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The Specter of Spinoza: The Legacy of the Pantheism Controversy in Hegel's Thought

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Abstract of the Dissertation

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This dissertation seeks to trace Hegel's shifting attitudes towards Spinoza, and its significance for later interpretations of the Hegel-Spinoza relationship. In contrast to virtually all other approaches, it will be argued that Hegel's earlier defense of Spinoza in *Faith and Knowledge* (1802) was superior to Hegel's interpretation of Spinoza shaped after his break with Schelling. There is precious little in the Anglophone literature that compares and contrasts the approaches of the young and "mature" Hegel regarding Spinoza's metaphysics. In most discussions, the young Hegel's views on Spinoza are mentioned, but only perfunctorily, and not granted a sustained analysis. This hurts our understanding of Hegel's relationship with Spinoza in multiple ways, but it also obscures the deeper connections between these two thinkers made clearer in Hegel's earlier writings.

For Samantha

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Introduction

The common ground of social and spiritual freedom is morality, the highest good, the "perception of God," as Spinoza puts it, or the self-consciousness of the "Absolute Spirit," as the Hegelians ineptly put it. It is the spirit's consciousness of its likeness to itself in its becoming something else, the overcoming of otherness as fixed, the transformation of determined nature into self-determination. Without all this, neither equality nor inner freedom is possible.

---Moses Hess**, "**Philosophy of the Act," 1843

The Hegelian dialectic is, to be sure, the ultimate word in philosophy and hence there is all the more need to divest it of the mystical aura given it by Hegel…Even in the case of philosophers who give systematic form to their work, Spinoza for instance, the true inner structure of the system is quite unlike the form in which it was consciously presented by him.

--Marx to Lassalle, 1858

This dissertation seeks to trace Hegel's shifting attitude towards Spinoza, and its significance for later interpretations of the Hegel-Spinoza relationship. In contrast to virtually all other approaches, it will be argued here that Hegel's earlier defense of Spinoza against Jacobi in *Faith and Knowledge* (1802) was superior in its understanding of Spinozistic substance to the interpretation Hegel shaped after his break with Schelling in 1807.

There is precious little in the Anglophone literature that compares and contrasts the approaches of the young and "mature" Hegel regarding Spinoza's metaphysics. Indeed, in most discussions, the young Hegel's views on Spinoza are mentioned perfunctorily, but are not granted a sustained analysis.[1] This hurts our understanding of Hegel's relationship with Spinoza in multiple ways, but it also obscures the deeper connections between these two thinkers made clearer in Hegel's earlier writings.

Hegel never reckoned with the earlier positions he held on Spinoza after his break with

[1] Despite many illuminating discussions on the Hegel-Spinoza connection, the two most recent anthologies on Spinoza and German Idealism contain no sustained engagement of Hegel's early reception of Spinoza. See Hasana Sharp and Jason Smith's *Between Hegel and Spinoza: A Volume of Critical Essays* (London: Continuum, 2012) and see Eckart Förster and Yitzhak Y. Melamed's *Spinoza and German Idealism* (New York: Cambridge, 2015).

Schelling, and while the young Hegel ably defended Spinoza's philosophy and substance metaphysics against criticism, Hegel's later understanding represented not so much an advance but a regression towards the very same anti-Spinozist positions he had already refuted in the early Jena period. In reverting back to old characterizations of Spinozistic substance as a-cosmic in his later work, Hegel obfuscated his own deeper connections with Spinoza, who had formerly represented for him a genuine philosopher of the absolute Idea.

This process of distancing did not stop radical students of Hegel, such as Ludwig Feuerbach, Moses Hess, and Heinrich Heine, from assuming an identity between the substance of Spinoza and the spirit of Hegel. They argued that at the base of Hegelian philosophy rests Spinoza's conception of God. For Heine, Spinoza's pantheism was at the heart of German Idealism; he called it the "secret religion" of the latest form of German Idealism, namely the idealism shared by Schelling and Hegel.[2] As Heine remarks in the third chapter of his *Religion and Philosophy in Germany* (1835):

> The only merit of modern nature philosophy is that it demonstrated most ingeniously the eternal parallelism between spirit and matter. I say spirit and matter, and I use these terms as equivalents for what Spinoza calls thought and dimension. These terms are also, to some extent, synonymous with what our nature philosophers call spirit and nature or the ideal and the real.[3]

Feuerbach likewise called attention to the identity of Spinoza's philosophy and German Idealism regarding the relationship between mind and matter as two attributes of God or spirit:

> Hegel's paradoxical statement that "consciousness of God is God's self-consciousness" rests on the same foundation as Spinoza's paradoxical statement: "expansion or matter is

[2] The term "pantheism" is a highly contested one. Used pejoratively, it could mean the reduction of God to the finite, or the mystical collapse of the world into the oneness of God. As we will see, Spinoza is charged at various times with either reducing God to finite nature, or of holding an "a-cosmic" conception of God that makes the finite world illusory. Put differently, Spinoza is accused of either being a crass naturalist or a Parmenidean--sometimes simultaneously. Understood differently, however, Spinoza can be appreciated as a "dialectical" pantheist, in identifying the unity of the finite and the infinite within substance. This understanding of Spinoza will be advanced by the young Hegel in *Faith and Knowledge* (1802), but it can also be found in Spinoza's own texts as we will see in chapter four.

[3] Heinrich Heine, *The Romantic School and Other Essays* (New York: Continuum, 2002), 176.

> an attribute of substantiality" and means nothing else than "self-consciousness is an attribute of substantiality or God, God is I"...[Speculative philosophy was] theism and atheism at one and the same time.[4]

Such an identity between Spinoza and Hegel seems hard to maintain, however, due to what George di Giovanni has called Hegel's own ostensible "anti-Spinozism."[5] In the wake of Hegel's break with Schelling's Identity-Philosophy, Hegel went on to surpass and also refute Spinozistic substance as something abstract, barren, undifferentiated, proto-Romantic, and--the most perennial charge--a-cosmic. According to Hegel, Spinoza's God simply does "too much," swallowing up and obliterating all particularity in its path, and affording human beings only a formalistic freedom of cosmic oneness. Thus, in Spinoza, we flee from the concrete diversity of the world into the "night of substance."

