is, nonetheless, not reducible - contra Kant - to the status of a contract. As Hegel puts it: "the precise nature of marriage is to begin from the point of view of contract, i.e. that of individual

personality as a self-sufficient unit - in order to supersede it [ihn auf zucheben]" (PR 163). In other words, although marriage outwardly takes the form of a contract, it is a contract that transcends contract, in that it sublates the plane of legality in "ethical love". In Hegel's words, in marriage "I gain my self-consciousness only through the renunciation of my independent existence [meines fursichseins] and through knowing myself as the unity of myself with another and another with me" [PR 158 Addition]. Accordingly, "Love is therefore the most immense contradiction, the understanding cannot resolve it" (Ibid). The contradiction is this: that two persons can "consent to constitute a single person" [PR 162]. Yet it is through this mutual loss of self that both partners gain absolute selfhood: "their union is a self-limitation, but since they attain their substantial self-consciousness within it, it is in fact their liberation" (Ibid). Finally, "Love is both the production and the resolution of this contradiction. As its resolution, it is ethical unity" (PR 158 Addition).

It is important to note that for Hegel the reciprocal recognition of two persons in marriage is not merely founded on the mutual agreement of two alter ego's - although this is a necessary constituent of the marital relation - but ultimately involves a total communion between two absolute others, both of whom must be self-consciously aware of their absolute status, and it is only in and through this communion that each self is brought into relation with and confirmed in its own absolute alterity. In Hegel's logical parlance, marriage is a "being-with-oneself in the Other". It therefore constitutes the immediate union of eros and

agape, that perfects two concrete individuals. Put another way, matrimony effects the complete <u>Aufhebung</u> of the emotion, will, personality, and subjectivity of each of the parties in a joint-personality, which does not annul but rather completes their respective individualities.

Finally, insofar as the marriage relation is based on the free decision of two rational beings, it must necessarily acquire a public dimension. The two parties to the marriage have not simply "fallen" in love, though this may indeed characterise the pre-nuptial stage of their relationship; rather their decision to marry involves a mutual will to will to love each other. As such, it is based not merely on feeling but on a rational principle. Moreover, since the mutual decision of the parties will have repercussions for wider society the rationality of their union must take the form of a public statement, open to refutation, i.e. the marriage ceremony.

Now, at first sight, Hegel's concept of ethico-legal love, appears to be at the furthest possible remove from Levinas' descriptions of "eros" and "fecundity" and its cognate terms, 'caress', 'profanation', voluptuosity', 'trans-substantiation', etc. Indeed, Levinas does not even once mention the word "marriage" in TI. Nevertheless, as in the spheres of "abstract right" and "morality", a closer examination reveals a number of inverse parallels between Hegel's and Levinas' respective treatments of the family. Broadly speaking, these may be summarised under three headings. First, for Levinas and Hegel, the erotic union presupposes two beings with resources and an ethical disposition towards one another. Second, for both thinkers, the erotic union is

at once a human and a divine covenent.2/ Third, albeit in markedly different ways, Hegel and Levinas both contend that the family is the basis of ethical life within the State.

In the light of these broad areas of identity and difference we shall now subject Levinas' deduction of the family to a Hegelian critique. Our critical analysis is divided into three parts (a) Women and Ethics; (b) The Divine Nuptial; and (c) Voluptuosity and the Child.

(a) Woman and Ethics

In the first part of the present chapter, we noted how there are in fact two parallel deductions taking place simultaneously within TI. On the one hand, Levinas sets out a phenomenological genesis of the socio-historical world. This traces the way in which the solitary self escapes the anxiety of the there is. engulfing the elemental realm, by setting to work and representing a world to itself. Later this results in the more complex mediatory structures of commerce and the state. However, the historical subject remains encapsulated within the Same, wholly ignorant of ethical transcendence. On the other hand, Levinas executes an onto-phenomenological epoche of the social-historical world to its aboriginal origin in the ethico-religious community. As we noted above, the first moment of the ethical relation is the "dwelling". Hence, in this primary derivation, the separated being does not pass directly from the elements to a world of social forms but is ab initio contained within an ahistorical ethical society. We now turn

to examine the role played by women in the "genesis" of this transcendent community.

In Levinas' account, the ethical community is grounded on an <u>ethical covenant</u> which evolves through four distinct stages. First, there is a domestication of the spontaneous "atheist" will in and through its "recollection" in the "dwelling". Second, there is a primary dispossession of this recollected self, enacted through the prohibition on murder, which founds a common world. Third, the self responds to the summons to command ethical service in the face of the third party. Fourth, and finally, these three moments lay the ground for the erotic union, which engenders the child and so perpetuates the generational infinity of the ethical nation. Women play a critical role in the first and last moments of this deduction.

Levinas maintains that the dwelling - the possibility of interiority and inhabitation - is predicated on feminine alterity. The withdrawal from being effectuated in the dwelling implies "a new event" (TI 170), insofar as it serves to demonstrate that the will has transcended the sphere of need and labour. As Levinas expresses it, in the first person discourse of TI, the dwelling shows that "I must have been in relation with something I do not live with. This event is the relation with the Other who welcomes me in the Home, the discreet presence of the feminine" (Ibid). The "first revelation of the Other" (TI 151), then, is the peaceable welcome produced "primordially" in the gentleness of the feminine face" (TI 150). This, in turn, allows for "intimacy" and "inhabitation". Hence, the feminine face signifies itself differently to the face

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proper. It expresses itself not as a presence but as an absence: it is "discreet". Accordingly, Levinas insists,

> habitation is not yet the transcendence of language. The Other who welcomes in intimacy is not yet the you [vous] of the face, that reveals itself in height, but precisely the thou [tu] of familiarity: a language without teaching, a silent language, an understanding without words, an expression in secret. (TI 155)

This silent expression, though "situated on another plane than language" is not pre-ethical, for it "includes all the possibilities of the transcendent relation with the Other" and is therefore grounded in the "full human personality". The latter, "however", Levinas adds, "in the woman can be reserved so as to open up the dimension of "interiority"" (Ibid).

Within the terms of Levinas' deduction, the welcome extended to the autochthonous self by the feminine resident in the "dwelling" represents a perfection, so to speak, of the finite will. This, in turn, prepares the final ground for, as it were, the second "revelation of the Other" that binds and seals the ethical covenant. In Levinas' words:

> but in order that I be able to free myself from the very possession that the welcome of the Home establishes, in order to be able to see things in themselves, that is, represent them to myself, refuse both enjoyment and possession, I must know how to give what I possess. Only thus could I situate myself absolutely above my engagement in the non-I. But for this I must encounter the indiscreet face of the Other that calls me into question. (TI 170-171)

The response to the "indiscreet" command of the face, primordially expressed as the interdiction against murder,

dispossesses the I of both its spontaneity and its possessions. This primary dispossession is the first discourse or ethical language that "institutes a common world" (TI 173) by rendering universal what was "hitherto mine" (TI 174).

Now it is evident from the above account that Levinas has framed the two stages of the ethical covenant in terms of an implicit contrast with Hegel's master-slave dialectic. If we follow the feminist tradition and read the primary struggle for recognition as a battle between the sexes,[3]/ then we may see that the implied contrast in Levinas' presentation is this: whereas the transition from the elements to the world of work and representation proceeds via the forced subordination of the female sex to male domination, the advent of the ethical community is distinguished by the fact that it is based on the voluntary and gratuitous self-acquiescence of womankind. Moreover, it is this primordial feminine self-abnegation that makes ethics possible by carving out, so to speak, a dimension of gentleness and intimacy within the midst of the bellicosity of being.

Yet, on closer scrutiny, Levinas' account of the abdication of the feminine is not so wholly opposed to Hegel's derivation of the birth of self-consciousness as the above contrast would suggest. Indeed, his statement that feminine expression is "reserved" so as to found "interiority" is essentially a reformulation of Hegel's observation that self-consciousness achieves recognition in another self-consciousness "only when the object itself effects the negation within itself" [Phen Para 175]. Whether the self-abnegation of the feminine is voluntary or non-voluntary is besides the point, for the

fact remains that according to Levinas the birth of civilisation - "inhabitation" - remains predicated on the submission of woman to the male Other.[4]/

Levinas' description of the foundational moment of the ethical covenant has therefore the unpalatable implication that "woman" counts as the first possession of the separated being - along with the "dwelling" and its furnishings. To be fair to Levinas, the possession of woman in the dwelling is not a legal possession, for it is altogether outside the sphere of reciprocal right, it is rather an extension of that special form of possession in the sense of which the separated being is said to be chez soi. Nonetheless, in keeping with the overall stress Levinas places on asymmetry, the silence of the feminine entails that when the masculine I responds to her welcome and enters the dwelling he is placed in possession of her as well as of the home.

It is important to note that Levinas is not propounding the broadly defensible socio-historical thesis that all civilisations hitherto have de facto been based on the confinement of the female sex to the domestic role; rather he is maintaining the identification of the feminine with care and domesticity to be the de jure foundation of the ethical community and, hence, indirectly of world civilization. It is only because the masculine I - and from the moment of the self-abnegation of the feminine the separated being is necessarily defined as masculine - has a home, complete with a woman and possessions, that he is able to enter the ethical encounter, not simply in the negative sense of complying with the interdiction against murder, but positively by welcoming the Other,

as a brother. into his home and offering him food and raiment. The "dwelling", and the (male) self who owns it are inalienable; but the first substitution that establishes a "world in common" requires, above and beyond the donation of material gifts, the institution of an incest taboo and a primary system of kinship exchange.

In summary, then, in Levinas' dedication of the ethical covenant the feminine is subsumed twice under male authority: first she is rendered subordinate to the spontaneity of male power by imposing upon herself a domestic vocation, she is then abnegated a second time as part of the suspension of the power of the male will before the transcendent - paternal law of the face.

The obvious question Levinas' deduction raises is why should the feminine consent to be "discreet", to forgo her own voice and visibility, to hold herself in reserve, etc. To put the question in a slightly different way: how is the double acquiescence of woman to patriarchal authority justified? Levinas' answer to this question moves in a circle: "it is necessary because without it there could be no ethics". But what is ethics?": answer: "nothing other than acquiescence to the patriarchal law." Hence he is unable to produce non-question begging justification for his contention that the silencing of the feminine voice is absolutely normative. Indeed, his entire claim that the production of the ethical relation is predicated on the self-denial of the feminine reduces itself to the following simple tautology" "it is (necessary) because it is (necessary).

The inherent dogmatism of this response is further compounded by the perverse argument that the subordination of the feminine finds its rational justification in the eschewal of the search for reasons to justify it. This follows from Levinas' identification of reason with the paternal moral law:

> In the welcoming of the face the will opens up to reason. Language is not limited to the maieutic awakening of thoughts common to beings. It does not accelerate the inward maturation of a reason common to all; it teaches and introduces the new into thought. The introduction of the new into thought, the idea of infinity, is the very work of reason. (TI 219)

On this basis, even the posing of the question as to why the self-suppression of the Feminine under paternal law is required, would constitute a denial of ethical transcendence and therefore be eo ipso unethical, and "irrational" to boot. The soi-disant source of all "critique" is itself placed beyond criticism.

It will perhaps be objected, on Levinas' behalf, that we have traduced his argument by inadmissibly identifying the "feminine" with the biologically specific category of the female sex simpliciter. To the contrary, the objection may continue, the genders "masculine" and "feminine" in Levinas' work must not be read as corresponding to the sexual division between male and female but as denoting two me-ontological principles integrated within each human personality. Commentators sympathetic to Levinas,[5/] point inter alia to a passage in Ethics and Infinity where this more appealing line of interpretation is expressly confirmed by Levinas himself:

> All these allusions to the ontological differences
> between the masculine and the feminine would appear
> less archaic if, instead of dividing humanity into two
> species (or into two genders) they would signify that
> participation in the masculine and the feminine were
> the attribute of every human being. (EI 68)

Moreover, our own analysis in the previous chapter, showed that the notion of the "maternal-psyche" signifies the "presence" of the (feminine) Other in-the-same. But, while there is no denying the manner in which Levinas' use of gender terms transcends biological determinates with respect to his characterisation of the intra-subjective relation, it must equally be acknowledged that his understanding of the nature of inter-subjectivity remains grounded in a biological conception of sexual difference. Indeed, his whole polemic against the philosophy of the "Neuter" basing itself on the merely logical unity of the species, and thereby reducing the female sex to the self sameness of the concept, is premised on the irreducibility of <u>sexual</u> difference. Levinas makes this explicit in TI:

> the other sex is an alterity borne by a being as an
> essence and not as the reverse of his identity, it could
> not affect an unsexed me. (TI 120)

Against this background, Levinas' statement that the "empirical absence of the 'feminine' sex in a dwelling nowise affects the dimensions of femininity" (TI 156) does nothing to mitigate the <u>force</u> of his exposition which tends towards an absolute normative identification of gender and sexual difference. Although, <u>in fact</u> the "dwelling" does not presuppose a female occupant, in <u>principle</u> it does so. Just as the production of empirical evidence showing that husbands today help their wives around the house more than they did in the past, confirms rather than refutes the stereotypical view

that housework is a woman's primary responsibility, so, on another plane, this is a similar instance of the exception serving to prove the rule. It would therefore be naive to suppose that Levinas' deduction of the ethical relation has no negative implications for Women's self-liberation and for sexual politics generally. On the contrary, Levinas' contention that the self-affacement of woman and her confinement to the reproductive role is a condition of human civilisation, and a fortiori of all morality, places powerful a priori limits on the scope of female self-development.

(b)   The Divine Nuptial

In the "Phenomenology of Eros", Levinas derives the erotic relation in terms of a three-way interplay between the moral law, as expressed in the "indiscreet" face of the Other, the Lover and the Beloved. This is therefore at once a description of a divine and a human nuptial. The erotic relation both presupposes and reproduces the ethical community, by quite literally replenishing the stock of its members.

Levinas uses the term "profanation" to define the nature of eros. The Beloved exhibits the qualities of the feminine: gentleness, tenderness, intimacy, fragility, vulnerability, etc. These are not merely the psychological properties of the "female sex"; rather they denote a withdrawal from the ontological order, a delightful "lapse in being", that renders ethical life possible. The feminine is from another time, from the "future which is not-yet" (TI 257); she is beyond all intentional relations and projects. Accordingly, the Lover solicits his Beloved, not through the grasp

but in the "contact" of the caress, which precisely cannot grasp its "object". This is the whole pathos of the caress. The alterity of the feminine is such that she remains intact in her otherness, even in the midst of the sexual union. She is a mystery that can be violated but not disclosed. She remains inviolable in her very violability. Her presence as an exorbitant "ultramaterial nudity" is ever an absence, secret and clandestine. Thus, the Beloved moves at "the limit of transcendence and immanence" (TI 254), beyond both the object and the face. In Levinas' words:

> Alongside of the night as anonymous rustling of the <u>there is</u> extends the night of the erotic, behind the night of insomnia the night of the hidden, the clandestine, the mysterious land of the virgin, simultaneously uncovered by <u>Eros</u> and refusing Eros - another way of saying: profanation. (TI 258-259)

The feminine face does not express itself, or rather it "expresses only this refusal to express" (TI 260). As such, it is liable at any time to be inverted into raillery, mockery, innuendo, lasciviousness and indecency. Yet this descent into non-sense is nonetheless predicated on the straightforwardness of the face. As Levinas puts it: "Only the being that has the frankness of the face can be 'discovered' in the non-signifyingness of the Wanton" (TI 261), or, in a more extended formulation: "disrespect presupposes the face. Elements of things remain outside of respect and disrespect. It is necessary that the face have been apperceived for nudity to be able to acquire the non-signifyingness of the lustful" (TI 262). In Levinas' account, then, the feminine is both the basis of the ethical order and the source of its instability and vitiation:

> Equivocation constitutes the epiphany of the feminine - at the same time interlocutor, collaborator and

master superiorly intelligent, so often dominating men in the masculine civilisation it has entered, and woman having to be treated as woman, in accordance with rules unprescriptable by civil society. (TI 264)

The power of the "feminine epiphany" resides in its indeterminancy and equivocality. As Levinas says "The violence of this revelation marks precisely the force of this absence, this not yet. this less than nothing, torn up from its modesty, from its essence of being human" (Ibid). The apparition of the feminine eros divorced from its ethical context, emanates from the abyss into which it sinks "weighing a monstrous weight in the shadow of nonsense" (TI 264). It leads away from the Thou of community. In the first instance, it is recuperated in the "non sociality of the society of lovers" (Ibid). But is only in and through the engenderment of the child that the violence of the erotic is ultimately defused and, via the family, reintegrated into the ethical order.