In Hegel's zeal to combat his erstwhile commitments to Schelling's Identity-Philosophy, and in his polemics against the Romantics, he conscripts Spinoza into their ranks. This is not to say that Hegel was completely hostile to Spinoza, or that he did not acknowledge a debt to him. Even in the second preface to Hegel's *Encyclopedia Logic* (1827), we read that Spinoza's name above all else is a signifier for speculative philosophy, and in the *Lectures on The History of Philosophy* (1830), Spinozism becomes the signifier for all subsequent attempts at philosophy.[6] However, it is arguable that Hegel's fundamental criticisms of Spinoza undermined these partial defenses of him, and what Spinozism signifies is not just speculation for Hegel, but a caricatured form of pantheism that has too much in common with the nihilism of the Romantics. Judging from previous debates and controversies, one can also trace the long pedigree of Hegel's critique

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[4] Ludwig Feuerbach, quoted in Georg Lukacs' *Destruction of Reason* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1981), 123.
[5] George Di Giovanni. "Hegel's Anti-Spinozism: The Transition to Subjective Logic and the End of Classical Metaphysics." *The Cardozo Public Law, Policy, and Ethics Journal*, 3 (2005), 45-60.
[6] Hegel, G. W. F. *The Encyclopedia Logic: Part I of the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences with the Zusatze*. Translated by T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting, and H. S. Harris (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), 10. Hegel, G.W.F. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (Vol. 3). Translated by E. S. Haldane. (Nebraska: Nebraska, 1994), 283.

of Spinoza as stemming back to Spinoza's earlier reception among a previous generation of German thinkers. We notice many of the same criticisms made by Hegel against Spinoza and Spinozism in Kant, in Mendelssohn, and--above all—in Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi.

It is in the last of these three figures that the essential dimensions of Hegel's later critique of Spinoza can be found. Hegel acknowledged the impact Jacobi's critique had on his characterizations of Spinozistic substance in his Heidelberg Review of the latter's collected works. Jacobi's *Letters on Spinoza* detailed the revelations (or perhaps gossip) surrounding Lessing's alleged pantheism, and were pivotal in terms of Hegel's own understanding of Spinoza throughout his intellectual career. Originally, Jacobi had sparked what was known as the "Pantheism Controversy" in order to expose Lessing—the doyen of the German Enlightenment—as a Spinozist. For Jacobi, this revelation was tantamount to calling Lessing an atheist, and he wanted to use this information to show how the very foundations of rationalism and Enlightenment were compromised by Spinozism. But instead of Jacobi's explicit intention to bring his contemporaries back to faith, these revelations had the consequence of generating a new-found interest in Spinoza.[7]

Jacobi, a contemporary of the German Enlightenment, was one of the strongest critics of speculative metaphysics and rationalism for his time. In endeavoring to return to uncorrupted religious experience and theism, he opposes intuition (or what he dubs "immediate knowledge") to conceptual and discursive knowledge. But, what is striking about Jacobi's critique of Spinoza as his ultimate antagonist was his willingness to grant utter consistency to the latter's positions. In fact, for Jacobi, any form of rationalism or metaphysics in general had to end in Spinozism on pain of incoherence.[8]

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[7] Two of the best accounts of the Pantheism Controversy are from Frederick Beiser and Johnathan Israel. See Frederick Beiser, *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy From Kant to Fichte*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987). See Johnathan Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment*, (New York: Oxford, 2011).

[8] As Jacobi points out to Mendelssohn, "The Leibnzian-Wolffian philosophy is no less fatalistic than the Spinozist philosophy and leads the persistent researcher back to the principles of the latter. Every avenue of [rationalist]

In the course of his collaboration with Schelling, Hegel wrote against Jacobi a lengthy polemic in defense of Spinoza, found in the 1802 essay *Faith and Knowledge*. The bulk of this early book focuses on defending the claims of speculative philosophy against Jacobi's criticisms and his alternative embrace of a non-mediated faith (i.e., immediate intuition) in God and providence.[9] But perhaps the most interesting aspect of the polemic Hegel wages is a staunch embrace of Spinoza, as providing the ultimate ground of speculative philosophy. What we want to observe here is how Hegel's arguments on behalf of Spinoza's can be appreciated on their own, and without having to reduce them as tailored to Schelling's own immediate concerns, or what Hegel will later deem as Schelling's flaws. After the break with Schelling, Hegel amalgamates Schelling's flaws with Spinoza's. But at least in *Faith and Knowledge* and other texts from the early Jena period Hegel claims Spinoza as a dialectical thinker without conceding a theoretical inch to Jacobi's critique.

In this 1802 text, Hegel grasps Spinozistic substance as something internally self-differentiated, eminently real, and at the heart of Hegel and Schelling's own attempts to reconstruct Kantian philosophy along speculative lines. What is most interesting about Hegel's defense of Spinoza here is the anticipation of specific criticisms he himself later makes against Spinoza. In fact, it will be argued that the young Hegel refutes much of what can be called a "Jacobian" caricature of Spinoza, which reappears in Hegel's later work.

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demonstration ends up in fatalism." For Jacobi, Spinozism is the ultimate system of this fatalistic tendency of reason. Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza*, 1785, in *The Main Philosophical Writings and the Novel Allwill*. Translated with an introduction by George Di Giovanni, (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 234.

[9] Jacobi's philosophy of experience is one of immediate intuition opposed to Spinoza's intellectual intuition. As we will see, Jacobi's embrace of intuitive knowledge of God mimics Spinoza's rationalist version, but also subverts it. While Spinoza's intellectual intuition grasps substance through a rational system of deduction, Jacobi needs no such deduction. God cannot be grasped through concepts or rational cognition, but through feeling. God is an unmediated fact of existence, and any attempt to know God through the mediation of concepts is to treat God as something mediated in turn, i.e., as something conditioned. Thus, we can only grasp God as purely immediate to our experience. We will discuss Jacobi's critique of rationalism and his (non) philosophy of experience more in chapter one. For Jacobi's importance in the history of modern philosophy, see G.W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (Vol. 3). Translated by E. S. Haldane. (Nebraska, 1994).