Now, in order to gain a critical purchase on Levinas' notion of eros as 'profanation' we shall briefly compare it with Hegel's exposition of Greek Sittlichkeit in the Phenomenology of Spirit. Three salient parallels immediately suggest themselves. First, Hegel's description of the ethical order as divided between the Human law, the manifest law of the state, and the Divine law, the chthonic law of the family, is represented, mutatis mutandis. in Levinas' identification of the masculine principle with the revealed law of the community and the feminine with the subterranean realm of interiority. Thus, Hegel's statement that "Nature, not the accident of circumstances or choice, assigns one sex to one law, the other to the other law; or conversely the two ethical powers

themselves give themselves an individual existence and actualise themselves in the two sexes" [Phen Para 465] is clearly echoed in Levinas' gendered presentation of eros.

Second, this identification of the masculine with the manifest law and the feminine with the law of the Netherworld leads both Hegel and Levinas to identify the feminine with the subversive principle. Again, allowing for the necessary changes - viz, that for Levinas this is a distinction within the ethical community opposed to the State, whereas, for Hegel the separation of the human and the divine law is a distinction within the State, conceived as a single ethical order - there is a definite correlation between Hegel's memorable statement that "Womankind - the everlasting irony [in the life] of the community - changes by intrigue the universal end of government into a private end... and turns to ridicule the earnest wisdom of mature age" (Phen Para 475) and Levinas' just-quoted epiphet that "Equivocation constitutes the epiphany of the feminine", and that woman is a source of mockery and innuendo capable of undermining and corrupting the moral order.

Hence, both Hegel and Levinas confer special moral powers upon the feminine, not available to the masculine principle. For example, Hegel's assertion that "the feminine in the form of the sister, has the highest intuitive awareness of what is ethical" (Phen Para 457) is paralleled in Levinas' contention that woman is "a master, superiorly intelligent in the masculine world it has entered" (TI 264). Both thinkers are here implicitly contrasting the supposed particularity of female moral perception to the universalism of (male) reason.

However, Hegel's specification of the sister as the supreme example of feminine ethicality alludes to a critical disanalogy between our two thinkers' respective accounts of the feminine. It is by no means an accident that Hegel deems the sister-brother relation, rather than that of husband and wife or parent and child, to be the highest embodiment of the Divine law. In the circumstances of natural Sittlichkeit, a woman can find no recognition in marriage, nor in her role as a daughter, where her ethical duty is to resign herself to the death of her parents, nor as a mother, where she performs a universal rather than a particular function. Only in the sibling relation is she recognised as an equal. In Hegel's words: "The brother, however, is for the sister a passive, similar being in general; the recognition of herself in him is pure and unmixed with any natural desire"... hence... "the moment of the individual self, recognising and being recognised, can here assert its right" (Phen Para 457). This moment of equality within the family marks both its perfection and its point of dissolution, for it is "the limit at which the self-contained life of the family breaks up and goes beyond itself" (Phen Para 458), i.e. the brother passes from the sphere of the divine law to the realm of the human law, while "the sister becomes, or the wife remains, the head of the household" (Phen Para 459).

This sets the stage for the tragic collision between family right and state-right, symbolised in the figure and fate of Antigone.7/ The conflict demonstrates that the divine and the human law are interconnected and presuppose one another. In the person of Antigone, the feminine is raised to the point of the

universal consciousness, insofar as she fully comprehends the right of both sides in the conflict between family and state, and yet freely subsumes her own individuality in defence of the ethical substance. Unlike her father, she _knows_ the full extent of her transgression in advance of the deed and must therefore more completely assume the guilt that ensues from it. In her immortal words:

"Because we suffer we acknowledge we have erred."

The historical circumstances of Greek _Sittlichkeit_. however, are such that Antigone must remain within the bounds of the family and therefore she is incapable of actualising her self-consciousness, and can therefore attain only to an "intuitive" awareness of the ethical. Nonetheless, the feminine principle has been established as a political force within the state; subsequently, in more propitious historical circumstances this implicit principle may be actualised in a way that will allow women to transcend the familiar sphere in which they have hitherto been encompassed.

We have now identified the point where the difference between Hegel's and Levinas' respective understanding of the feminine is at its most pronounced. For Levinas, in contrast to Hegel, the dialectic between the masculine and the feminine is contained within an essentially static community, hence there is _a priori_ no possibility of a radical re-working of the relationship between the ethical law and the feminine principle. The latter may disturb the male order and even exert a kind of mastery over it - the devious kind of mastery exercised by the powerless over the

powerful - but she cannot attain equality within it. That is to say, within the ethical community, the woman has no transformational potential. Moreover, if she were to agitate for equality with her 'brothers' she would, in Levinas' eyes, be simply denying her own "otherness". Perhaps she would then have to be forced to be "ethical"? This flippant remark has a serious intent; for it highlights how, under the guise of "me-ontological" categories, Levinas has re-imparted a neo-essentialism to rival that of the most formal Aristotelianism; and, like all essentialisms, in as much as it defines individuals in advance of the way they may define themselves, it is latently authoritarian.

It will no doubt be thought a bit rich to use Hegel of all people to criticize Levinas for being sexist. This would appear to be a case of the chauvinist kettle calling the patriarchal pot black. Hegel after all is hardly a pro-feminist. His analysis of Greek Sittlichkeit is by no means confined to a survey of classical Greek literature. We find many of its features Aufgehoben in the deduction of the modern family, as the first concrete moment of the Idea of the State. In particular, the supposed ethical division of the sexes is reproduced in accordance with a functional account of complementary role allocation. The male sex is self-determining "being of self" and has its "knowledge and volition" in the realm of "free universality", while the female sex is a "spirituality which maintains itself in unity as knowledge and volition of the substantial in the form of concrete individuality" [Eizelheit] and feeling [Empfindung]. In its external relations, the former is powerful and active, the latter passive and subjective" (PR 166). He goes on to say that man has "his actual substantial life in the state

and learning [Wissenschaft]", while, "Woman has her substantial vocation [Bestimmung] in the family, and her ethical disposition consists in this [family] piety" (Ibid). The man is dedicating himself to a life of division, work and struggle "fights his way to a self-sufficient unity with himself"; but this end is already anticipated in his family life which provides him with " a peaceful intuition of this unity, and an emotive [empfindend] and subjective ethical life" (Ibid). By contrast, the woman remains within the closed circle of the family. Seyla Benhabib succeeds in damning Hegel simply by accurately summarising his position:

> Women, since they cannot overcome unity and emerge out of the life of the family into the world of universality, are excluded from history-constituting activity. Their activities in the private realm, namely reproduction, the rearing of children, and the satisfaction of the emotional and sexual needs of men, place them outside of the world of work. This means that women have no history, and are condemned to repeat the cycles of life.[8/]

Any lingering doubts about Hegel's sexism may be dispelled by reference to his infamous obiter dicta concerning the educability of women. These inform us that though women may have "insights [Enfalle] taste and delicacy", they do not "possess the ideal". Hegel likens the difference between male and female to the distinction between animals and plants. Man actively pursues knowledge of the universal through scientific labour while woman's inner development "is a more peaceful [process of] unfolding whose principle is the more indeterminate unity of feeling [Empfindung]". Consequently, "the education of women takes place imperceptibly", they simply live and breathe "the atmosphere of representational thought". Finally, Hegel warns that, on account of their

combination of emotivity and particularity, women are unfit to govern: "When women are in charge of government the state is in danger, for their actions are based not on the demands of universality, but on their contingent inclination and opinion" (PR 166 Addition).

The question naturally arises, then, as to whether such an overt champion of male dominance as Hegel is a reliable authority to indict Levinas as a sexist. Indeed, it may be said that our Hegelian antipathy to Levinas' notion of the feminine derives from the fact that Levinas defines woman as other per se. rather than as the binary (and subordinate) opposition of the male sex? Is there not therefore a positive notion of the feminine in Levinas' thought which Hegelianism is in principle incapable of understanding?

Our [Hegelian] response to these questions is to recall the distinction we made in Chapter One of this work between the System and Hegel's authorship. The two are not identical; and in this non-identity resides the possibility and indeed the necessity of criticising the content of Hegel's oeuvre on the basis of his own system. Hegel's theory of gender relations and the state are a prime candidate for such an exercise in immanent revision. It is evident that Hegel's contention that the natural determinacy of the sexes emerges from a rational and ethical necessity, which entails the men are to enter civil society and the state while women are to pursue a domestic vocation, is in complete contradiction with his own demonstration that the advent of the Idea of the modern state is predicated upon the liberation of humanity from all natural determination. As Richard Winfield rightly observes Hegel's

attempt to place biological constraints on family relationships "doubly violates the spirit of his own ethics of freedom by limiting marriage to a heterosexual relation where men and women have different roles based on their gender, the man taking charge of the household and representing its affairs in the world, the woman restricting her activity to child-rearing and domestic chores"[9/] insofar as this re-imports elements contingent on history and tradition into a self-determining institution of right. Similarly, Peter Steinberger shows that Hegel's theory of gender and his theory of marriage are "flatly contradictory" since ex hypothesi the "success of marriage depends upon the full and mutual spiritualisation, i.e. rationalisation - of the parties; both must attain to the kind of reflective enlightenment required of Concrete Persons. But the theory of gender would make this simply impossible, since, according to Hegel, women would never achieve such rationality".[10/] In short, Hegel is his own best critic

However, it would be facile to explain Hegel's views on women as simply reflecting the prevalent prejudices of his time. Hegel's rational for reintroducing natural determinacy into the system of right is grounded in two conceptual principles which must be retained in any subsequent speculative-systemic philosophy of the State. First, the liberation from all natural determinations of personality, concomitant with the predominance of abstract right in the sphere of social relations, and necessary to the advent of modernity, does not entail that the State can be established de novo. without reference to its antecedent genesis in history and tradition. As Hegel demonstrates in his analysis of the French revolution, such an abstract negation of all existing

institutions in the name of absolute freedom ultimately leads to terror and a frenzy of destruction. In order to provide itself with a determinate content the system of right must be based on a will to will the historically extant institutional forms of society and the state to the extent that they conform with the requirements of rational justice. Second, and this is closely related to the first point, Hegel's idea of the State is grounded in the necessity to reconcile its substantial and subjective shapes within a single but non-inclusive - insofar as it necessarily remains open to the infinite dimensional of the Sacred - self-mediating totality. Now, the family constitutes the substantial element in the life of the State. It demarcates an effective private domain whose essential internal relations may only become subject to legal interference only at the point when they cease to be self-regulated by bonds of ethical love exclusive to its own inner sphere. Therefore, from the standpoint of the System, so to speak, the critical requirement is that the private sphere of the family or household remain conceptually distinct from the public institutions of civil society and the state. Once the principles of abstract right have consolidated themselves in society, there is no justification for continuing to determine the rights to establish households on the basis of gender and sexual inheritance rather than on the basis of the freely willed decision of consenting adult persons. Equally it is evidently unjust to assign women to the family domain and exclude them from full participation in the public realm.

The system of right therefore demands that the necessary equilibrium between the substantial and the reflective principle be determined without reference to gender. However, the extent to

which at any specific historical conjuncture the relationship between substance and subject may be reformed in accordance with its rational determination is a matter for political judgement, since it is conditional upon a number of contingent factors which cannot be determined a priori. This in turn explains why the system itself can never be complete and why even Hegelians seldom agree upon its immediate practical import.

Nonetheless these broad considerations suffice to disqualify Levinas' claim to provide an ethics of absolute otherness. As we argued above, the full development of both men and women as persons, civilians and citizens is a necessary condition for the revelation of divine alterity. Thus, Levinas' requirement that women must keep themselves "in reserve", entails that "ethical transcendence" is predicated on the non-recognition of feminine alterity.

(c) Voluptuosity and the Child

Hegel and Levinas place their analysis of the erotic relation within the overall context of their respective philosophies of divine redemption. We noted above, that whereas Hegel maintains redemption is accomplished in and through the absolute reconciliation between the infinite and the finite, Levinas holds the contrary view that redemption is attained in the non-reconciliation between the divine and the human. In this section we shall attempt to show, through a further comparison with Hegel, how Levinas' ethics of absolute non-reconciliation corrupts his philosophy of eros, by re-importing a neo-Platonic conception of

love which devalues sensuality in general and women in particular. Finally, we shall also contend that Levinas' notion of the erotic results in an insular and particularist concept of community based on a potentially dangerous combination of consanguinity, moral righteousness and anti-statism.

Our stated aim of directly comparing Hegel and Levinas on the nature of <u>eros</u> is complicated by the fact that the two texts containing their most extended treatments of the subject, namely the <u>Philosophy of Right</u> Part Three, Section One, respectively, and Section IV of TI, are widely disparate in character. In the <u>Philosophy of Right</u>, Hegel's comments on love are integrated within his overall speculative-logical deduction of the institutions of marriage and the family in relation to the State; by contrast, in TI, Levinas sets out a <u>phenomenology</u> of eros. A simple juxtaposition of material taken at random from these two texts would give the misleading impression that Levinas was some kind of Epicurean and Hegel a moralising prude. For example, contrast Levinas' statement that "In the caress, a relation yet, in one aspect sensible, the body already denudes itself of its very form, offering itself as erotic nudity. In the carnal given to tenderness, the body quits the status of an existent" (TI 258) with Hegel's decidedly non-romantic comment that in marriage "the natural drive is reduced to a modality of nature destined to be extinguished in its moment of satisfaction" (PR 163).

To compare like with like, however, it is necessary to go back to Hegel's own "phenomenology of eros", his early fragment on "Love". This short text is usually read as an example of Hegel's

early romanticism which he is said to repudiate in his nature thought. However, as is often the case with Hegel, it would be closer to the truth to say that he did not altogether abandon his early concept of love in his maturity. The underlying element of continuing is that both young and the old Hegel consistently define the erotic relation as, in essence, a sacrament.

On the surface, there are a number of striking similarities between Hegel's "love" and Levinas' description of "Eros". To begin with both texts, appropriately enough, tend toward the rhapsodic in their depiction of the "oceanic" feeling engulfing the lovers in the erotic encounter. Thus Hegel's lyrical contention that in the moment of love" what in the first instance is most the individual's own is united into the whole in the lovers' touch and contact; consciousness of a separate self disappears and all distinction between the lovers is annulled" (ETW 307) is virtually interchangeable with Levinas', equally intense, averment that: "The caress does not act. does not grasp possibles. The secret it forces does not inform it as an experience; it overwhelms the relation of the I with itself and with the non-I. An amorphous non-I sweeps away the I into an absolute future where it escapes itself and loses its position as a subject" (TI 239).