The reasons for the reappearance of Jacobian themes in Hegel's later critique of Spinoza can understood as part of his professional and intellectual rapprochement with Jacobi in the context of German academic politics. Hegel was told by friends that he had to put away the old animus towards Jacobi if he was to advance his career, and Hegel started within the space of a year to rapidly change his mind about "the party of Jacobi." As president of the Bavarian Academy of the Sciences, Jacobi was a cultural leader, and Hegel seems to have adapted more and more to what he saw as a Protestant united front against a bulwark of reactionary Catholicism in Bavaria. Slowly--but surely--the two enemies became friends, and Jacobi even Hegel was to be godfather to one of Hegel's children.[10]

Hegel of course never became a Jacobian--he never accepted Jacobian intuitionism and anti-rationalism. Even Jacobi himself in his dying days still saw Hegel as stuck in the same basic Spinozism. But Hegel's treatment of Spinoza as an Oriental, Jewish thinker of dead substance, as opposed to the freedom of Protestant spirit, inverts how Hegel originally saw Spinoza in those early Jena days.[11] When Hegel edited the *Critical Journal* with Schelling, Spinoza was not so much behind the cultural achievement of German Protestantism, as rather beyond it, and Hegel saw Protestantism as exhausting itself in the likes of Kant, Fichte, and Jacobi. But after the break with Schelling and his identification with "the party of Jacobi," Hegel gave up the attempt to forge a new speculative religion, partially suppressing his Spinozism for a Lutheran veneer. However, as Jacobi and others noticed—including the late Schelling--Spinoza was still peeking out underneath Hegel's Lutheran costume.

After the death of Jacobi and Hegel's ascension to philosophy professor in Berlin,

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[10] For Hegel's changing relations with Jacobi, see Terry Pinkard, *Hegel: A Biography*, (Cambridge, 2000).

[11] Hegel sees Spinoza's critique of Cartesian dualism as partially motivated by his Jewishness: "The dualism of the Cartesian system Spinoza, as a Jew, altogether set aside." The identity of thought and matter in Spinoza is also cast as "Oriental." We will explore Hegel's Orientalization of Spinozist substance in chapter three, and how it reproduces Jacobian themes. Hegel, G.W.F. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (Vol. 3). Translated by E. S. Haldane, (Nebraska, 1994). 252.

charges of pantheism continuously cropped up against him. To be labelled a pantheist in such official circles was to invite professional scrutiny, and it was in Hegel's interest to banish these charges by treating pantheism not so much as a present threat, but as something that had already been sublated in his system. Spinoza was not a bogey-man to be feared, but an Oriental and Jewish precursor who had much in common with other Eastern religions, and was properly transcended in Hegel's version of Christianity. Hegel's descriptions of Spinozism and pantheism were so caricatured that they had very little in common with the defense Hegel gave of Spinoza in opposition to Jacobi decades before.[12]

This is not to say Hegel did not try to defend Spinozism to some extent; he had to, as Spinoza's name was indelibly linked to speculative philosophy, and Hegel's own philosophical commitments were still arguably Spinozistic. But his attempt to save Spinoza from the charges of nihilism and atheism by calling him "a-cosmic"[13] was quickly undermined in the course of the arguments he himself gave in the *Science of Logic* and elsewhere. Hegel admits that a-cosmism is still a form of atheism, and that Spinozistic formalism also can be yoked with the "fanaticism" of Hindu religion and the nihilism of German Romantics. This tension between Spinoza as a speculative philosopher and Spinoza as a Hindu or a Romantic marred all of Hegel's subsequent discussions of Spinozistic substance.

Despite Hegel's attempt to subsume and refute the substance of Spinozism under Protestant spirit, Hegel's ghost did not escape from the charges of pantheism either. Not only

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[12] See for instance Hegel's descriptions of substance and pantheism in the lectures on religion as essentially Oriental or pre-Christian forms of thinking: "Everything enters into [Oriental] substance, but nothing comes back out of it, i.e., nothing determinate, only a revel of confused images (as in the case of the Hindus). This system is usually called pantheism. Substance relates itself passively and negatively to things: on the one hand it is only through things that it subsists; on the other, substance is the purification of being from this limitation, i.e., the annihilation of the finite." In the same the lectures, Hegel identifies Spinozism and "Oriental substance." See Hegel, G. W. F. *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion: Determinate Religion*, Volume 2. Translated by Brown and Hodgson, (California, 1987), 266, 728.

[13] G.W.F. Hegel, *Encyclopedia Logic*, edited and translated by Theodore F. Geraets, Wallis Arthur Suchting, and Henry Silton Harris, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), 97, § 50.

Hegel's students, but Hegel's erstwhile colleagues turned on his legacy as essentially pantheistic. The public makeover of Hegel's legacy in Berlin circles from official court philosopher to a "dissolute pantheist" was completed with the consolidation of Friedrich Wilhelm IV's cultural agenda. Known as the "romantic on the throne," the new king asked Hegel's old philosophical comrade Schelling to come to Berlin to lecture against "the dragon seed" of "Hegelian pantheism."[14]

The level of irony here is astonishing: Schelling, whom Hegel once hinted of as being too Spinozistic himself, was summoned from on high to attack Hegel as a pantheist. Schelling made his break with German Idealism long before Hegel started to reconstruct the original Identity-System, but it is interesting to note that it was *Schelling* that made the complete break from Spinoza, and *not* Hegel. For Schelling, Hegel merely repeated the same mistakes their illustrious precursor first made, and it was up to Schelling to make a complete and final break from pantheistic conceptions of God, towards what he called a philosophy of revelation, or "historical science" of Christianity. Below, we will demonstrate how Schelling's critique of Hegel essentially re-activated Jacobi's critique of Spinoza, and how Jacobi's project of driving pantheism out of official circles was completed by Jacobi's old foe, Schelling. In this philosophical tale, some enemies became friends, and some friends became enemies, even after death.

While Schelling was busy banishing Hegel's ghost from the halls of the academy, a new generation of Hegelian students was embracing Hegel as a pantheist, and through the writings of Heine, David Friedrich Strauss, and Feuerbach, Hegelian philosophy came to signify "modern pantheism." We see this vividly expressed in the testimony of a young Friedrich Engels upon reading Strauss's Left-Hegelian book on the *Life of Jesus* (1835), which helped the young Engels

[14] For Schelling's later anti-Hegelianism, see Andrew Bowie and John Laughland's work. Andrew Bowie, *Schelling and Modern European Philosophy: An Introduction*, (New York: Routledge, 1993). John Laughland, *Schelling versus Hegel: From German Idealism to Christian Metaphysics*, (New York: Routledge, 2007).

convert from Pietism to "Hegelian pantheism" (in 1839):

> Through Strauss I have now entered on the straight road to Hegelianism. Of course, I shall not become such an inveterate Hegelian…but I must nevertheless absorb important things from his colossal system. The Hegelian idea of God has already become mine, and thus I am joining the ranks of the "modern pantheists"…knowing well that even the word pantheism arouses much colossal revulsion on the part of pastors who don't think…Modern pantheism, i.e., Hegel, apart from the fact that it is already found among the Chinese and Parsees, is perfectly expressed in the sect of the Libertines, which was attacked by Calvin. This discovery is really rather too original. But still more original is its development.[15]

How far we are from Hegel's project to subsume "Oriental" Spinozism underneath a hegemonic Protestantism! Here, Hegel is cast as developing a pantheism that does not have much to do with Christianity, and more to do with ideas already found (according to Engels) among "the Chinese and Parsees," i.e., the same Eastern currents that Hegel wanted to sublate. But for many of his students such a break from religious orthodoxy was already complete in Hegel, whether Hegel wanted to acknowledge that break in life or not.