A second parallel is that the respective texts each describe the erotic encounter as a trans-reflective passion which accomplishes a unity of identity and difference between the two lovers. Hegel asserts that " genuine love excludes all oppositions. It is not the understanding, whose relations always leave the manifold of related terms as a manifold and whose unity is always

a unity of opposites [left as opposites]" (ETW 304). This statement is clearly echoed in Levinas' declaration that "voluptuosity" - Levinas' term for carnal desire - "is a pure experience, which does not pass into any concept, which remains blindly experience" (TI 260). In similar vein, Hegel states "love completely destroys objectivity and annuls and transcends reflection" (ETW 305) and, as a consequence, "in love, the separate does still remain, but as something united and no longer as something separate; life [in the subject] senses life [in the object]".

Contrary to a received view, propagated for example by Max Scheler,[13/] and with which Levinas implicitly concurs, there is no warrant for interpreting this passage as committing Hegel to a notion of love as constituting a Spinozaic fusion of two alter-egos in a single, pantheistic substance. This reading relies on inadmissibly interpreting Hegel's concept of life in monistic terms. But as we sought to show above, throughout his authorship, Hegel's definition of life is consistently Trinitarian rather than monistic. Life, for Hegel, is infinite-life: the union of the union and the non-union of the transcendent and the immanent. Hence in the erotic union the lover is not simply transported into an impersonal identification with the life-substance but is brought into an absolute relation with its own self as infinite-life in and through its absolute relation to the infinite-life of its beloved.

It is no exaggeration to say that Hegel's notion of life sensing itself in life anticipates Levinas' definition of the caress as a transcendence of sensibility irreducible to an intentional relation. To see this we have only to compare Hegel's statement that "Love

neither restricts nor is restricted; it is not finite at all. It is a feeling, yet not a single feeling [among other single feelings]. A single feeling is only a part and not the whole of life; the life present in a single feeling dissolves its barriers and drives on till it disperses itself in the manifold of feelings with a view to finding itself in the entirety of this manifold" (ETW 304-305), with Levinas' avowal that voluptuousity accomplishes the "<u>common action of the sentient and the sensed</u>" (TI 265), such that: "the other is not a sensed, but in the sensed, affirmed as sentient, as though one and the same sentiment were substantially common to me and the other" (Ibid). In the light of this convergence, it is not surprising that Levinas' whole analysis of the erotic is expressed in speculative terms lifted directly from Hegel. Thus Hegel's speculative proposition that "in love, life is present as a duplicate of itself and as a single united self" (ETW 305) is reiterated almost verbatim in Levinas' affirmation that "voluptuosity, as the coinciding of the lover and the beloved, is charged by their duality: it is simultaneously fusion and distinction" (TI 270) and in other equivalent formulations, which defined the erotic as: "inward and yet intersubjectively structured, not simplifying itself into consciousness that is one. In voluptuosity the other is me and separated from me" (TI 265).

However, these apparent symmetries mask profound differences in Hegel's and Levinas' respective understanding of the nature of <u>eros</u>. In our view, Hegel has a concept of the erotic that is far deeper, richer and more all-inclusive than that advanced by Levinas. Unlike the latter, Hegel does not limit the erotic relation to the purely carnal but defines it as being a total interpenetration

of the mind, body and spirit of two independent beings. In Hegel's own words:

> True union, or love proper, exists only between living beings who are alike in power and thus in one another's eyes living beings from every point of view. (ETW 304)

The erotic communion is only accomplished through the total reciprocal giving of the whole self of the lover to the beloved and of the beloved to the lover. In their mutual cancellation as solus ipse the lovers are perfected in their selfhood. Invoking Shakespeare, Hegel expresses the dynamic of eros thus:

> The lover who takes is not thereby made richer than the other; he is enriched indeed, but only so much as the other is. So too the giver does not make himself poorer; by giving to the other he has at the same time and to the same extent enhanced his own treasure (compare Juliet in Romeo and Juliet [ii 1 175-177 : "My bounty is as boundless as the sea, My love as deep;] the more I give to thee, the more I have"). (ERW 307)

The subject-in-desire fears its own dissolution as a subject. Eros is inseparable from death. But by surrendering itself in love the subject is able to face and transcend death and so accomplish a reconciliation with the other qua other. Hence, to shrink from eros, to remain entirely intact in one's separability, whether in the name of morality or out of deference for the sanctity of the body, is to confess one's lack of faith. In Hegel's words, the motivation for this denial of transcendence is the refusal of eros:

> ...is not a fear for what is mortal, for what is merely one's own, but rather a fear of it, a fear which vanishes as the separable element in the lover is diminished by his love. Love is stronger than fear. It has no fear of its fear, but led by its fear, it cancels separation,

apprehensive as it is of finding opposition which may resist it or be a fixed barrier against it. (ETW 306-307)

In short, for Hegel, in the passion of the erotic encounter, two lovers bring one another into relation with their own and each other's absolute otherness and are thus simultaneously both the agent and the patient of a mutual absolute negation of self and of a redemption of this negation. Love is stronger than death. But for love to overcome death there must be a reciprocal and total self-surrender, without reserve, of the whole being of each party to the erotic communion.

Now, in comparison with the sublimity of Hegel's theory of love, Levinas' account of eros is clearly defective in two salient respects: First, because it displaces transcendence from the erotic relation per se to its "issue": the child; and, second, because it divorces love and friendship, and identifies eros exclusively with the carnal desire for the carnal desire of the Other.

For Levinas, eros is at best only, as it were, a relative transcendence. The erotic union itself does not accomplish the absolute relation. Rather it is a necessary but indirect "means" towards genuine transcendence, which is only positively accomplished in the birth of the son. In Levinas' words:

if love is to love the love the Beloved bears me, to love is also to love oneself in love, and thus to return to oneself. Love does not transcend unequivocably - it is complacent, it is pleasure and dual egoism. (TI 266)

That is to say, for Levinas, there is no absolute self-transcendence in love, but only through it. In the erotic union

itself, the lovers remain unreconciled. Indeed, Levinas implies that the lovers remain much the same as they were before. His understanding of the erotic is in this respect quite frankly debased. As Luce Iriquray rightly observes of Levinas: "He knows nothing of communion in pleasure... for Levinas, the distance is always maintained with the other in the experience of love".14/

Hegel, in contrast, shows that there can be no absolute self-transcendence in _eros_ if the lovers either merely stake their bodies in _lieu_ of their whole being or if they only give themselves spiritually to one another but remain bodily separate. There is no doubt that, generally speaking, love and friendship are distinct in essence; but in the erotic relation they are not distinct. The beauty of love resides in its integrity. yet it is precisely this integrity which Levinas sunders by isolating carnality from the whole human personality. In his own words:

> Love and friendship are not only felt differently; their correlative differs : friendship goes onto the Other; love seeks what does not have the structure of an existent, the infinitely future, what is to be engendered.

According to Levinas, then, the lover does not seek to be recognised by his beloved, for this would presumably count as friendship, but rather directly and impatiently desires that "unparalleled conjunction of identification" which will engender the child. Thus he concludes, "I only love fully if the Other loves me... because my voluptuosity delights in his voluptuosity" (Ibid). The beloved _qua_ subject is simply by-passed in the erotic union. Of course, Levinas is not saying that the erotic relation is contracted with the _intention_ of conceiving a child. Procreation is rather its

unconscious telos. The child is supposedly implicit in the very structure of desire.

To see how this is so we must recall Levinas' definition of desire as being "beneath and beyond discourse" (TI 255). On the one hand, desire is rooted in the need and enjoyment of carnality and immanence, on the other, it is driven by the transcendent search for that "regime of tenderness" (TI 256) that exceeds the possible, the non-negative future that anticipates the child. Thus eros is bifurcated into two forces - the desiring and the desired - which mutually solicit one another. Levinas assigns the masculine to the active, the feminine to the passive moment in this polarity. Moreover, by explicitly identifying feminine alterity with the maternal function, Levinas renders the term sexually specific. The feminine is woman; and woman is the repository of male desire.

In the midst of the erotic relation, the beloved must continue to keep herself "in reserve". "The feminine is the other, refractory to society, member of a dual society, an intimate society, a society without language" (TI 265). She therefore cannot appear or speak for herself. It is not that Levinas believes women are incapable of being the equal of mean, as lovers, friends and persons, but he holds that ethics requires them to renounce their claim to equality. As a result, the female beloved is systematically negated as a spiritual being and thoroughly infantalised in the sexual union. She does not give or take from her lover; she allows herself to be taken - after a struggle. Although Levinas states that "In the possession of the Other I possess the Other inasmuch as he possesses me; I am both master and slave" (TI 265) the context

makes clear that this reciprocity in the sport of love is predicated on the feminine seduction of the ardent male. The beloved cannot give herself in the erotic encounter because her innermost subjectivity is said not to reside in herself as subject but in her capacity as child-bearer. Hence, Levinas avers, the beloved does not oppose her lover as a will. but "on the contrary, as an irresponsible animality which does not speak true words, returned in the stage of infancy without responsibility - this coquettish head, this pure life 'a bit silly' has quit her status as a person" (TI 263). He adds, the perhaps marginally even more insulting comment, that: "The relation with the Other is enacted in play : one plays with the Other as with a young animal" (Ibid).

In the light of this analysis, we fully concur with Irigaray's judgement that "the description of pleasure given by Levinas is unacceptable to the extent that it presents man as the sole subject exercising his desire upon the woman who is deprived of subjectivity except to seduce him" and that "for Levinas, the feminine does not stand for another to be respected in her human freedom and human identity. The feminine other is left without her own specific face. On this point, his philosophy falls radically short of ethics".15/

Levinas' suppression of erotic transcendence may be traced back to his particular appropriation of Plato's theory of love. His revision of Platonism proceeds in three steps. First, as we have seen above, he reinterprets Plato's definition of eros. the daughter of "contrivance and poverty", as the half-mortal, half-immortal composite of "concupiscence and transcendence". Second, on this

basis, he then proceeds to reverse the Platonic hierarchy which elevates spiritual procreation - the attainment of immortality (via the sublimation of desire) in the production of works, the performance of deeds and the contemplation of the eternal forms - over physical procreation - the attainment of immortality (via the expression of desire) in one's progeny and indirectly through the regeneration of the race. Whereas Plato says of the fruits of spiritual creativity "Everyone would prefer children such as these to children of the flesh",[16/] Levinas per contra. asserts that the "infinite time" produced through fecundity "is better" (TI 268) than the lifeless eternity of the Idea. The Forms represent a false transcendence that negate the real transcendence engendered through eros. Hence, the Idea of the beautiful "inverts the beauty of the feminine face" by substituting an image for its "troubling depth" (TI 263).

Third, and finally, Levinas also rejects Plato's theory of physical immortality. As we noted above, the mere endless reproduction of the species does not transcend the self-sameness of the totality. In Levinas words, "In the exaltation of the biological life the person arises as a product of the species or of impersonal life, which has recourse to the individual so as to ensure its impersonal triumph" (TI 120). It is only when the procreation is "articulated" through the family, within the overall structure of the ethical community (TI 280), that it "delineates a structure that goes beyond the biologically empirical" (TI 277) such that "fecundity engendering fecundity accomplishes goodness" (TI 269).

In short, Levinas transposes the Platonic Idea of the Good from the supersensible world of intelligible forms of the terra firma of the ethical community considered under the aspect of its generational perpetuity. At the same time, he retains the transcendent dimension of Plato's epekeina tes ousias by defining the ethical community over and against the Totality (which he identifies with Being-in-itself). The propagation of the membership of the ethical elect therefore ensures the "convergence of reality and morality" (IT 306), within the internal life of the irenic community, which further serves as an ethical example and standard to the unethical, war-ridden, world.

Therefore, for Levinas, the procreation of the child, specifically the son, is at once a natural and ethical event. This further entails that the erotic relation, as a matter of ethical necessity, must be made subordinate to the reproductive function within the kinship network comprising the community. By implication then erotic relations which do not conform to this imperative are eo ipso 'unethical'. Levinas therefore consistent with his own premises identifies the erotic per se with concupiscence, egoism and evil. We have already seen this above, in his characterisation of eros as "monstrous", "violent", and leading away from the Thou to a "closed society"; but his view is even more candidly stated in his essays, see for example this passage taken from "Humanism and An-archy",

> That there is in the midst of the submission to the Good, the seduction of irresponsibility, the probability of egoism in the subject responsible for his responsibility, that is the birth of the ego in the obeying will. This temptation to separate oneself from

the Good is the very incarnation of the subject in his
presence in being. (CP 137)

Here Levinas is simply reformulating the hackneyed
identification of woman as the source of a diabolical temptation to
divine disobedience (the latter a synonym for patriarchal authority).
It follows that the "evil" inherent in the temptation to carnal
irresponsibility embodies in the female sex may only be
surmounted by channelling it into legitimate forms of procreation.
Woman is thus redeemed through motherhood. And so the whole
ethical covenant turns full circle; for it is as a mother, or potential
mother, that the woman welcomes the Other into the dwelling
where she remains "discreetly" deferential to paternal authority.

We see therefore, that in Levinas' account of the ethical, both
the sensuality and the spirituality of woman are alienated and
placed at the service of the fraternal order. In consequence,
Levinas entirely negates the redemptive power of feminine eros.
since, for him, contrary to the Song of Songs (8:6), it is not erotic
love but non-erotic love, filial love and love of one's neighbour, that
is "stronger than death". By reducing carnality to eros and by
identifying female sexuality with concupiscence, Levinas denies the
essence of female alterity, her freedom, and thus denies the
redemptive possibility of faith and grace to all human subjects.[17/]

Hegel, in sharp contrast to Levinas, defends the integrity of
eros. In the Philosophy of Right, his early theory of love is
Aufhebung. within an institutional framework. His concept of
marriage upholds the wholeness of the erotic relation against, on
the one hand, so-called Platonic Love, "associated with the

monastic attitude which defines the moment of natural life [Lebendigkeit] as utterly negative" (PR 163), and on the other hand, against "free love", which reduces eros to the "arbitrariness of sensuous inclination" (PR 164). As our analysis of Levinas demonstrates, these apparent opposites are in fact two sides of the same coin. In both the "divine and substantial is separated from its existence [Dasein]" (PR 163).

Now, of course, in the Philosophy of Right. Hegel maintains that the integrity of love can only be upheld within marriage. However, his reasons for asserting this are largely based on historically contingent considerations with respect to the economic dependence of women on men.[18/] His argument against Schlegel's notion of "free love" is that if the latter's doctrine were to become generally practised, women would be denied the economic status marriage afforded them and so be reduced to some form of concubinage. Although Hegel may be justly faulted for not drawing the alternative conclusion that women should therefore be granted entry into civil society on the basis of full economic and political equality with men,[19/] the important point now is that his failure to draw this conclusion is no wise analytically contained in his concept of marriage, which, to the contrary, presupposes the complete equality between the spouses. From a contemporary perspective, given the greater extension of civil and political rights to women, at least in the Western world, the contingencies that preoccupied Hegel no longer obtain, and therefore there is no reason to insist that the formal legality of marriage is a necessary condition of the integrity of the erotic union. But, by the same token, legal marriage is certainly not incompatible with ethical love,

and it may still be said to be its logical consequence, as it were. The erotic union is not, in essence, a "closed society" as Levinas avers. Ultimately secrecy corrodes the erotic relation, which, in order to be fully celebrated, has to be to some degree openly known and recognised.