This is not to say that Hegel's students, *Faith and Knowledge* and other early writings from Jena, or even Jacobi and Schelling, provide some kind of magic key for creating a new and perfect harmony between Hegel and Spinoza. Spinoza's own arguments about substance need to be analyzed independently of the filter of German intellectual history. But, it is important to appreciate how the arguments contained in *Faith and Knowledge* transcend the limitations of the typical German reception of Spinoza in the age of Goethe, and why they point to a new way of understanding Spinoza's philosophy as compatible in key registers with Hegel's own mature system. With a new focus on the arguments contained in Hegel's earlier work, and what so many friends and opponents of Hegel's system for good reason saw as its Spinozistic core, one can begin to undermine some of the oppositions assumed between Hegel and Spinoza in current

[15] Friedrich Engels to Friedrich Graeber, 21 December 1839, in *Letters of the Young Engels*, 1838-1845, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976), 129.

debates.

In terms of more recent debates on the Hegel-Spinoza relationship, the separation of Hegel and Spinoza as irreconcilably opposed comes to us in large part from the legacy of 20th century French philosophy, beginning with the "French Hegelians," such as Alexandre Kojève and Jean Hyppolite, and ending with the "French Spinozists," such as Louis Althusser and Gilles Deleuze. If in the 19th century, German friends and detractors of Hegel understood the fundamental metaphysical connections that linked Spinoza with absolute idealism, 20th century French commentators tried their hardest to break such a link. Even if Hess, Feuerbach, Heine, and the later Schelling were not on the same side of the philosophical or political barricades, they acknowledged the deep identity between Spinoza and Hegel as "pantheistic," affirming that the God of Spinoza was also the God of Hegel. But, with the influence of Heideggerianism on 20th century French philosophy, and its post-metaphysical critique of onto-theology, Hegel and Spinoza came to be set at loggerheads: either Spinoza was seen as the culmination of onto-theology and rationalistic metaphysics, or Hegel was.

One of the first Heideggerian-inspired attempts to split Hegel and Spinoza came from Alexandre Kojève. In Kojève's *Introduction to Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, the *Science of Logic* was contrasted poorly with the *Phenomenology*. The first was described by Kojève as hopelessly "Spinozistic", a-historical, and "theological," pretending to argue from the perspective of God before the creation. Kojève sought to banish the *Science of Logic* from a properly historicist Hegelianism, and to reconstruct Hegel's dialectic on more anthropological grounds. Thus, in Kojève's critique of onto-theology, the Spinozistic elements were necessarily evacuated from Hegel in order to bring him closer to a historicist Heidegger.[16]

From the opposite direction of French neo-Spinozism, Heidegger's 1947 *Letter on*

[16] Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit*, (Ithaca: Cornell, 1980), 102. For a summary of Kojève understanding of the history of philosophy (and how it developed over the course of his lifetime), see James H. Nichols, *Alexandre Kojève: Wisdom at the End of History* (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007).

Humanism inspired Althusser and others to reject Hegel in favor of a Spinozism that was post-metaphysical and theoretically anti-humanist.[17] Contra Kojève, Hegel and not Spinoza was to be condemned as too metaphysical, while Spinoza was promoted as a "materialist" alternative to idealism. This contrast, mediated by Heidegger was completed in Althusser's later writings, especially the unfinished manuscripts on the materialism of the encounter. In these, Spinoza is read against himself, and Spinoza's understanding of substance as prior to its modifications is replaced by a more "aleatory" and indeterminist reading. Gone is the characterization of Spinoza as a rationalist pantheist or monist, since for Althusser substance constituted a negative "void" that made room for absolute contingency. This reading of Spinoza freed him from Hegelian "logocentrism," and brought Spinoza closer to Heidegger's "*es gibt*" or the contingent "there is" of the world freed from any metaphysical ground like the Hegelian Idea.[18]

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[17] From Althusser: "Somewhat belatedly, I had read Heidegger's Letter to Jean Beaufret on Humanism, which influenced my arguments concerning theoretical antihumanism in Marx." Louis Althusser, *The Future Lasts a Long Time and The Facts*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1993), 176.

[18] As Althusser puts it: "A philosophy of the *es gibt,* of the "this is what is given," makes short shrift of all the classic questions about the [metaphysical] Origin, and so on. And it "opens up" a prospect that restores a kind of transcendental contingency of the world, which in turn points to the opening up of Being, the original urge of Being, its "destining," beyond which there is nothing to seek or think." Louis Althusser, *The Philosophy of the Encounter: Later Writings*, 1978-87. (Verso, 2006). p. 170. Althusser elaborates on Heidegger as part of a materialist tradition that resists "logocentric" metaphysics (p. 261): "My intention, here, is to insist on the existence of a materialist tradition that has not been recognized by the history of philosophy. That of Democritus, Epicurus, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Rousseau (the Rousseau of the second *Discourse*), Marx and Heidegger, together with the categories that they defended: the void, the limit, the margin, the absence of a centre, the displacement of the centre to the margin (and vice versa), and freedom."
One should be sensitive to the periodization of Althusser's philosophical writings, since not all of Althusser's appropriations of Spinoza are the same. Althusser also could be quite critical of Heidegger as Geoff Waite points out. However, there is a distinct "Nietzschean-Heideggerian" tendency (Callinicos) in Althusser's work, and this comes out especially in the later writings. According to Jacques Derrida, Heidegger was the most important philosopher for Althusser, though we might have to take this claim with a grain of salt. For an excellent overview of Althusser's uses (and abuses) of Spinozism, see Peter Thomas, "Philosophical Strategies: Althusser and Spinoza" *Historical Materialism* 10 (3):71-113 (2002) and Knox Peden's *Spinoza Contra Phenomenology*, (Stanford: Stanford, 2014). See also Warren Montag for why we shouldn't dismiss Althusser's connections to Heidegger via Derrida in *Althusser and His Contemporaries: Philosophy's Perpetual War*, (Duke, 2013), 182. For Althusser's criticisms of Heidegger, see Geoff Waite*, Nietzsche's Corpse: Aesthetics, Politics, Prophecy, Or, The Spectacular Technoculture of Everyday Life*, (Duke, 1996). p. 417. Alex Callinicos, while writing in appreciation of Althusser's

In contradistinction to both French Hegelianism and French Spinozism, this study seeks to explore a "Young Hegelian" understanding of Spinoza as a pantheist, which maintains the conceptual and metaphysical structure of Spinoza's God as unitary, as opposed to the pluralization--and even atomization--it is subjected to in such diverse thinkers as Deleuze and Althusser. We should also note that the status of Spinoza as a pantheist in Continental philosophy has gone through different variations. Deleuze for instance seems to have embraced pantheism as a heretical label, but without the same rationalistic overtones one would find in the early Hegel's pantheism. Deleuze's re-reading of Spinoza makes substance revolve around the modes, which breaks from Spinoza's argument that substance precedes the modes logically. Here, Deleuze follows Nietzsche's idea of a pantheism of forces over a pantheism of substance, as he reads Spinoza as an ontological pluralist instead of as a metaphysical monist.[19]

Antonio Negri, who closely follows Deleuze's reading of Spinoza, levels criticism at the pantheistic label as precisely too idealistic and rationalistic. In line with Deleuze, he wants to free Spinoza from the encumbrances of idealism in favor of a properly "materialist" (or Nietzschean) understanding of being. Negri though is much more explicit as to how anti-pantheistic such a reconstruction of Spinoza is, since it interrupts any idea of a unitary substance in favor of a pluralistic, spontaneous, and creative conception of being.[20] Althusser completes this process of casting away the pantheist label by embracing a reading of Spinoza as a philosopher of absolute contingency. Substance ceases to be a metaphysical reality and is

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critique of Hegel, admits Althusser's philosophical motivations as partly "Nietzschean-Heideggerian." See Alex Callinicos, "What is Living and What is Dead in the Philosophy of Louis Althusser," in E. Ann Kaplan & Michael Sprinker (eds.), *The Althusserian Legacy*, (London: Verso, 1993).

[19] Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, (New York: Zone Books, 1990), 16. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*. 55 (June 10, 1887). Trans. Walter Kaufmann, (New York: Vintage Books, 1968). For an overview of Deleuze's Spinoza, see Adam Wilkins' dissertation, "Modes, Monads, and Nomads: Individuals in Spinoza, Leibniz, and Deleuze," (Stony Brook, 2008).

[20] Antonio Negri, *The Savage Anomaly: The Power of Spinoza's Metaphysics and Politics*, (Minnesota: Minnesota 1991), 64.

transformed into a principle of transcendental contingency as "the void," and Althusser likens Spinoza's logic to the *clinamen* of Epicurus. Althusser thus situates Spinoza as the philosophical heir to the Epicurean atomists, and not heir to the *logos* of the Stoics.[21] In terms of French neo-Spinozism, we thus come full circle in Althusser: from a pantheism of forces to the anti-pantheism of Epicurean atomism.

This dissertation somewhat parallels the work of Pierre Macherey--Althusser's colleague--in outlining Hegel's relationship to Spinoza, but with a much different philosophical intent.[22] Macherey brilliantly summarizes Hegel's critique of Spinoza, finding many flaws in his exposition, but he does not reach back far enough to Hegel's earlier writings. Thus, his outline of the relationship is incomplete. We will begin our story of Hegel's reception of Spinoza in the early Jena period. Expanding the scope of Hegel's Spinoza reception helps us to rediscover philosophical alternatives that do not treat Hegel and Spinoza as stark alternatives as so much of the French Hegelian and French Spinozist traditions are wont to do. For Macherey, Hegel is a teleological thinker, while Spinoza is more of a materialist one, but Hegel's earlier writings show how Spinoza can be "teleological" as well, insofar as the distinction between *telos* and efficient causation can map onto how Spinoza uses the terms immanent and transitive causation. For the young Hegel, Spinozistic substance is the *telos*, or end, that determines the whole.[23] It is from Spinoza's principle of reason that we understand substance as determining and conditioning all other aspects of creation, and thus we see how Hegel maintains the integrity and oneness of

[21] See Althusser's comparison of Spinoza and Epicurus in Althusser's *Philosophy of The Encounter,* ibid. 176-177.

[22] See Pierre Macherey, *Hegel Or Spinoza*, (Minnesota: Minnesota, 2011). For an overview of Macherey's Spinozism and how it contrasts with Deleuze, see Simon Duffy, *The Logic of Expression: Quality, Quantity and Intensity in Spinoza, Hegel, Deleuze*, (Vermont: Ashgate, 2006), 11-43.

[23] "...Spinoza's unity [is not] an abstract one lacking in purposiveness, that is, lacking an absolute teleological coherence, but as the absolutely intelligible and in itself organic unity." Here, Hegel reads immanent cause as an organic one, i.e., as the main organizing and determining cause of Spinoza's system. See Hegel, G. W. F., *Faith and Knowledge*. Translated by Walter Cerf and H. S. Harris, (New York: SUNY Press, 1977), 91. Hegel's identity of immanence and *telos* in Spinoza will be developed further in chapter 2.

Spinozistic substance, against the pluralization and dissolution substance meets with the French Spinoza.

Instead of perpetuating the opposition "Hegel or Spinoza," we propose to turn Macherey's *or* into a *sive*, and advance a new project for Hegel *and* Spinoza to be read as two thinkers that share a fundamental metaphysics. In other words, we aim at showing that the God of the *Ethics* and the God of the *Science of Logic* are one and the same.

The plan of the dissertation will follow Hegel's understanding of Spinoza through his relationship to Jacobi's philosophy. We will first explicate Jacobi's seminal critique of Spinoza in his letters to Mendelssohn, while evaluating his own attempt to "leap" out of speculative rationalism towards a new form of theism. Second, we will delve into Hegel's earlier views on Spinoza and elucidate in depth Hegel's affirmation and defense of Spinoza against Jacobi in *Faith and Knowledge*. We will see how Hegel's defense of Spinoza is in profound contrast to his later writings on the philosopher as an "a-cosmic" thinker. The third chapter will trace Hegel's rapprochement with Jacobi, and his explicit commitment to Protestant spirit over Spinozistic substance which he now describes as Oriental and Jewish. But while Hegel's intent was to reconstruct Protestantism on speculative lines, we will show how Hegel encounters opposition from Pietist opponents and then the late Schelling for failing to overcome his original Spinozism. It was Schelling, more than any other of Hegel's contemporaries, who grasped Hegelianism not as breaking with Spinozism, but as continuing it. Hegel remained a Spinozist for Schelling, while Schelling himself moved closer to Jacobi's critique of rationalism.