In summation, for Hegel, the erotic union is confirmed in the existence of the child, while for Levinas, it is consummated through the child. However, this is not to say that for Hegel the birth of the child adds nothing to the relationship between two lovers. To the contrary, the child is the visible embodiment of their inner communion. This speculative understanding of the union and non-union of the parents and child is a leitmotif that runs throughout Hegel's entire authorship. In the fragment on "Love" Hegel states that the result of the erotic union is that "The mortal element, the body has lost the character of separability, and a living child, a seed of immortality, of the eternally self-developing [race], has come into existence. What has been united [in the child] is not divided again; [in love and through love] God has acted and created" (ETW 307). _In_ love and _through_ love, God has acted and created and "not solely, as Levinas holds, through love. The child certifies the love of the parents. Hence the "child is the parents themselves" (ETW 307). As Levinas himself acknowledges, albeit obliquely (TI 267), Hegel's speculative exposition of the parent-child relation forms the basis of his own presentation of the nature of filiation. This is evident in such formulations as "I do not have my child; I am my child" (TI 277) and "my child is a stranger (Isaiah 49), but a stranger who is not simply mine, for he _is_ me. He is me a stranger to myself" (TI 267).

But whereas Hegel contends that the child is the visible expression of the union of both parents, Levinas subsumes the child exclusively under the name of the father, and thus privileges the male child. In Levinas words "The I owns its unicity as I to the paternal eros" (TI 278). "The paternal eros first invests the unicity of the son; his I qua filial commences not in enjoyment but in election" (TI 279), i.e. it is not borne out of the erotic fusion between male and female but rather out of the infusion of the female by the paternal moral law. Levinas goes on to say the son is only unique to himself because he is unique for his father "and because the son owes his unicity to the paternal election he can be brought up, be commanded, and can obey, and the strange conjuncture of the family is possible" (Ibid). However, once the son has reached maturity, he must be to some degree released from the obligations of the filial bond so that he can take his place within the fraternal community:

> The unique child, as elected one, is accordingly the same time unique and non-unique. Paternity is produced as an innumerable future; the I engendered exists at the same time as unique in the world and as a brother among brothers. I am I and chosen one, but where can I be chosen, if not from among other chosen ones, among equals. (TI 279)

The founding of the ethico-religious community is therefore concomitant with the complete abrogation of the feminine.

Now, Levinas' account of paternal eros conforms to Hegel's presentation in the Phenomenology of Spirit of the nature of filiation within natural Sittlichkeit. Here, in contrast to the

fragment on "Love" and the <u>Philosophy of Right</u>. Hegel states that the relation between the spouses has "its actual existence not in itself but in the child - as 'other' whose coming into existence is the relationship, and it is also that in which the relationship passes away; and this alternation of successive generations has its enduring basis on the nation" (Phen. Para 456). Allowing for the necessary changes - the fact that Hegel places Greek <u>Sittlichkeit</u> at the beginning of world-history while Levinas situates the ethical community outside of history - we nonetheless find a parallel in Levinas' contention that fecundity is "discontinuously historical without fate" (TI 278) and that it therefore "defines a notion distinct from continuity, a way of resuming the thread of history - concrete in a family and a nation" (Ibid).

The analogy may be pressed further. Levinas' separation of the soi-disant transhistorical ethical community from the historical-political state reproduces the inner diremption between the divine law and the human law which, according to Hegel, divided the natural ethical order. For example, Levinas states that "the irreplaceable unicity of the I <u>which is maintained against the State</u> is accomplished by fecundity (TI 300, emphasis added). The ethical nation existing in "infinite time" constitutes the "antipodes" of the State (TI 306). Nonetheless it is not indifferent to the fate of the State. To the contrary, it affirms itself as being "the model in relation to which the work of the State must be situated" (TI 30). In keeping with Levinas' stress on dysymmetry, this is an entirely univocal relation. Although the state must take the ethical community as its paradigm the reverse does not appertain. In Levinas' words, the ethical community "is not subordinated to the

State as a means and does not represent a reduced model of the State" (Ibid).

Therefore, whereas Hegel distinguishes between the genesis of the parent-child relation within natural Sittlichkeit on the one hand, and the Aufhebung of that relation within the Idea of the State, Levinas makes no such distinction, and as a consequence his understanding of the nature of filiation remains within a pre-modern, patriarchal and anti-subjectivist framework. The upshot is that on Levinas' account, the ethical community and the State remain in an unmediated and potentially conflictual relation with one another.

The system of right comprehends the reversal accomplished in modernity whereby the subjective element is made paramount and the substantial moment rendered subordinate to it. As we noted above, this development exerts its most powerful impact on the family; to an extent which Hegel himself was loathe to admit. For once the family is grounded by society, and not vice-versa, there is no warrant to restrict the right to establish common households on the basis of gender or sexual preference. A consensual agreement between two free persons is now the only legitimate ethical criteria applicable in this matter. Equally, once a household has been established, and the decision is taken to raise children within it, there is no necessity that the relation between parents and children be based on consanguinity. Rather what counts is that the parents be prepared to fully accept the responsibilities of child-rearing, namely to provide the child with the necessary maternal support and emotional and spiritual love to

enable it to mature, not in the first instance into an ethical being selflessly devoted to others, but into an autonomous subject capable of determining itself to act in accordance with universal moral principles.

Therefore, in contrast with natural Sittlichkeit where the child perpetuates the nation, in rational Sittlichkeit, the child perpetuates the elementary sphere of the State: "the presupposition of persons existing immediately as persons - here becomes the result, a process which runs on into an infinite progression of generations which presuppose one another" (PR 173). The child is quite literally raised into civil society, and is equally its offspring, insofar as the family is founded on the mutual will of autonomous subjects. Both parents have a shared responsibility for the household and a duty to particularise themselves through work, welfare and political participation, and ultimately as members of the spiritual community. Thus, the opposition found in natural Sittlichkeit between nation and state is transcenced. The family and the state no longer answer to two independent laws, the divine and the human, but constitute two distinct elements within a single order. Properly speaking, there can no longer be a tragic collision between nation and the state because the state now has all the right on its side.

Ironically it is Levinas' insistence on the unmediated relation between the irenic community and the state which leaves it open to violence. One of the principle defects of Levinas' quasi-Augustinian statement of the relation between religion and the state in TI is that he presents no worked out response to the ethical and political

problems raised by his pacifism. What if a state emerged intent on the annihilation of the ethical community? Ought this persecution be accepted as a sign of ethical election, even if this were to put at risk the very possibility of goodness in the world? For Levinas, this is not the hypothetical question it would have been for his mentor Franz Rosenweig. The belief that the "eternal star" might continue undisturbed in is spiritual witness under the protective wing of the "eternal way", in the form of the enlightened Christian state, was cruelly shattered by the Holocaust. As a consequence, this is one aspect of Rosenzweig's works which Levinas cannot avail himself of. But TI has nothing to put in its place.

In our view, Levinas' awareness of the shortcomings of his statement of the relation between <u>ethics</u> and politics in TI led him to reformulate the relation between justice and the state in OBBE, and to effect a <u>rapprochement</u> with liberalism. We shall conclude our study with a critical assessment of the cogency of this restatement. However, it must be borne in mind that the innovations of OBBE concern only the external relations between the ethical elect and the State; Levinas does not renounce a single detail of his deduction of the ethical covenant, which is indeed presupposed in all his later analyses.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER FIFTEEN

1/   Richard Dien Winfield, Reason and Justice. p.186.

2/   LPR "The Love that God is, is in the Actual Life, Conjugal Love".

3/   Simone De Beauvoir, The Second Sex. Translated and edited by H.M. Parshley, London, Penguin Books, 1972, p.96, 'Certain passages of the argument employed by Hegel in defining the relation of master and slave apply much better to the relation of man to woman". See also Genevieve Lloyd The Man of Reason: "Male" and "Female" in Western Philosophy (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press 1984) pp.91-92 and Susan Easton "Hegel and Feminism", in (ed.) David Lamb, Hegel and Modern Philosophy. London, Croom Helm 1987). For a selective bibliography of Hegel and Feminism, see Henry Brod, Hegel's Philosophy of Politics. pp.174-179.

4/   For a contrary view to my own, see Tina Chanter, "Feminism and the Other" in (ed.), Robert Bernasconi and David Wood The Provocation of Levinas. Rethinking the Other.

5/   Ibid., p.47.

6/   Alison Ainley in "Amorous Discourses 'The Phenomenology of Eros and Love Stories'", also in The Provocation of Levinas. pp.70-82 is justifiably more circumspect than Chanter when

she observes "if we are to understand the balance of voluptuosity, which is the self's immersion within itself, as fecundity, or that which expresses a 'beyond', it seems that inherent within Levinas' schema is a specifically heterosexual formulation of love relations, containing the possibility of parenthood...", p.78.

Robert John Schoffler Manning, Interpreting Otherwise than Heidegger. p.221 in defending Levinas against the Derridean charge that Levinas subordinates sexual difference to the difference between people in general, contends that: "Derrida's criticism can at least be rightly accused of overlooking the fact that sexual difference is absolutely central for Levinas in his very significant move from the Other to the totally, absolutely and infinitely Other. It is sexual difference itself that enables him to make this move. Given the significance of sexual difference for Levinas' early work, it is hard to agree with Derrida that Levinas' work has "always rendered secondary" sexual difference".

7/   I am indebted in what follows to Tina Chanter's essay "Antigone's Dilemma", in (ed.), Robert Bernasconi and Simon Critchley, Re-reading Levinas (Bloomington and Indianopolis, Indiana University Press 1991).

8/   Seyla Benhabib, Situating the Self. Gender, Community and Post-Modernism in Contemporary Ethics (Cambridge. Policy Press 1992).   Chapter 8: "On Hegel, Woman and Irony", pp.247-248.

9/   Richard Dien Winfield, <u>Reason and Justice</u>. p.188.

10/   Peter J. Steinberger, <u>Logic and Politics</u> (New Haven and London, Yale University Press 1988), p.188.

11/   As Seyla Benhabib points out in <u>On Hegel, Woman and Irony</u>. "'His time' was a revolutionary one, and in the circles closest to Hegel, that of his Romantic Friends, he encountered brilliant, accomplished and non-conformist woman who certainly intimated to him what true gender equality might mean in the future. Hegel saw the future, and he did not like it", p.254.

12/   See Richard Dien Winfield, <u>Reason and Justice</u>. pp.187-190.

13/   Max Scheler, <u>The Nature of Sympathy</u>. Translated by Peter Heath (New York, Yale University Press 1954). Scheler interprets Hegel as maintaining that love is the incorporation of the other person into oneself. To this view, Scheler opposes his own: "Love calls explicitly for an understanding entry into the individuality of <u>another</u> person <u>distinct in character</u> from the entering self, by him accepted as such, and coupled, indeed, with a warm and whole-hearted endorsement of 'his' reality as an individual, and 'his' being what he is', p.70. However, this is a statement with which the young Hegel would concur. Scheler errs in attributing to Hegel a monistic concept of life which he does not hold.

14/ Luce Irigaray, "Questions to Emmanuel Levinas On the Divinity of Love". Translated by Margaret Whitford in Re-reading Levinas. pp.110-111.

15/ Ibid, p.113. See also Drucilla Cornell, The Philosophy of the Limit (New York, Routledge 1992). "Without the recognition of phenomenological symmetry, Levinas' ethical relation inevitably degenerates into violation".

16/ Plato, The Symposium (London, Penguin Books 1968), 209C, p.91.

17/ Phyllis Trible, "Love's Lyrics Redeemed" in (ed.) Harold Bloom, The Song of Songs (New York, Chelsea House Publishers 1988), reads the Songs of Songs as a redemption of the casting out of man and woman from the Garden of Eden. "In the closing movement of the Song of Songs, this tragedy is reversed. Once again eroticism can face the threat of death. The woman says:

Let me be the seal upon your heart,
Like the seal upon your hand.
For love is as fierce as death,
Passion is mighty as Sheol;
Its doubts are darts of fire,
A blazing flame.

Trible concludes "Naked without shame or fear (cf. Gen 2.25; 3:10), this couple treat each other with tenderness and

respect. Neither escaping nor exploiting sex, they embrace and enjoy it. Their love is truly bone of bone and flesh of flesh, and this image of God male and female is indeed very good (cf. Gen 1:27, 31). Testifying to the goodness of creation, then, eroticism becomes worship in the context of grace", p.65.

18/ Peter Steinberger in <u>Logic and Politics</u> shows how on Hegel's own premises there is no necessity to consider marriage the <u>only</u> institution "that begins the transition from subject to concrete person". "For example, we can imagine certain communal living arrangements that would satisfy procreative and other social urges, provide children with sound moral instruction, and be based upon a free and rational decision to join with others in a self-limiting union based on ethico-legal love" (p.187).

19/ Seyla Benhibib, "<u>On Hegel</u>. <u>Woman and Irony</u>". p.250.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

ETHICS AND POLITICS

(a)   The Other and the Others

In TI, Levinas defines the face to face as a <u>direct</u> relation to
the Other which accomplishes " a coinciding of the expressed with
him who expresses" (TI 66). By contrast, in OBBE, the face to face
is re-defined as an <u>indirect</u> relation with the Other that signifies
itself not beyond but <u>through</u> representation: "A trace is sketched
out and effaced in the equivocation of a saying" (OBBE 12). In TI,
Levinas states "We call justice the face to face approach in
conversation". By contrast, in OBBE, he defines justice as residing
in the <u>relation</u> between the face to face and the third party: "The
relationship with the third party is an incessant correction of the
asymmetry of proximity in which the face to face is looked at"
(OBBE 158).

Notwithstanding these appearances to the contrary, we
continue to maintain that the innovations of OBBE do not cancel
but rather complement the conclusions of TI. The key to
understanding the systematic relationship between the two texts is
the recognition that the concept of the "third party" has a different
referent in each of the two works in question. In TI the "third
party" refers to the plurality of face to face relations; in OBBE it
refers to social plurality in general, as it were, the "faceless"
plurality. This distinction corresponds to the two senses in which
Levinas employs the term "we". In TI, as shown above, the third

party or "we" is defined <u>endogenously</u> as the neighbour to my neighbour <u>within</u> the ethical community; in OBBE, the third party is defined <u>exogenously</u> as the neighbour to my neighbour <u>without</u> it.

In summary, then, the restatement of the relation of the I to the third party in OBBE transfers the ethical subject from its inclusive membership of a transcendent community, consisting of asymmetrically related individuals standing in an immediate relation to one another, into a non-inclusive rational-legal community comprised of formal, reciprocal interactions, mediated through an abstract system of rules. Therefore, whereas in TI the "third party" is my equal and brother summoned like me to ethical service by virtue of our common birth into a monotheistic, paternal order, in OBBE the "third party" defines that limit to the "fraternity" where my command to my neighbour to command his neighbour to ethical service is not reciprocated by my neighbour's neighbour. This limit, in turn, defines the moment when the ethical subject transcends the fraternity, or society of faces, and is forthwith placed within the midst of a <u>faceless</u> world.

As a consequence of this transition the primordially artless and straightforward face to face "relation" assumes the character of a difficulty and a predicament. Levinas explains this complication thus:

> If proximity ordered to me only the other alone, there would not have been any problem, in even the most general sense of the term. A question would not have been born, nor consciousness nor self-consciousness. The responsibility for the other is an immediacy antecedent to questions, it is proximity. It is troubled

and becomes a problem when the third party enters.
(OBBE 157)

In other words, although within the ethical community the moral law is transparent, universally known and absolutely imprescriptable; without it it is mediated through representation and, thus, exposed to interpretative indeterminacy. As a result, the primordially "evident" becomes obscure and opaque:

> The other stands in the relationship with the third party, for whom I cannot entirely answer, even if I alone answer, before any question, for my neighbour. The other and the third party, my neighbours, contemporaries of one another, put distance between me and the third party. "Peace, peace to the neighbour and the one far off" (Isaiah 57:19) - we now understand the point of this apparent rhetoric. The third party introduces a contradiction in the saying whose signification before the other until then went in one direction. (Ibid)

This is the critical juncture where Levinas' analysis diverges from that given in TI. In the latter work, Levinas contends that the assimilation of the ethical relation into the structures of the socio-political world is tantamount to its negation tout court. It is only saved from this fate by its containment within the ethical community. In OBBE, on the other hand, Levinas modifies this antithetical formulation of the relationship between ethics and the totality in two important respects. First, there is here no "return-to-community". The ethical relation must suffer its alienation in the "Said". Second, this alienation of the face to face in representation, unlike in TI, is not presented as a negation without remainder. On the contrary, it is now seen as essential to the very manifestation of ethical transcendence. In brief, the face to face is no longer held to express itself exclusively within the confines of

the ethical community; in addition it is also said to signify itself as a "trace" within the world as a whole. In the following exert from OBBE, Levinas sums up the essence of these modifications vis a vis TI. In the "Said":

> There is weighing, thought, objectification and thus a decree in which my anarchic relationship with illeity is betrayed, but in which it is conveyed before us. There is a betrayal of my anarchic relation with illeity, but also a new relation with it: it is only thanks to God that, as a subject incomparable with the other, I am approached as an other by the others, that is, "for myself". "Thanks to god" I am another for the others. (OBBE 158)

The question is exactly what it is that the betrayal of the anarchic relation "conveys" through its annulment? The key term in this respect is the neologism "illeity". The masculine root of the term clearly indicates that the "trace" is an indirect revelation of the paternal moral law which founds the ethical community. If this were not so, there would be nothing to distinguish it from the Heideggerian ontological difference. Hence the statement of the relationship between ethical transcendence and representation in OBBE does not supplant but rather presupposes the deduction of the ethical covenant in TI. As said, the absence of this presupposition would deprive the ethical relation of its specifically ethical content. Moreover, the presupposition is mutual. As we shall now show, the ethical community requires its members to become legal persons and to accept the rights and duties of citizenship in order to sustain its own religious vocation. Therefore, the innovations of OBBE bring the analysis undertaken in TI to a systemic completion.

As a result of becoming "another for the others", the ethical subject becomes at once a member of the ethical elect within the ethical community and a denizen of the State. The ethical subject is thus dirempted into a religious and a political being and placed under two forms of jurisdiction: the transcendent moral law and the positive law of the State.

Of course, to a certain extent, this is also the position in TI. The difference is, however, that whereas in TI, as we have already said above, Levinas maintains participation in the structures of the state to be tantamount to a total alienation of the ethical relation, in OBBE, he contends that the trace of illeity within the state entails that involvement within its structures is no longer inimical to ethical transcendence, indeed, it is positively required by it. To put it another way, we may say that whereas in TI the notion of a just state is treated as something of an oxymoron, in OBBE it is, in principle realisable.

How then does Levinas understand the relationship between transcendent justice and the justice of the state? The answer is: in a deeply equivocal fashion. On the one hand, in OBBE Levinas insists, contra TI, that justice requires symmetry and reciprocity. In his own words, "Justice requires contemporaneousness of representation. It is thus that the neighbour becomes visible, and, looked at, presents himself and there is also justice for me" (OBBE 159). Levinas elaborates on this point in the following, more extended, formulation:

> Synchronisation is the act of consciousness which, through representation and the Said, institutes with

the "help of God", the original locus of justice, a terrain common to me and the others where I am counted among them, that is, where subjectivity is a citizen with all the duties and rights measures and measurable which the equilibrated ego involves, or equilibrating itself by the concourse of duties and the concurrence of rights. (OBBE 160)

On the other hand, Levinas also maintains, immediately contradicting the above assertion that representation is the "original locus" of justice: "The one for the other of proximity is not a deforming abstraction, in it justice is shown from the first" (OBBE 159). He adds that "Justice is impossible without the one that renders it finding himself in proximity" (Ibid).

This is a prime instance where we must "stay with the extreme situation of the diachronic thought" if we are not to misunderstand Levinas' meaning. For Levinas, justice resides in the relation between proximity and formal equality. Nevertheless, the justice of the state is ultimately grounded in proximity. Levinas explains this order of priority thus:

> But the contemporaneousness of the multiple is tied about the diachrony of the two: justice remains justice only, in a society where there is no distinction between those close and those far off, but in which there also remains the possibility of passing by the closest. The equality of all is borne by my inequality, the surplus of my duties over my rights. (OBBE 159)

The "society where there is no distinction between those close and those far off" is an unmistakable reference to the ethical community. This provides the standard of justice of the state is to judged and measured. Our interpretation on this point is explicitly confirmed in the text: "Justice, society, the state and its institutions, exchanges and work are comprehended out of

proximity. This means that nothing is outside of the control of the responsibility of the one for the other" (Ibid).

In short, Levinas contends that by virtue of the inclusion of the ethical subject within the State, a trace of the transcendent moral law enters the world. In this way the divine dispensation granted to the ethical community is universally communicated to humanity as a whole:

> "Thanks to God" I am another for the others. God is not involved as an alleged interlocutor: the reciprocal relationship binds me to the other man in the trace of transcendence, in illeity. (OBBE 158)

The work of justice therefore resides in keeping open the movement or oscillation between proximity and equality: "It is through this ambivalence which always remains an enigma that infinity or the transcendent does not allow itself to be assembled" (OBBE 161). The totalitarian gesture par excellence is to reduce justice to either its transcendent or immanent pole. Levinas warns against this, advising a middle course between the Scylla of religious zealotry and the Charybdis of political fanaticism:

> My lot is important. But it is still out of my responsibility that my salvation has meaning, despite the danger in which it puts this responsibility which it may encompass and swallow up, just as the State issued from the proximity of the neighbour is always on the verge of integrating him into a we, which congeals both me and the neighbour. (Ibid)

Levinas therefore is only too well aware that just as political rule is always liable to degenerate into corruption and violence,

organised religion is also "in permanent danger of turning into a protector of all the egoisms" (Ibid).

The ethico-political task, then, is to maintain the 'ambivalence' through which transcendent justice signifies itself in the state. This also defines the nature and work of philosophy as Levinas understands it:

> Philosophy serves justice by thematizing the difference and reducing the thematized to difference. It brings equity into the abnegation of the one for the other, justice into responsibility. (OBBE 165)

In a deliberate inversion of Hegel's definition of Wissenschaft as the accomplished love of wisdom (Phen. Para 5), Levinas defines philosophy as "the wisdom of love in the service of love" (OBBE 162). He likens the relationship between philosophy and the state to that between scepticism and rationalism:

> In an alternating movement, like that which leads from scepticism to the refutation that reduces it to ashes, and from its ashes to rebirth, philosophy justifies and criticises the laws of being and the city. (OBBE 165).

According to Levinas, philosophy is the critical conscience of the State. Although its claim to uphold ethical transcendence is self-refuting, it nonetheless "returns" to "interrupt" all attempts by the State to immanently ground justice in its own structures.

(b) The Right and the Good

We recall that above, in relation to TI, we asked the question: what is to prevent the asymmetry of the ethical relation assuming

an exploitative form? That is to say, if I as an ethical subject am obligated to the other on a wholly non-reciprocal basis, i.e. regardless of his or her actions towards me, what is to prevent the other from subjecting me to abuse, degradation, physical violence, slavery and, ultimately, from putting me to death? Levinas' implicit answer to this question in TI is that insofar as the face to face is primarily enacted within the bounds of a community collectively ordained to ethical service, the ubiquity and the transparency of the moral law limits the risk of violence. Of course, Levinas is not saying that members of the ethical community are so obedient they have neither the inclination nor the capacity to transgress the law; his point is rather that their spontaneity is antecedent to their election 'in responsibility', which, in turn, derives from their being born into a society founded on the ethical covenant. Therefore, within the ethical community: "The will is free to assume their responsibility in whatever sense it likes; it is not free to ignore the meaningful world into which the face of the other has introduced it. In the welcoming of the face the will opens to reason" (TI 218-219).

Nevertheless, even if, for arguments' sake, we were to assent to the terms of Levinas' account in TI, which defines the ethical community as primordially peaceable while projecting all war and violence into the realm of the state, this would not resolve the question of how, as a community, it is to defend itself from the threat and indeed the actuality of aggression, persecution and even annihilation at the hands of forces within the State, or indeed from the State itself, that are hostile to its very existence, and yet remain faithful to its irenic vocation? OBBE as a whole, and particularly

Chapter V: "Subjectivity and Infinity", represents Levinas' more considered response to this predicament. In a nutshell, Levinas' answer here is that the assumption of citizenship by individual members of the ethical elect will enable the ethical community as a whole to practise its religious life in peace, under the aegis of the rule of law.

This more positive stance towards the state is reflected in an interview Levinas granted in 1985, published under the title "The Paradox of Morality". In reply to a question regarding the relationship between ethics and politics, he states: "There is no politics for accomplishing the moral, but there are some politics that are further from it or closer to it". He then goes on:

> The liberal state is a state which holds justice as the absolutely desirable end and hence as a perfection. Concretely, the liberal state has always admitted - alongside the written law - human rights as a parallel institution. It continues to preach that within its justice there are always improvements to be made in human rights. Human rights are the reminder that there is no justice yet. And, consequently, I believe that it is absolutely obvious that the liberal state is more moral than the fascist state, and closer to the morally ideal state. [1]

However, Levinas also maintains that liberalism by itself cannot generate an adequate theory of justice. The discourse of rights has to be supplemented by equity and charity; these ancillary principles, supplement the requirement of formal equality, and serve to guide the moral improvement of the state.

Nonetheless we must be careful not to exaggerate the extent to which the significant changes in form and emphasis introduced

in OBBE represent a fundamental revision of Levinas' basic characterisation of the state itself. For, in the later work, he continues to depict the state in purely instrumental and mechanical terms. The only reason he holds the liberal state to have a moral precedence over other state formations is that its constitutional framework retains the trace of the convental law more "fully" or "completely" that any other known form of polity. It is important to note therefore that, as far as Levinas is concerned, the structures of right have no <u>intrinsic</u> validity; all their legitimacy derives from a <u>transcendent</u> source. Minus 'illeity', so to speak, the self-determination of the rational subject through reciprocal forms of normative interaction, remains in Levinas' eyes tantamount to the wholesale negation and alienation of the ethical being perfected prior to its entry into civil society. In this respect, his understanding of the relationship between justice and the state is at one with that of St Augustine's, as summed up in the latter's famous question: "Remove justice and what are kingdoms but gangs of criminals on a large scale?"[2/] <u>All</u> justice within the state derives from ethical transcendence; none is generated by the state's own immanent resources:

> ... justice is not a legality regulating human masses, from which a technique of social equilibrium is drawn. That would be a justification of the state delivered over to its own necessities. (OBBE 159)

In short, for Levinas, the state is an arena of venality and violence. This is essentially true even of the liberal-democratic state. This too has an inherent tendency towards the suppression of alterity and difference, and is thereby congruent with the "political character of all logical rationalism, the alliance of logic

with politics" (OBBE 171). Levinas expresses this charge in the form of a rhetorical question designed to capture the equivocal nature of the relationship between justice and the state:

> Does not the coherent discourse, wholly absorbed in the Said, owe its coherence to the state, which violently excludes subversive discourse? Coherence thus dissimulates a transcendence, a movement from the one to the other, a latent diachrony, uncertainty and a fine risk. (OBBE 170)

He alludes to the now former Soviet regime's practice of incarcerating political dissidents in mental hospitals, as an example of the way in which rationalism may collude with the state to oppress the other:

> The interlocutor that does not yield logic is threatened with the prison or the asylum or undergoes the prestige of the master or the medication of the doctor: violence or reasons of state ensures to the rationalism of logic a universality and to law its subject matter. The discourse then recuperates its meanings by repression or mediation, by just violences, on the verge of the possible injustice where repressive justice is exercised. It is through the state that reason and knowledge are force and efficacity.

Transcendent or ethical justice therefore champions the cause of those marginalised and excluded by the "coherent discourse" of the state". From the standpoint of the said, this appears a "folly". But it is a folly the state cannot "irrevocably discount", since, like scepticism, it always returns to trouble its own rational foundation (Ibid).

In summation, then, notwithstanding the fact that within OBBE, the opposition between the ethical community and the state is integrated within the state itself, the basic asymmetry between

ethics and politics detailed in TI, remains intact. This has the following significant consequence: there is no <u>necessary</u> concordance between transcendent justice and secular, conventionally defined, statements of human rights. To the extent, then, that there exists an overlap, as it were, between the covenantal law and, say, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, this is purely contingent; it simply reflects the fact that the "interruption" of the Said by Saying partially coincides with the evolution of the Western liberal state. But, conversely, there is also a potential and actual non-coincidence between illeity and the secular notion of human rights.

This, in turn, poses the question as to whether this element of non-coincidence between the divine and secular rights may place them on a collision course with one another? From our analysis of Levinas' deduction of the moral law in TI we can see this is a distinct possibility. We showed above how Levinas' description of the ethical covenant has substantive, moral implications. In particular, heterosexuality is considered absolutely normative, and woman are identified with the maternal and domestic function. Other potential areas of conflict between Levinas' <u>ethics</u> and secularism are not difficult to identify. For example, does the prohibition against murder extend to abortion? We may surmise that Levinas would answer this question in the affirmative. When viewed from the standpoint of civil society, such absolute norms must appear wholly arbitrary insofar as they are not intersubjectively determined but simply dogmatically pronounced to be imprescriptable. This follows from the fact that "rationality" by which they are justified is inherently circular, and therefore

immune to adjustment through the process of rational debate. Therefore, when Levinas speaks of illeity "interrupting" the "coherent discourse" of the state through acts which will appear a "folly" from the point of view of the rationality of its institutions, he is potentially licensing violence, based on moral indignation and subjective caprice, against the democratic state itself.

Of course, we acknowledge that this strand in Levinas' thought is at odds with his overtly moderate political stance. Nonetheless we insist that the potential for violent conflict between illeity and formal universality is implicit within his very definition of justice qua "equivocation". The vagueness of this term allows Levinas to subject the state to a critique from two opposed perspectives which flatly contradict one another. On the one hand, as said, the state is charged with being insufficiently egalitarian. This is the familiar, and justified objection, that the formal universality mediating relations within the rational-legal community is not truly universal since, in practice, it operates to exclude a whole range of "non-autonomous others" - women, children, the sick, the mentally disabled, the poor, etc. - simply by defining them as non-persons or by effectively depriving them of the means to fully participate in the life of the community. The ethico-political task therefore is to campaign for the extension of rights - both formal and material - to such marginalised and disadvantaged social groups. The ethical superiority of the liberal state in this respect, is that the disadvantaged may appeal to the 'theory' of the state - its constitutional principles - against its own practice, to demand equality of treatment and respect. Moreover, the liberal state possesses an internal mechanism as it were to

peacefully resolve such disputes over social justice, obviating the threat of war.

On the other hand, however, Levinas also criticises the state from a direction which entirely cuts across the terms of the egalitarian argument. Here the charge is that the state, precisely because it seeks to extend rights and include all others within the "coherent discourse" of a single universal framework, thereby denies the otherness of the other. Hence, the legal-rational state a priori precludes a substantive conception of the good society in which interpersonal relations are grounded in the immediate responsibility of one for all, rather than on the basis of a mediate, formal reciprocity between legal entities. In short, the objection here is that the prioritisation of the right over the good results in an abstract homogenisation of individuals and thus negatives the ethical personality of the subject.