In the final chapter, the superiority of Hegel's earlier views on Spinoza will be corroborated with an examination of Spinoza's texts themselves, demonstrating how Spinoza's own arguments refute the charges of a-cosmism and nihilism. Throughout this thesis, we will

argue how Hegel remained fundamentally a Spinozist, and how Hegel's later criticisms of Spinoza obscure how close and compatible Spinoza and Hegel are on core metaphysical issues. In this regard, we are re-activating the tradition of Young Hegelians like Heine, Feuerbach, and Hess, who understood Spinoza and Hegel as two sides of the same pantheistic coin. We will end our discussion with an overview and critical evaluation of what is now the classic portrayal of the differences between Hegel and Spinoza in French Continental philosophy.

[The specter of Spinozism] has been haunting Germany for lo these many years in all shapes and sizes and is regarded with reverence by believers and doubters alike. I am speaking not just of the petty-minded but of people with the finest minds…Perhaps we will yet experience a controversy that will loom over Spinoza's bones like the one between the Archangel and Satan over Moses' remains.
--Jacobi to Mendelssohn, 1785

Chapter One: Spinoza's Bones.

1.1. *Lessing's Secret*

> "Let us check Spinoza's attack with a sally, and see whether we cannot fill his trenches, destroy his fortifications, and explode his mines in his own face. Fire all together!"[24]

Contrary to Heine's description of Friedrich Jacobi as a gossip-hound, and Kant's dismissal of him as a man merely seeking notoriety, Jacobi should be taken seriously as inaugurating a new stage in the battle against Enlightenment rationalism.[25] His criticisms that speculative philosophy leads inexorably to atheism and materialism are far clearer than those of his acknowledged precursors.[26] Jacobi emerged as a more potent adversary of the Enlightenment rationalism of Mendelssohn and others by engaging with the most radical and

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[24] Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza*, 1785, in *The Main Philosophical Writings and the Novel Allwill*. Translated with an introduction by George Di Giovanni, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 206. All future references to Jacobi's writings will appear in text as "Jacobi."

[25] See Heine's remark in *Religion and Philosophy in Germany*. Jacobi "was nothing but a quarrelsome sneak, who disguised himself in the cloak of philosophy and insinuated himself among the philosophers, first whimpering to them ever so much about his affection and softheartedness, then letting loose a tirade against reason." Heinrich Heine, "Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany," in Heinrich Heine*, The Romantic School and Other Essays*. Eds. Jost Hermand and Robert C. Holub, (New York: Continuum Books, 1985). From Kant to Marcus Herz (April 7, 1786): "The Jacobi controversy is nothing serious; it is only an affection of inspired fanaticism trying to make a name for itself and is hardly worthy of a serious refutation." See Kant's *Correspondence*. Translated by Arnulf Zweig, (Edinburgh: Cambridge, 1999), 251.

[26] Jacobi acknowledged Pascal as his precursor and was fond of this passage from the *Pensees* (he used it as an epigram in introducing his *David Hume*): "Nature confounds the Pyrrhonists and reason the dogmatists—We have an incapacity of proof that no dogmatism can overcome. We have an idea of truth that no Pyrrhonism can overcome." See Jacobi, *David Hume on Faith*, 1787, in *The Main Philosophical Writings*, ibid, p. 254. As Beiser also explains, the young Jacobi "was a student of Pascal and Rousseau, and he deliberately imported their ideas into Germany." But it is debatable whether Jacobi "merely" repeated Pascal's argument against reason. See Beiser's *Fate of Reason: German Philosophy From Kant to Fichte*, (Massachusetts: Harvard, 1987), 47.

consistent speculative system of the time, namely, the philosophy of Baruch Spinoza.[27] Jacobi's importance is also revealed in the set of problems he bequeathed to German Idealism, problems that remained integral to Schelling and Hegel's early projects to reconstitute speculative philosophy in the wake of Kant. One can go further and say that many of the main themes of German Idealism are already sketched in Jacobi's conversations (perhaps fictional) with Gotthold Ephraim Lessing.

Jacobi was not the first to sound the clarion call of anti-Spinozism in Germany; nor was he the first to criticize the Leibnizian-Wolffian system as a pale imitation of Spinoza's *Ethics*.[28] But his attack was the most sophisticated and the most sustained of its kind. In order to safeguard what he thought were traditional tenets for piety and theism Jacobi used his research into Spinoza to try to drive Spinozism and all other rationalistic positions into the undesirable nights of materialism, atheism, and fatalism. By demonstrating that Spinoza's nihilism[29] was the most coherent manifestation of speculative reason, Jacobi could also argue for the nihilism of reason itself and he proceeded to condemn all positions as crypto-Spinozist that failed to take the leap of faith in God. For Jacobi, any attempt to prove God's existence with the aid of reason logically culminates in atheism. The reality of God as a creator, as a divine intelligence that transcends

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[27] As Jonathan Israel describes in his treatment of the first *Pantheismusstreit*:
Jacobi "had taken a positive dislike to Mendelssohn and the kind of providential thesis he and others of the "enlightened" circle in Berlin…represented. At some point Jacobi formed a plan to use the "Spinozist" dimension of his Lessing conversations to exert a wide impact in the German cultural arena with a view to advancing his own particular intellectual strategy and weakening the moderate half-way house *Aufklärung* that he detested by accusing it of collapsing in the face of—and having an inherent leaning towards—Spinozism." Johnathan Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment*, (New York: Oxford, 2011), 689.

[28] From Israel: "Actually, rather than Jacobi, it was the later Hanoverian official and conservative writer August Wilhelm Rehberg who was seemingly the first, in 1779…publicly to assert in a published text that, despite the mountain of academic and ecclesiastical condemnation and scorn heaped on him and his ideas for over a century, if judged from a purely objective, philosophical standpoint, Spinoza is more cogent and "consequent" than Leibniz, Wolff, or any other major figure competing for primacy in German thought and that since this must become obvious sooner or later, this fact inevitably signified a pending great crisis in philosophy." See Israel, ibid, 689.

[29] We will explain Jacobi's innovation of this term and how he defines nihilism in his open letter to Fichte below. See Jacobi, *Jacobi to Fichte*, 1799, in *The Main Philosophical Writings,* ibid, p. 519.

nature, can only be accessed through a leap of faith the heart makes. Instead of Spinozist intellectual intuition, Jacobi substitutes the immediate intuition of feeling.