To illustrate the incompatible nature of these two approaches to justice, let us briefly return to the issue of homosexuals and their rights. It is plainly the case that as a matter of historical fact homosexuals have been systematically denied full civil rights even in liberal states. Even today, despite the progress that has been made in this direction by the gay movement, many areas of discrimination continue to exist. For example, in Britain gays are barred from serving in the armed forces. The question arises therefore as to whether "transcendent justice" requires equal rights for homosexuals? After all, is this not a prime instance where the otherness of the other is being denied by the "coherent discourse" of the state? Does not justice demand that gays be granted the

same rights as other members of the rational-legal community in all spheres of social life? Since Levinas himself ducks this question,3/ we must reconstruct the answer implied by his texts. These show that his notion of justice is equivocal in the pejorative sense of the term. On the one hand, he is clearly committed to answering yes; the requirements of formal equality entail that, as a simple matter of natural justice, homosexuals be granted the same rights as heterosexuals. But, on the other hand, he must equally answer no; for, insofar as the ethical covenant is transmitted exclusively via heterosexual relations, this evidently implies that, from a transcendent point of view, as it were, homosexuality is an ethically deviant practice or at best some kind of pathological aberration. It may or may not be tolerated within civil society or indeed within the ethical community, but it can never be considered to be in itself legitimate or just. Moreover, in the event of a collision between the convenantel law and the constitutional or positive law of the state on this question, say, for example, the state sought to extend the principle of formal equality into the internal regulation of the ethical community, then from a Levinasian point of view the convenantal law would prevail over or "trump" state legislation. Hence it may even be consistently argued that (transcendent) justice positively requires the denial of civil rights to homosexuals.

These contradictions in Levinas' concept of justice reflect a wider impasse vis a vis the relationship of the ethical community to the state: on the one hand, the ethical community requires the protection of the state and formal equality in law in order to secure the peaceful conditions necessary for it to continue to practice its

religious form of life; on the other hand, the extension of the universal norms of the state to its internal regime threatens to destroy the non-formal inequality upon which it is founded. In OBBE, Levinas addresses this question by proposing what amounts to a Faustian pact with the state. The implicit agreement is this: the ethical community, in return for legal protection and the right of citizenship for its members, and for a guarantee of non-interference in its internal affairs, undertakes to abide, externally at least, by the law of the state and to conduct its ethical protest as perceived injustices within the prevailing legal limits. We see, then, that the continued survival of the ethical community is the latent interest underpinning Levinas' soi-disant "disinterested" ethics.

In pursuit of this reapproachment with liberalism, Levinas attempts to defuse the conflictual potential inherent in his understanding of the relationship between illeity and universality by effectively de-politicising his entire concept of justice, reducing it in the process to the status of an individual imperative to moral saintliness:

> We find the agglomeration or dispersions of the peoples in the deserts without manna in the earth. But each of these peoples is virtually a chosen one, called to leave in his turn, or without awaiting his turn, the concept of the ego, its extension in the people, to respond with responsibility: me, that is, here I am for the others, to lose his place radically, or his shelter in being, to enter into ubiquity, which is also a utopia. (OBBE 184-185)

In passing, we note how in this extract the qualifier "virtually" a chosen people underlines the derivative, second-order nature of ethical witness in the world. However, the more important point the passage demonstrates is that, for Levinas, the

struggle for justice does not primarily involve collective participation in a political movement for social and political change, rather it takes the form of making an individual stand against specific instances of unjust behaviour.

To be fair to Levinas, he acknowledges the danger of a self-oriented "ethics of conviction" that such an individualist stance invites:

> Here I am for the others - an enormous response, whose inordinateness is attenuated with hypocrisy as soon as it enters my ears forewarned of being's essence, that is, the way being carries on. (Ibid)

However, he immediately continues:

> The hypocrisy is from the first denounced. But the norms to which the denunciation refers have been understood in the enormity of meaning and in the full resonance of their statement to be true like unrefrained witness. (Ibid)

Yet this heralded "enormity of meaning" and "unrefrained witness", which it is implied will regulate and expose injustice wherever it appears, immediately turns out to be positively bathetic in its import: "In any case, nothing less was needed for the little humanity that adorns the world, if only with simple politeness or the pure polish of manners" (Ibid). This recalls an earlier banality when Levinas cites "the simple 'After you, sir'" to exemplify the nature of proximity (OBBE 117).

In conclusion, Levinas does not maintain that the law of the state must be made to conform to the moral standards of the

ethical community, but only that as individuals ethical citizens ought to live in accordance with the convenantal law. Levinas' contention is partly motivated by his concern to avert the potential for political fanaticism inherent in his own notion of illeity; but it also reflects a certain sense of embarrassment at the fact that if the ethical community were to promote the cause of social justice in an overtly political manner, this would serve to draw attention to the inegalitarianism at the heart of its own internal arrangements, and so expose it to the charge of hypocrisy. In short, Levinas does not challenge the state but rather reaches an accommodation with it.

Politically speaking, Levinas' ethical philosophy is thereby rendered critically neutral and his notion of justice is emptied of all substantive content.[4] As a result, far from it being the case that the state is "regulated" by the norms of transcendent justice, it is these so-called transcendent norms that are subordinated to the legality of the state. We shall now proceed to examine the underlying social basis of this inversion.

(c)   Religion and Human Freedom

Does not our critical analysis of Levinas commit us to the proposition that in order to become a full citizen the ethical subject must cease to be a religious being? This is, of course, essentially, the argument of Bruno Bauer to which Marx replied in "On The Jewish Question". In fact, on this point, the substance of our Hegelian critique of Levinas' philosophy is closer to Marx's argument than to Bauer's. In this section, we first review Marx's essay and then critically apply it to Chapter V of OBBE, as a

prelude to demonstrating that the force of the Marxian critique is only consistently defensible on the basis of Hegel's system.

In "On The Jewish Question", Marx refutes Bauer's contention that religious affiliation is incompatible with political emancipation. He conclusively demonstrates, citing the articles of the Constitutions of <u>Pennsylvania</u> and <u>New Hampshire</u>, and the <u>Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen</u> in the French Constitutions of 1791 and 1795 as proof, that the "principle of faith", that is, freedom of religious worship and belief, is not only compatible with full membership of civil society but is integral to the principle of negative liberty upon which the modern state is founded, viz the liberty to do and perform anything that does not harm others.[5/] Therefore, to the extent that liberalism defines rights in negative terms - as delimiting an egoistic sphere of private interest and choice free from interference by the wider community or the state - the right to private property and the right to religious freedom are continuous with one another.

According to Marx, there is then no contradiction in the modern state between religious affiliation and membership of the political community; for <u>both</u> religion and politics have been reduced to the level of civil society. Thus the diremption of the subject into a religious being on the one hand and a political being on the other simply reflects and disguises the more profound "secular contradiction between the political state and civil society".[6/] Although, outwardly, the modern state establishes an autonomous political sphere, for example, through the abolition of the property qualification for voting and the introduction of

universal adult suffrage, this only secures the nominal emancipation of the individual from the "egoism" of civil society. In Marx's words: "The state abolishes distinctions of <u>birth</u>. <u>rank</u>. <u>education</u> and <u>occupation</u> in its fashion when it declares them to be non-political distinctions, when it proclaims that every member of the community equally participates in popular sovereignty without regard to these distinctions".7/ However, the <u>appearance</u> of political emancipation is contradicted by the <u>actuality</u> of non-freedom: "Nonetheless the state permits private property, education and occupation to <u>act</u> and to manifest their <u>particular</u> nature as private property, education and occupation in their own ways".8/

The upshot is that the alienation of humanity in religion is reproduced as the alienation of humanity in the state. This is expressed in the form of a <u>secular</u> contradiction between man as <u>bourgeois</u> and man as <u>citoyen</u>:

> In the political <u>community</u> he regards himself as a
> <u>communal being</u>. but in civil society he is active as a
> private individual, treats other men as a means,
> reduces himself to a means, and becomes the
> plaything of alien powers. The political state is as
> spiritual in relation to civil society as he is in relation
> to earth.9/

In point of fact, however, in the modern state the 'political community' is from the very beginning fractured into a plurality of competing, mutually opposed and antagonistic private-interest groups. Ironically, therefore, "political emancipation" is concomitant with the death of politics. The rights of the citizen are annulled to the extent that they are reduced to the level of instruments fashioned for the pursuit of self-interest:

> The political liberators reduce citizenship, the political community. to a mere means for preserving the so-called rights of man and the citizen is thus proclaimed to be the servant of the egoistic man, the sphere in which man acts as a member of the community is degraded below that in which he acts as a fractional being and finally man as a bourgeois rather than man as citizen is considered to be the proper and authentic man.[10/]

Now, Levinas' philosophy of justice clearly falls within the ambit of Marx's critique of human rights. Levinas' diremption of the ethical subject into a religious being and a citizen de facto reduces the ethical community to the status of a private association within civil society. The ethical community's defence of human rights is therefore a particularist defence of its own self-interest, that demands for its members equal status with all other citizens while at the same time reserving the right to dissent from those aspects of formal universality which it deems incompatible with its own internal order. Moreover, this accommodation with liberalism is purchased at the price of an uncritical endorsement of the bourgeois state, not to be sure of all its actual functionings, but of its negative definition of the nature of the political. This, in turn, restricts the scope of redemptive justice. As we said above, the full development of the self within a political community is a necessary condition for the accomplishment of the absolute relation with the absolute; hence, Levinas' negative definition of the state not only places barriers in the way of genuine political emancipation, it also, and for that very reason, vitiates the religious vocation of the spiritual community.

However, Marx's positive proposals for overcoming the contradiction between politics and civil society (including religion) lack the cogency of his critical diagnosis of the problem. Marx's answer is to simply counterpose a holistic notion of "human emancipation" to alienated forms of bourgeois political freedom:

> Only when the abstract individual man has taken back into himself the abstract citizen in his everyday life, his individual work, and his individual relationships, has become a species being. only when he has recognised his own powers as social powers so that social force is no longer separated from him as a political power, only then is human emancipation complete.[11]

In her commentary on the above passage. Seyla Benhabib[12] notes that Marx's project of human emancipation may be construed as taking one of the two disjunct forms, for which she coins the helpful shorthand labels (a) the "universalisation of the political" and (b) the "socialisation of the universal". (a) - "the universalisation of the political" - requires the extension of democratic norms throughout all the institutions of state and civil society via a restructuring of social and economic relations in accordance with the common good as collectively determined by the political community; (b) - "the socialisation of the universal" - on the other hand, necessitates the complete reappropriation of alienated humanity via the elimination of the differentiated value spheres - political, societal, juridical - constitutive of the modern state and their integration into a completely communalised society. On the latter interpretation, Benhabib states: "social life itself would become the genuine expression of universal and common interests and would not

delegate the representation of this universal interest to an independent political realm". [13]/

In our view, (a) the accomplishment of human freedom through "the universalisation of the political" - broadly speaking, represents the Hegelian standpoint. Private property, and hence material inequality, is not a priori incompatible with political enfranchisement so long as the levels of wealth and income available to the poor in society are not so reduced as to effectively exclude them from political participation in the state. [14]/ This in turn requires a programme of social justice to address the civil wrong of poverty and a democratisation of the state to enable and facilitate genuine self-government. In contrast (b) - "the socialisation of the universal" - corresponds to the orthodox Marxist position, which requires the complete dissolution of both state and civil society in a communist order. However, Marx himself in "On The Jewish Question" - taking his cue from Hegel's analysis of the French Revolution - outlines how the abstract negation of the prepolitical conditions of political emancipation results in terror and destruction and is fated to end in the restoration of the superseded order. The prescience of Marx's comments demand that they be cited in full:

> To be sure, in periods when the political state as such is forcibly born from civil society, when men strive to liberate themselves from the form of political self-liberation the state can and must go so far as to abolish and destroy religion, but only in the way it abolishes life by the guillotine. In moments of special concern for itself political life seeks to repress its presupposition, civil society and its elements, and to constitute itself the actual species life of man. But it can do this only in violent contradiction with its own conditions of existence by declaring the revolution to be permanent and thus the political dogma is bound to

> end with the restoration of religion, private property, and all the elements of civil society just as war ends with peace.[15/]

Marx therefore contends that the bourgeois revolution is unable to accomplish real human liberation because - notwithstanding those emergency circumstances when the emergent state, in order to consolidate its own rule and, indirectly, the rule of capital, is forced to take measures against particular private interests - it stops short at abolishing the true basis of human alienation viz private property, which constitutes its own fundament and presupposition. The clear implication is that if the expropriation of private property were to be enacted then the "violent contradiction" between the political state and civil society - and the attendant antithesis between bourgeois and citoyen - would be <u>aufgehoben</u> in a fully human society. Punning on "Judaism" as a metaphor for commence, Marx expresses the completion of human liberation thus:

> When society succeeds in transcending the <u>empirical</u> essence of Judaism - bargaining and all its conditions - the Jew becomes <u>impossible</u> because his consciousness no longer has an object, the subjective basis of Judaism - practical need - is humanised, and the conflict between the individual sensuous existence of man and his species existence is transcended.
>
> The <u>social</u> emancipation of the Jew is the <u>emancipation of society from Judaism</u>.[16/]

In short, Marx's argument is that once society is emancipated from bourgeois egoism, the social basis of Judaism, and indeed of all religious movements, will be annulled, human alienation will be overcome, and religion, like the state itself, will 'whither away'.

If Marx's polemic against "Judaism" is not anti-semetic in its intent, though the emotive overtones of his remarks leave some doubt on this score, it is certainly so in its consequences.[17]/ For Marx offers no independent argument to show how the accomplishment of a "socialised universal" would not result in the very self same destructive Jacobinism he himself warns against. In the absence of a worked out theory of socialist transition, the abstract negation of the contradiction between state and civilian society can only reinstate a far more violent contradiction between the idea of a communal society and an existent, plural, self-differentiated, socio-political totality. If the former were ever to succeed in superimposing itself on the latter, then, yes, this might well signal the "end of religion" - but it would also constitute the end of the political. The total emancipation of humanity from religion would be tantamount to the complete negation of the preconditions of human freedom and therefore of human freedom itself.

(d) The Redemption of the Political

Hegel's theory of the relationship between religion and the state receives its most extended treatment in the long Remark to Paragraph 270 of the Philosophy of Right. Here, Hegel attempts to chart a via media between the de-politicisation of the state entailed in equal measure by the privatisation of religion on the one hand and the terror of a pure Enlightenment on the other. To this end, he develops a speculative exposition of the identity of identity and non-identity of religion and the state. Insofar as the "object" of

religion is God, it defines the transcendent end in terms of which all finite ends are merely relative; it is "the unlimited foundation and cause on which everything depends" (PR 270R), and hence eo ipso it is also the foundation of the state. But Hegel is equally insistent that religion is "only the foundation" (Ibid) of the state - its presupposition rather than its result. In order to complete its spiritual and ethical vocation religion must, while retaining its distinct institutional identity, pass over into the state and undergo an education (Bildung) in relation to it. Conversely, the state, as the necessary but autonomous agent for the fulfilment of the spiritual community's redemptive mission, is itself a spiritual organism, or, as Hegel puts it: "The state is the divine will as present spirit, unfolding as the actual shape and organisation of a world" (Ibid).

Hegel presents his theory in contradistinction to both a neo-Augustinian and a liberal conception of the religion-state relation. He summarises the former view as one which holds that religion embodies "the spiritual in general and hence also the ethical elements are part of its concern, whereas the state is a mechanical framework serving non-spiritual ends" (Ibid). This approach, he continues, "seems to represent the entire political regime as a matter [Sache] of indifference and arbitrariness either in such a way as to suggest that the state is dominated by the ends of passion, unjust [unrechtlicher] force, and the like, or because such religious advice attempts to retain exclusive validity and claims authority to determine and administer [the process of] rights" (Ibid). Now, it is evident from our discussion in section (b) of the present chapter, that Levinas understanding of the religion-state relation in

TI essentially conforms to the neo-Augustinian perspective as Hegel describes it. Moreover, Hegel may also be credited with having demonstrated the logic by which Levinas is led from an initial standpoint of indifference towards the state to seek a reapproachment with it, without in the process fundamentally revising his negative evaluation of the state itself. This is entirely consistent for, as Hegel shows, the liberal standpoint, in essence, represents a secularisation of the neo-Augustian position, insofar as it, too, holds that the state is an irreligious and unethical entity whose "sole function [Bestimmung] ...is to protect and secure the life, property and will of others; in this view, the state is merely an arrangement dictated by necessity [Not] (Ibid). Hence, Levinas ostensibly contradictory stance of simultaneously distancing the ethical community from the state while accommodating itself to it, turns out, on closer examination, to have a logic of its own.

In sharp contrast with both the neo-Augustian and liberal standpoints, Hegel proposes that "the state is not a mechanism but the rational life of self-conscious freedom and the system of the ethical world" (Ibid). As such, it educates and predisposes its citizens to be conscious of ethical principles and to act in accordance with them. He then proceeds to divide all religious organisations into two distinct groups: those that are in "direct agreement" with the latter proposition form part of the "state-religion" or Church; those that are in "direct opposition" to it comprises the diversity of sectarian religious communities.

Now it is essential if we are not to misunderstand Hegel on this point that we constantly bear in mind his logical distinction

between actuality and existence. For Hegel, Actuality (Wirklichkeit) is the unity of existence (Dasein or Existenz) and essence (Wesen) (Enz. 1.142). The rational or actual state is not therefore the state as it de facto exists. On the other hand, the element of possibility inherent in the definition of the actual entails, that the rational Idea of the state is grounded in the existent modern state. The identity and non-identity between the existence of the modern state and its essence constitutes the speculative relation between the rational and the actual and the actual and the rational (PR Preface).

The historical presupposition of the Philosophy of Right in its entirety is that the reconciliation between the Lutheran Church and the reformed Prussian State achieved in Hegel's own time, entails that the state has become sufficiently rational to constitute the accomplishment of the absolute Idea in the world. But it is only implicitly accomplished. It is still necessary to fully actualise the rational. This is why Hegel says that the absolute Idea, though accomplished, "is ever accomplishing itself" (Enz. 234.R). As Michael O. Hardiman aptly puts it in a recent work: "Hegel thought that his social world was worthy of reconciliation and stood in need of reform. Roughly speaking, he thought that its existing features were sufficiently rational to warrant reconciliation and sufficiently irrational to warrant reform".18/

Against this background, we can see why it is that Hegel maps on, so to speak, the distinction between state-religion and sects to that between the Lutheran Church and dissenting Christian communities and non-Christian religious communities,

including Judaism. In the <u>Philosophy of History</u>. Hegel states that in the Lutheran Church "Christian freedom is actualised" (PH 416). He continues, with reference to the Reformation: "Time, since that epoch, has had no other work to do other than the formal imbueing of the world with this principle, in bringing the Reconciliation implicit [in Christianity] into objective and explicit reconciliation" (Ibid), and he concludes his <u>Lectures</u> by saying that: "... in the Protestant Church the reconciliation of Religion with Legal Right has taken place. In the Protestant world there is no sacred, no religious conscience in a state of separation from, or perhaps even in hostility to Secular Right" (PH 456). But, as we have said, the important point here is that although the reconciliation between religion and secular right has taken place, it is nonetheless still to be accomplished. From this Notional "point of view", the specific reconciliation between the Lutheran Church and the State constitutes an <u>existent</u> element in the actual which is itself subject to contingency and therefore open to historical re-formation.[19]/ What <u>is</u> unchanging, however, is the <u>Notional</u> unity between the state-religion and the state. In essence, the state-religion, like the state itself in its non-institutional sense, is an invisible community. Therefore, it cannot be wholly identified once and for all with any one empirical Church or religious organisation. Rather, it embraces every form of institutional religion that is reconciled with the rational Idea of the state.

In summary, then, there is no warrant, in the contemporary world, for identifying the state-religion with any given denomination of the Christian Church. On the contrary, as we shall shortly see, the state-religion must incorporate a plurality of

religious traditions. By the same token , the state-religion is not to be identified with any existent state formation. In this respect, it is to be entirely distinguished from any concept of a <u>civil</u> religion - which simply elevates one particular religious group to the status of an official representative of the <u>Notstaat</u> or else makes a cult of the state itself - precisely because it constitutes an integral part of the <u>political</u> community.

According to Hegel, the characteristic feature of sectarian religious communities is that they "refuse to go beyond the form of religion when confronted by the state" (PR 270.R). Adherents of such groups may develop one of two reactive dispositions towards the state, both of which we have seen evidenced in Levinas' account of the relationship of the ethical community to the political realm. On the one hand, they may relate to the state as moral purists "who will only the abstract good and leave it to the arbitrary will to determine what is good" (Ibid). Hegel appoints up the potential for violence inherent in such an ethics of pure conviction. He cautions that when the latter is taken "for the essentially valid and determining factor in the political context too", then, the consequence is that we "expose the state as an organism in which lasting differences [bestends]. laws and institutions have developed to instability and disruption" (Ibid). As noted above, this self same danger is implicit in Levinas' notion of the saying "interrupting" the "coherent discourse" of the said. On the other hand, Hegel also observes that the religious disposition which insists exclusively upon its form may develop a more benign, but nevertheless damaging, mode of antagonism towards the state; viz., "it may well retain its inward character, conform to social institutions [and

laws], and either simply resign itself to these with sighs or with contempt and longing" and thus practice "a polemical kind of piety" (Ibid) against it. Hegel's description of the peaceful negative disposition towards the state displayed by the Pietest sects of his own era, accurately captures the essential bad faith of Levinas' concluding outward rapprochement with the liberal state, as presented in Chapter V of OBBE. There we witness the same destructive combination of an inwardly non-reconciled and antagonistic stance towards the state coupled with an outer compliance to its institutions and laws.

In opposition to the anti-political standpoint of sectarianism, Hegel contends that "it is philosophical insight which recognises that Church and State are not opposed to each other as far as their content is concerned, which is truth and rationality, but merely differ in form" (Ibid). Hence if religion is "of a genuine kind", that is to say, if it does not have a "negative and polemical attitude towards the state but acknowledges and endorses it" (Ibid), then Hegel avers, its relationship to the state is a "simple one". Religion, for its part, "integrates the state at the deepest level of the disposition [of its citizens]" (Ibid) and thus "gives the state itself its religious accreditation" (Ibid). In return, "the state fulfils a duty by giving the religious community every pursuit and protection of its religious end" (Ibid).

Hegel maintains that legal protection and support is to be extended to all religious organisations irrespective of whether or not they explicitly endorse the ethical principles of the state. The only proviso is the general one, binding on all religious

organisations of whatever persuasion, that they must be, in respect to their external affairs and arrangements, subject to the "policing and supervision of the state" (Ibid). Hegel even goes so far as to suggest that:

> the state ought even to require all its citizens to belong to such a [religious - AG] community- but to say any community they please, for the state can have no say in the content [of religious belief] insofar as this relates to the internal dimension of representational thought. (Ibid)

Of course, Hegel's recommendation of compulsory religious affiliation is completely unacceptable from a moral point of view. Not least because it contravenes the spirit of his own ethics, for it clearly violates the right of conscience. It is wholly inconsistent of Hegel to insist on the right of <u>religious</u> conscience while at the same time denying the right of conscious to atheists and freethinkers. However, this illiberalism on Hegel's part must not be allowed to obscure the fact that he defends the right of subjective inwardness in the matter of religious belief and thereby implicitly welcomes the religious pluralism that is its corollary.

Sectarian communities, according to Hegel, are to be treated as "active members only of civil society" and hence "as private persons" who "have purely private relations with the other people" (PR 270 R. Authors note). As a consequence of this, the religious convictions of the member of a given sect "has its province in the conscience and enjoys the right of self-consciousness, the sphere of inwardness which is not itself the province of the state (Ibid)". Hegel's general view, then, is that since the majority of sectarians base their worship and religious practice upon emotion, symbolic

media and revealed textual authority, they do not as a rule formulate their beliefs as objective doctrines to be adopted by the state and therefore do not encroach upon its sphere; consequently, provided that they conduct their affairs within the limits set by law, they are to be left to their own devices. Furthermore, Hegel recommends tolerance in those cases where the religious convictions of sectarians lead them to refuse or fail to fulfil their duties and obligations towards the state. This tolerance extends to the ultimate act of recusancy: a refusal to defend from armed attack by a foreign enemy. In such an eventuality, Hegel advises that an accommodation be reached that would allow the dissenter to serve the state in some non-military capacity. Hegel concludes that the moral strength of a state is directly proportionate to its capacity to tolerate groups which remain unreconciled with its ethical principles.

By contrast, Hegel grants the state a more direct role in the regulation of the internal affairs of the Church. A distinguishing feature of the Church vis a vis a sect is inter alia, that the former does not confine its religious practice to the witness of the heart, the performance of rite and ritual, or indeed to the doing of good works; although all these forms of religious worship and action remain essential to its inner life and vocation, in addition, it also presents the central elements of its faith in a rational and codified manner in the form of dogma and doctrine, which taken together, constitute its systematic self-knowledge as a religious community. Now, because religion is the foundation of the state, and identical in content, though not in form, with the latter, then its doctrine, in Hegel's words, "relate to objective principles, to ethical and rational

thoughts" and "its expression of these doctrines immediately brings it into the province of the state" (PR 270 R). Hegel does not stipulate that all Church doctrine is subject to state control. He specifically states that those aspects of the Church's teaching which remain "peculiar to the Church as a religious community" (Ibid) are to be determined by the members of the Church without interference from the state. However, insofar as the doctrine of the Church relate to matters which directly concern the principles of the state, this immediately suggests the possibility of a conflict between them. In the event of such a collision, Hegel insists that the will of the state must prevail over that of the Church. In his own words, when confronted "with a Church which claims unconditional authority, the state must on the whole assert the formal right of self-consciousness to its own insight and conviction and in general to thoughts concerning what should count as objective truth" (Ibid). Moreover, to ensure "the right and form of self-conscious objective rationality" the state may take it upon itself to determine the interpretation of Church doctrines in respect to their ethical content and to enforce its view "against assertions based on the subjective variety [Gestalt] of truth, no matter what assurance and authority this truth may carry with it" (Ibid).

Hegel's account of the relationship between Church and State is essentially a speculative restatement of the Lutheran doctrine which subordinates the spiritual to the temporal power in the realm of externality.[20] This grants the state the right to reform the organisation and doctrines of the Church in the event of the latter deviating from the word of God as proclaimed in the New Testament. Yet in one highly significant respect Hegel's account of

the hegemony of the State over the Church radically departs from this Orthodox Lutheran model. For Hegel, it is not scripture but science (Wissenschaft) that is to be the final arbiter determining the necessity and nature of the internal reform of the Church. The effect of this innovation is to reverse the terms of the Lutheran balance between theology and politics, which, broadly speaking, institutes a division of labour according to which theology presides over matters concerning the Church-invisible, leaving the temporal power to administer the Church-visible. In Hegel's version, however, speculative philosophy, which represents the standpoint of the state, supplants theology as the ultimate standard in respect to matters of faith.

This reversal is entirely consistent with, and indeed is an expression of, Hegel's stated view that, though different in form, religion and the state are identical in their content. According to Hegel, this entails that, in principle, there can be no genuine collision between the Church and the state. Nonetheless, Hegel also believes that because the Church - in contrast to the state, which, as the actualisation of the Idea of right, is grounded in pure logic - remains wedded to symbolic media, it is more likely to commit the error of mistaking these forms of representation for their speculative content. Philosophy and the State, on the other hand, presupposes liberation from all representational foundations. As Hegel puts it: "Science. too, is to be found on the side of the state, for it has the same element of form as the state, and its end is cognition. by means of thought, of objective truth and rationality" (Ibid). Hegel therefore maintains that philosophical science sublates the abstract opposition between theology and

politics. The categorical determinations of the <u>Science of Logic</u> provide the self-determining ground for both the comprehension of the inner forms of the religious community in speculative theology and the normative institutional structures of the modern state in political science. Philosophy therefore is the identity underlying the identity and difference between Church and State.

Nevertheless, Hegel is acutely aware that there is no less a discrepancy between the Idea of the State and its <u>de facto</u> existence, than there is between the Idea of religion and the existent Church. Hegel captures the nature of this disparity when he states that "A bad state, of course, is purely secular and finite, but the rational state is infinite in itself" (PR 270 Addition). A certain irony therefore pervades Hegel's treatment of the relationship between Church and State. On the one hand, philosophical science, as we have said, is the ground of the speculative unity of the latter. On the other hand, however, it is also, for this very reason, the source of the deepest critical insight into the extent to which the actualisation of the Idea is not yet fully accomplished. Thus the adherents of the Idea of religion constitute a distinct "state-religion" which is not identical with the existent Church. By the same token, proponents of the speculative Idea of the state constitute a political community which is not reducible to the empirical state. Philosophical science is the "ground" of this identity and non-identity between the "state religion" and the political community. Finally, the "state religion" and the political community stand in a relation of identity and difference to the existent Church and the existent State. This has the important consequence that science <u>(Wissenschaft)</u>: state-religion and the

political community transcend their institutional correlates: university; Church and State respectively, while the latter nonetheless continue to function as the ground of their real possibility. The ethico-political task of the spiritual-political community is to reform these existing institutions in order to bring them into accord with their rational concept.

It is in the light of these considerations that we now turn to consider Hegel on the Jewish question. In the Philosophy of Right, Hegel defends the extension of civil rights to the Jewish community. He implicitly repudiates the views of Jacob Fries, subsequently restated in a different form by Bruno Bauer, that maintains membership of the Jewish faith to be incompatible with the assumption of the rights and duties of citizenship. Hegel bases his objection to this argument on two grounds. First, he contends, that the foundation of the state in abstract right entails that, from a legal point of view, Jews are first and foremost to be treated as human beings: their religious beliefs being entirely a matter for their private concern. Thus the denial of civil rights to Jews on religious grounds would involve the state in a violation of the most elementary structure of justice upon which it is founded. In Hegel's words:

> [If they had not been granted civil rights] the Jews would have remained in the isolation with which they have been reproached, and this would rightly have brought blame [Schuld] and reproach upon the state which excluded them; for the state would thereby have failed to recognise its own principle as an objective institution with a power of its own. (PR 270.R. Author's note)

Second, Hegel argues that those who seek to deny civil rights to Jews in order to facilitate their integration into the state expressly defeat their own purpose insofar as it is the possession of rights that "gives those who receive them a self-awareness as recognised legal [rechtliche] persons in civil society, and it is from this root infinite and free from all other influences that the desired assimilation in terms of attitude and disposition arises" (Ibid).

What is the precise nature of the "desired assimilation in terms of attitude disposition" to which Hegel refers to this passage? It must be borne in mind that in the Prussian State circa 1820, when the Philosophy of Right made its appearance, members of the Jewish faith were barred from careers in university teaching and state administration, and from all posts directly or indirectly related to state sovereignty, all of which were the exclusive preserve of self-professed Christians. Against this background, it would be natural to interpret Hegel's defence of the extension of civil rights to the Jewish community as a whole as being calculated to encourage the conversion of individual Jews to Christianity, thereby enabling them to receive political rights of public participation in the life of the state. However, such an interpretation is clearly contradicted by the text of the Philosophy of Right. For example, in Paragraph 291, Hegel maintains that appointments to the civil service are to be made exclusively on the basis of the meritocratic principle of "knowledge and proof of ability" in order to guarantee "every citizen the possibility of joining the universal state" (PR 291). At no point does Hegel stipulate that the personnel of the state must be Christians.