According to Jacobi's letters to Mendelssohn, Lessing had divulged a startling secret to Jacobi before dying: that he was a follower of Spinoza. In Jacobi's words to Elise Reimarus (an intermediary in the correspondence):

> You know perhaps, and if you do not know I confide it to you here *sub rosa*, that Lessing in his final days was a firm Spinozist. It is conceivable that Lessing may have expressed this view to others; in that case it would be necessary for Mendelssohn, in the memorial he intends to dedicate to him, either to avoid matters totally or at least to treat them with utmost caution.[30]

As Jacobi knew, the implications of such a revelation--namely, that one of the main doyens of the German Enlightenment was a Spinozist--were potentially devastating. To be called a Spinozist at the time (and even during Hegel's time as an established Berlin professor) was tantamount to being called an atheist. Indeed, the closest political equivalent of the Spinozist label from a 20th century angle would be the accusation of communism in McCarthy's America.[31]

But do we know if Lessing actually had these conversations with Jacobi? Could it be that Jacobi was simply twisting the facts? Unfortunately, the only two people who know the veracity of this report are Lessing and Jacobi himself. Regardless of the authenticity of these dialogues,

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[30] Quoted in *The Spinoza Conversations Between Lessing and Jacobi*, translated by G. Vallee, J. B. Lawson, and C. G. Chapple, (Boston: University Press of America, 1988), 79.

[31] Beiser sketches the climate of anti-Spinozism from which this controversy emerged from: "Until the middle of the eighteenth century it was *de riguer* [in Germany] for every professor and cleric to prove his orthodoxy before taking office; and proving one's orthodoxy often demanded denouncing Spinoza as a heretic. Since attacks on Spinoza became a virtual ritual, there was an abundance of defamatory and polemical tracts against him. Indeed, by 1710 so many professors and clerics had attacked Spinoza that there was a *Catalogus scriptorium Anti-Spinozanorum* in Leipzig. And in 1759 Trinius counted, probably too modestly, 129 enemies of Spinoza in his *Freydenkerlexicon*. Such was Spinoza's reputation that he was often identified with Satan himself. Spinozism was seen as not only one form of atheism, but as the worst form. Thus Spinoza was dubbed the "*Euclides atheisticu*s", or the "*princips atheorum*."" See Beiser, ibid, 48.

however, this was Jacobi's opening gambit against the reign of the Enlightenment in Germany. The effects of his campaign were nothing short of game-changing. Jacobi thought that if he demonstrated how Lessing—perhaps the most important exponent of Enlightenment thinking in German classicism—was a Spinozist then the rest of the German Enlightenment would be tainted by the revelation.

Mendelssohn was initially confused and bewildered by Jacobi's Spinozist/anti-Spinozist campaign. In the beginning, he didn't quite know what to make of Jacobi; in fact, he thought perhaps Jacobi was a Spinozist himself. He also did not know what to make of these alleged dialogues with Lessing—a man Mendelssohn knew and loved as a friend for many years. Could it be that Jacobi, a relatively unknown writer, was more perceptive about his friend's positions than he was? Could it be that Lessing revealed to Jacobi hidden convictions he had kept from even his closest associates?[32]

Such revelations hurt Mendelssohn personally. He took it for granted that Jacobi's conversations were true—perhaps a mistake—and responded to Jacobi by reinterpreting Lessing's statements through the light of his own Leibnizian-Enlightenment theism, arguing that Lessing's "pantheism" or Spinozism was meant more as a provocation than as a serious position. Such intellectual efforts exhausted the older Mendelssohn, and he died distraught and offended at Jacobi's reclamation of his friend as a Spinozist. Some even accused Jacobi of driving Mendelssohn prematurely into the grave.[33]

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[32] For an interesting discussion of Mendelssohn's reaction, and Jacobi's misinterpretations of that reaction, see *Leo Strauss on Moses Mendelssohn,* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2013), 93.

[33] See Beiser, ibid. p. 75. For the most vociferous denunciation of Jacobi as an anti-Semite (and borderline proto-Nazi), with Mendelssohn as the first ideological victim of the Holocaust, see William Altman's *The German Stranger*. Despite this author's hyperbolic narrative and exaggerated conclusions (particularly when it comes to the pernicious influence of German philosophy on American intellectual culture *tout court*), Altman's scholarship provides a valuable link in establishing Leo Strauss as a modern day Jacobi. Altman, *The German Stranger*, (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2011), 29-74.

It is clear that the label of Spinozism was devastating in itself, but what was the content of the label for Jacobi? According to Jacobi's description of his first personal encounter with Lessing at Wolfenbüttel in July 1780, Jacobi had with him Goethe's poem "Ode to Prometheus" and wanted Lessing's opinion on its underlying message. Jacobi thought the true message of the poem absolutely explosive,[34] and Jacobi expected Lessing to share his opinion about Goethe's unsettling "Spinozism" (Jacobi, 187).[35] But Lessing surprised Jacobi and admitted: "The orthodox concepts of the divinity are no longer for me; I cannot stand them. *Hen kai Pan*! I know naught else. This is also the tendency of the poem; and I must admit, I like it very much." (Jacobi, 187).[36]

Even though Jacobi expressed surprise, he pushed Lessing further in the account: "Jacobi: Then you would indeed be more or less in agreement with Spinoza. Lessing: If I am to call myself by anybody's name, then I know none better." The conversation continued the next morning and Lessing conceded entirely to Jacobi this point: "There is no other philosophy but the philosophy of Spinoza" (Jacobi, 187).[37]

In these conversations Lessing provides Jacobi aid in casting even Leibniz as a crypto-

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[34] Later in life, Goethe himself thought the poem had "served as the kindling of an explosion which unveiled and brought to light the most secret relations of worthy persons: relations which, unknown to them, were slumbering in an otherwise highly enlightenment society…The rupture was so violent that on that occasion, through a series of occurrences, we lost one of our most worthy men, Mendelssohn." Could it be that even Goethe blamed Jacobi for Mendelssohn's death? See *Spinoza Conversations*, ibid. p. 9. Translation Gérard Vallée's, from Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, book 15 in *Goethes Werke*, (Munich: Beck. 1982), 49, [written in 1813/1814].

[35] "Jacobi: To be sure, there is nothing that I would have suspected less, than to find a Spinozist or a pantheist in you…In the main I had come to get help from you against Spinoza." See Jacobi, *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza*, 1785, in *The Main Philosophical Writings*, ibid, 187.