The desired assimilation in terms of disposition and attitude of which Hegel speaks therefore is not predicated on the conversion of Jews to Christianity; rather it requires the self-overcoming of all negative and reactive dispositions towards the modern state in the recognition that the latter represents the implicit accomplishment of the Absolute Idea in world history. In other words, the desired assimilation is that of the Jews qua Jews (and, by extension, Catholics qua Catholics; Muslims qua Muslims, etc.) to the political community. In this way, Hegel rejects the standpoint of an extreme and intolerant nationalist liberalism (a la Fries) that would have Jews choose between their faith and their citizenship. But at the same time he also repudiates the benign form of liberalism that reduces the state to an instrument of the egoistic interests of civil society and, as a corollary of this, relegates religion to the status of a private association within it. Both religion and the Notstaat are aufgehoben in the speculative unity of the "state-religion" and the political community. Contra Marx, genuine social and political liberation does not require the abolition of religion but presupposes its continued existence.

In the sphere of religion, from a contemporary perspective, it is no longer tenable, to follow Hegel and identify the spiritual community with a single church or denomination. Moreover, Hegel may be said to have anticipated this development. In the Philosophy of Right he maintains that the schism of the Church and the subsequent proliferation of the sectarian communities, was necessary to enable the actualisation of the Idea of freedom in the modern state:

> If the state is to attain existence [Dasein] and the self-knowing ethical actuality of spirit, its form must become distinct from that of authority and faith. But this distinction emerges only insofar as the Church for its part becomes divided within itself. Only then [when it stands] above the particular Churches, can the state attain universality of thought as its formal principle and bring it into existence [Existenz]. (PR 270 R)

To this, Hegel adds the following comment: "Consequently far from it being, or ever having been, a misfortune for the State if the Church is divided, it is through this division alone that the state has been able to fulfil its destiny [Bestimmung] as self-conscious rationality and ethical life" (Ibid). However, Hegel might well have gone on to say that the converse also holds: the fragmentation of religion is equally necessary from the point of view of the fulfilment of its own spiritual vocation; for only with the overcoming of the positivity of religious authority are the conditions present for the development and perfection of the rational self-determining subjectivity necessary to the accomplishment of the absolute relation to the absolute.

In his own time, Hegel identified the spiritual community with the Lutheran Church because the latter was the only existing confession fully reconciled with the foundational principles of the modern state. Today, however, as a consequence of the very process of fragmentation that Hegel welcomed, a great diversity of religious organisations are reconciled with modernity. Moreover, many religions that continue to maintain a reactionary stance towards the modern world, contain significant modernising factions within their ranks. It would therefore be contrary to the speculative interest to support the inclusion of a specific religious community within the institutional matrix of the state. Evidently,

it follows, that where established Churches are in existence they ought to be disestablished and placed, on a par with other religious associations, in civil society. Ironically, disestablishment is a necessary prelude to the re-politicisation of religion.

The principle of subjective freedom inherent in the modern state will ensure an endless propagation of religious movements; but the universality of state exerts a counterveiling tendency towards unity. In some instances, this will result in institutional fusion, but for the most part it will take the form of the increasing convergence of disposition and attitude of which Hegel spoke above. "State-religion", broadly defined, is the community of the faithful reconciled with the modern state. As such, it is essentially ecumenical in character. As we have already noted, it is not identifiable with any single religious organisation but has potential adherents in all religions.

The unity-in-difference between the spiritual community and the political community is the accomplishment of the pure self-recognition of rational subjectivity in absolute otherness. Positively, it is the achieved reconciliation between homo religiousus and home politicus that accomplishes the fulfilment of the ideal in the real. Negatively, it serves as a preventative against the idolisation of the state and the depoliticisation of religion, which are mutually destructive of ethical life.[21/] This accomplishment however is to be ever-accomplished again; indeed, it simply is the accomplishing of the accomplished reconciliation with the absolute. For Hegel, therefore, there is no anticipated definitive future reconciliation between spiritual and the temporal

powers that will once and for all accomplish the Kingdom of God on earth.   Rather infinite reconciliation resides in the <u>work</u> of reconciling the rational and the real - the divine and the human - in the eternalness of the present.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER SIXTEEN

1/   The Paradox of Modernity. pp.177-178.

2/   St Augustine, The City of God. Translated by Henry Bettenson with an Introduction by John O'Meara (London, Penguin Books 1984), Book IV, Chapter IV, p.139.

3/   In this interview Levinas was asked directly whether fecundity entails that his 'model of potentiality is only to be found in heterosexual relations?'. Levinas responded by simply repeating his point that paternal eros is not restricted to the biological father-son relationship. In other words, he evaded the question.

5/   'Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas', in Richard Kearney, Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers. The Phenomenological Heritage. p.68.

    Levinas' response to the charge that the 'Face to face' is "entirely utopian and unrealistic" bears out our point: 'I remember meeting once with a group of Latin American students well versed in the terminology of Marxist liberation and terribly concerned by the suffering and unhappiness of their people in Argentina. They asked me rather impatiently if I had ever actually witnessed the utopian rapport with the Other which my ethical philosophy speaks of. I replied 'Yes, indeed, here in this room'.

5/   Karl Marx 'On the Jewish Question', in (ed.), Loyd, D. Easton and Kurt H. Guddot, <u>Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society</u>. pp.234-238.

6/   Ibid, p.232.

7/   Ibid, pp.224-225.

8/   Ibid, p.225.

9/   Ibid.

10/   Ibid, .237.

11/   Ibid, p.241.

12/   Seyla Benhabib, <u>Critique, Norm and Utopia</u> (1986), pp.39-40.

13/   Ibid.

14/   See Richard Dien Winfield, <u>Reason and Justice</u> (1988), Chapter 11.3. Class and Economic Justice.

15/   Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question", pp.227-228.

16/   Karl Marx, 'On the Jewish Question', p.248.

17/ For a defence of Marx against the charge of anti-semitism see David McLellan, Marx Before Marxism (London and Basingstoke, Macmillan Press 1980), pp.41-42.

18/ Michael O Hardiman, Hegel's Social Philosophy. The Project of Reconciliation (Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press 1994), pp.26-27.

19/ Emil Fackenheim, The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought. Fackenheim contends (a) that Hegel's 'final synthesis' of philosophical thought is predicated upon "an actual - and, in principle, final-secular protestant synthesis in realistic life" (p.212) and (b) since this 'final synthesis' has irrevocably broken down, then, (c) a contemporary Hegelianism must frankly acknowledge the failure of the Hegel's project. To this our response is (a) Hegel's system presupposes the emergence of the Protestant religion but is no wise contingent on its historical survival. (b) The system requires both fragmentation and unity. Hence it is confirmed rather than refuted by the emergence of a postmodern world. (c) Fackenheim's obituary on the system is a touch premature. Ironically, the 'Protestant principle' may accomplish itself only in a 'post-Christian' world.

20/ Duncan B. Forrester, 'Martin Luther and John Calvin', pp.318-354 in (ed.), Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, History of Political Philosophy (Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1987).

21/ Laurence Dickey, 'Hegel on Religion and Philosophy' in (ed.),
Frederick C. Beiser, <u>The Cambridge Companion to Hegel</u>.
Dickey (drawing upon the work of John Toews, <u>Hegelianism:
the Path Towards Dialectical Humanism</u> 1805-1841,
Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1980, pp.203-207)
demonstrates that the received Left/Right Old/young
classification of the Hegelian school is over-simplistic. In fact
within Hegel's own lifetime three distinct schools of Science
had arisen: (a) The Right Wing (Marheineke), (b) the Old Left
(Daub and Gans) and (c) the Young Left Hegelians
(Feuerbach, Curave, Strauss). Hegel personally aligned
himself with the <u>Old</u>-Left Hegelians, and therefore worked for
the "translation of scientific theory into the ethical principle
of everyday life" (320). This study is a modest attempt to
continue the 'Old-Left' Hegelian tradition.

CONCLUSION

In this study we have sought to show that Levinas' two major works, TI and OBBE, constitute a speculative system. At the heart of this system is an unmediated antithesis between the notion of an ahistorical, though visible, ethical community and the historically evolved structures of civil society and the state. However, this juxtaposition commits Levinas to the untenable view that the ethical community has developed an institutional matrix, necessary to the practice of a non-formal ethics, in isolation from the developing socio-historical world. Since, according to Levinas, the ethical community is in the world but "discontinuous" with it, the fate of the world only becomes a matter of absolute concern when historical events threaten to disturb the supposedly changeless 'anachronism' of its internal life. This indifference to the world results in an uncritical accommodation with de facto political power, which, in turn, rebounds upon the life of the ethical community, thereby fatally vitiating the ethical relation as Levinas conceives it.

Now, it may be objected, that even if we have substantiated the argument set out above and proved our case against Levinas, this would not in any sense entail that we must therefore repudiate Levinas' concept of otherness, since the latter may be understood independently of the details of Levinas' phenomenological deduction; hence the significance of Levinas for the study of those groups living at the margins (e.g. feminism, rate studies, Third World studies etc.). However, our anatomy of the structure of Levinas' philosophical argument leads us to suggest that any such

attempt to, as it were, re-apply his notion of absolute otherness in a different context will simply reproduce the same logic whereby the dysymmetrically 'transcendent' term will be subverted by the immanent terms to which it is 'discontinuously' opposed.

We conclude, therefore, that Levinas' notion of absolute otherness can only be consistently defended within the framework of the speculative relation between religion and the state propounded in Hegel's system.

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APPENDIX

In the Preface to TI Levinas states "we were impressed by the opposition to the idea of totality in Franz Rosenzweig's <u>Stern der Elösung</u>. a work too often present in this book to be cited" (TI 28). In the <u>Star</u> Rosenzweig maintains that his "new thinking" has shattered the cognitive All on which the whole of western metaphysics is based (SR 83). In the place of the latter's pretension to place the whole of thought and being on an ultimate first principle (arche), Rosenzweig supplied a triad of origins: God, world, man (SR17). Each origin has its own unique nature irreducible to the others. In Book One, each of the elements of the triadic "proto-cosmos" are stated and then internally negated. The negation of each negation is then negated in turn. Rosenzweig insists that the process by which the three elements are self-negated is not effected through an immanent dialectical necessity but is one of pure peradventure (SR 87). All the same by some 'miracle' the three elements arrange themselves into a hierarchy, and the 'perhaps' or 'who knows' by which they are adventitiously related emerges as a result or a 'consequence' (SR 89). Book One concludes with an account of how the three elements of the proto-cosmos pass over into a new tripartite cluster: creation - revelation - redemption.

In Book Two, Rosenzweig traces the movement from creation to revelation in terms of temporal existence rising to the eternal. The Biblical religion is represented as the alpha and omega of this historical development. It is distinguished from all other religious configurations insofar as it based on a divine encounter between

God and Man which binds the elements of the proto-cosmos together and enables man and the world to enter into a redemptive relationship with God. This relationship is ultimately accomplished through the giving and receiving of two divine imperatives. First, there is the command to love one's neighbour announced in the question "Where are Thou?", to which the response must me "Here I Am". Second, it is stated in the command of the lover to the beloved that "Thou shalt love"; to which the beloved must respond by confessing that up to now she has been unloved, with the words "I have sinned". This confession releases the beloved to be loved and to be able to love. She is thus transported into an infinite future beyond the temporal world (SR 178-179). The dialogic relation is accomplished without a corresponding abjuration of separation. The self receives these commands by speaking them. The response is an act of prophetic witness in which one has no sooner opened one's mouth than God has already spoken (SR 178).

In Book Three, Rosenzweig brings together the two triads of the work - God - world - man and creation- revelation - redemption to unite them in the Davidic configuration that realises the Star of the title. This is represented as the culmination of a whole phenomenology of the sacred in which the religious of India, China and Islam are presented as one-sided and inadequate realizations of the divine-human relationship which only reenters its perfect expression in Judeo-Christianity. The latter alone correctly understand the divine-human relation in which the relation to God is presented as God's self-revelation of man. According to Rosenzweig, Judaism and Christianity represent two alternative

but complementary covenants between God and man. Rosenzweig presents his notion of the 'dual covenant' through a series of binary oppositions. Thus, Judaism is the 'eternal life', Christianity is the 'eternal way'; Judaism is the ever-burning star, Christianity is its ever-shining ways. Judaism is an 'eternal stasis', Christianity is eternally in motion etc.

This opposition between stasis and dynamism is central to Rosenzweig's account. Judaism is essentially static because the spiritual calendar of the ritual year has 'lifted it out of history' where it dwells in an 'eternal present' that has 'power over time' (SR 324). For the Jewish people therefore eternity is already established; it is at the eschaton to which other nations aspire (SR 327). Rosenzweig goes so far as to say the eternity of the Jewish people is guaranteed because it is a 'blood community' and that natural propagation through time will ensure its spiritual inheritance (SR 329). In contrast, Christianity is situated at the 'mid-point', between the beginning and end of time. As such, it is wholly immersed in world-history. It mission is to overcome time in the name of eternity by spreading the good news to the four corners of the earth. Hence its function is essentially one of proselytization. The Christian must both overcome the pagan within and without himself before he can attain to eternity. In sum, the essence of the distinction between the Jew and the Christian is this: the Jew is only ever a Jew, whereas the Christian is at bottom a converted pagan, he has become a Christian. This in turn entails that the two faiths have a radically different relation to the world. Rosenzweig presents this contrast on the following graphic terms.

> God withdraws the Jew from life by arching the bridge
> of his law high above the current of time which
> henceforth and to all eternity rushes powerlessly along
> under its arches.   (SR 109)

Conversely, the role of Christian is precisely to take up the 'contest with the current' (ibid). At the end of time the two paths to the one God will converge and the people of the 'eternal way' will return to 'praise and glorify the root they once despised' (SR 379).

Now we may identify three main respects in which Levinas' philosophy is indebted to Rosenzweig. First, Levinas implicitly employs the Rosenzweigian device of maintaining that the various transitions between the different strata of his phenomenological deduction of the ethical relation set out in TI do not proceed via a series of dialectical transitions but are related by a "who knows" or "perhaps" or, in Levinas' terms, by relations without relation. Second, Levinas carries over from Rosenzweig the notion of the reception of the divine imperative without mediation. Rosenzweig's statement that the atoning self has no sooner opened its mouth to respond to the divine commandment then "God has already spoken" is reproduced by Levinas when he writes that the "truth of the invisible is ontologically produced by the subject that states it" (TI 243). Levinas also follows Rosenzweig in utilising the Biblical phrase "Here I am" to designate the irreducible nature of ethical responsibility.

Third and most importantly Levinas' notion of an immediate ethical revelation is predicated on a reformulation of Rosenzweig's distinction between the "eternal life" and the "eternal way". Levinas

also contends that there is an ethico-religious community, perpetuated through natural propagation, withdrawn from the world and history but nonetheless visibly "discontinuously continuous" with it, which constitutes the eschaton of the world. Levinas convergence with Rosenzweig on this point may be clearly discerned by the simple juxtaposition of the following two passages taken from Rosenzweig's Star and Levinas' TI respectively:

> Only the eternal people which is not encompassed by world history, can - at every moment find creation as a whole to be redeemed while redemption is still to come. (SR 335)

> Truth requires both an infinite time and a time it will be able to seal, a completed time. The completion of time is not death, but messianic time, where the perpetual is converted into the eternal. (TI 285)

For both Rosenzweig and Levinas, then, there is an accomplished redemption of time within the life of the ethico-religious community, while unredeemed time continues to flow without it. Moreover, both thinkers anticipate a messianic future in which the whole of time and history will be redeemed. The vocation of the ethico-religious community is to passively witness the conditions of its divine election until the completion of time when the asyndeton of the divine contraction will be "sealed".

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