[36] According to Jacobi, Lessing scrawled the phrase *hen kai pan* on a mutual friend's house: "That is why it stands in Gleim's garden house, written in Lessing's own hand, under a motto of mine." Jacobi doesn't specify his own motto, and he takes out the reference to Lessing's graffiti in the second edition. See Jacobi, ibid, 199.

[37] See also Hegel's famous statement about the philosophy of Spinoza in his third volume of the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*: "You are either a Spinozist or not a philosopher at all." See Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy, vol. 3: Medieval and Modern Philosophy*, Translated by E.S. Haldane (London: Bison Books, 1995), 283.

Spinozist. From the report, Jacobi agreed with Lessing here: "I know of no doctrinal system that concurs with Spinozism as much as Leibniz's does." Jacobi then goes on to implicate Mendelssohn's Leibnizianism as Spinozistic in essence as well, since "Mendelssohn has clearly demonstrated that the *harmonia praestabilita* is in Spinoza" (Jacobi, 191).

Jacobi with Lessing—perhaps the real Lessing or a character invented for Jacobi's purposes—helps to paint the entire scene of German philosophy as a cauldron of Spinozism: either conscious, as with Lessing here, or unconscious:

> [It] follows that Spinoza must contain much more of Leibniz's fundamental teachings; for otherwise Leibniz and Spinoza (who would hardly have been touched by Wolff's lesson) would not be the consistent minds that they incontestably were. I would dare to extrapolate the whole of Leibniz's doctrine of the soul from Spinoza…Fundamentally they have the same teaching on freedom too, and it's only an illusion that distinguishes their theories.[38]

Specifically, Jacobi claims that Leibniz cannot be fundamentally distinguished from Spinoza on questions concerning the soul,[39] freedom, or even final causality. On the subject of freedom, Jacobi claims Spinoza and Leibniz are equally determinists since they explain the "feeling" of freedom only through naturalistic examples. In Spinoza's case it is "through the example of a stone that thinks and that knows that it is striving to maintain its movement as

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[38] Jacobi, ibid, 191. For Jacobi, it is sad but true that Leibniz is a Spinozist at heart: "I reel at the hypothesis that this man did not accept a transcendent cause of the world, but only an immanent one." Further—and we will discuss this later—not only do Leibniz and Wolff according to Jacobi fall prey to atheism, but any attempt to demonstrate the existence of God with reason leads inexorably to atheism: "The Leibnizian-Wolffian philosophy is no less fatalistic than the Spinozistic philosophy that leads the persistent researcher back to the principles of the latter. Every avenue of demonstration ends up in fatalism." See Jacobi, ibid, 234.

[39] See Jacobi, ibid, 192-193: "I would dare to extrapolate the whole of Leibniz's doctrine of the soul from Spinoza...Leibniz has called the souls, honestly enough, *des automates spirituels*. But how can the principle of all souls *subsist* on its own somewhere and be efficient…how can the spirit be before matter; or thought before the object?" For Jacobi, as we shall see below, final and efficient causes are two separate registers of causation. The principle of soul in Leibniz cannot both "subsist on its own" (as a free individual) and be part of a chain of efficient causes. This basis in efficient causation ultimately degrades the soul into a lifeless (Spinozistic) body, governed by the fatalistic laws of cause and effect. Leibniz cannot escape from this "great knot" of contradiction, as Jacobi calls it (193).

much as it can…" In Leibniz's case, the feeling of freedom is explained "with the example of a magnetic needle that desires to move in the direction of the North and believes itself to be moving independently of another cause, for it cannot be aware of the unnoticeable movement of the magnetic matter" (Jacobi, 192).

Even on the question of final causality, or what was purported to be the ultimate difference between Spinoza and Leibniz, the latter cannot escape the former's doctrines: "Leibniz explains the final causes through an *appetitus*, a *conatus immanens* (*conscientia sui paeditum*). Spinoza could say the same, for he could perfectly well allow them [i.e., final causes] in this sense; and for him, as for Leibniz, representation of the external, and desire, constitute the essence of the soul." The heart of the matter for Leibniz is thus the heart of the matter for Spinoza, since "each and every final cause presupposes an efficient one in Leibniz just as much as in Spinoza" (Jacobi, 193).

Lessing tells Jacobi that people "always speak of Spinoza as if he were a dead dog still." Jacobi responds that this will continue since "it takes too big an effort of mind, and too much determination to understand Spinoza." Jacobi showers Spinoza to Lessing with praise: he calls him "blessed," and a man who enjoyed firm inner convictions and peace of mind. Both of these accolades stem from the rigorous consistency of his doctrines. But then Lessing wonders why Jacobi is not a Spinozist himself. Jacobi answers that "Spinoza…has led me to the perfect conviction that certain things admit of no explication: one must not therefore keep one's eyes shut to them, but must take them as one finds them" (Jacobi, 193).

As Jacobi describes it, in order to leap out of speculative reason towards theism—towards the God of Abraham and Jacob—one needs to confront reason in its purest expression in Spinoza. Against other Enlightenment thinkers Jacobi uses Spinoza as his cudgel before

providing his own intuitionist position. After showing how all other positions based on reason inexorably lead to Spinozism, Jacobi must show how Spinozism leaves one no way out but to accept faith in a personal God. As Jacobi puts it, one "is powerless to resist the compulsion for consistency, even if that consistency means he must stand on his head." One must rather leap from the realm of concepts to God through the intimate feeling of God's immediate presence, a feeling that is not subject to logic or abstract principles: "[The] ultimate goal is that which cannot be explained: whatever is insoluble, whatever is immediate, whatever is simple" (Jacobi, 194).

1.2. *Jacobi's Critique of Spinoza*

1.2.1. *The Impossibility of Substance*

> Lessing could not abide the idea of a personal, truly infinite being perpetually enjoying its most supreme perfection. He associated with it an image of such infinite boredom that the very thought of it caused him pain and dread (Jacobi, 197).

> Jacobi: I believe in an intelligent personal cause of the world.
> Lessing: Oh, all the better! I must be about to hear something entirely new.
> (Jacobi, 189).

The purpose of Jacobi's critique of Spinoza's concept of the infinite is to expose it as staunchly anti-theist. "Spinozism is atheism"—the most blatant and consistent type of atheism—and while there may be some romantic dilettantes who believe that Spinozism is compatible with "all species of superstition and enthusiasm" they are missing the main point of the doctrine. The pseudo-Spinozist thinks they can "blow the most beautiful bubbles" with Spinoza's doctrine, but those who truly understand Spinoza will not "hide behind the froth" of Spinoza's religious imagery or call his concept of substance "God." A true demonstration of Spinoza's doctrine will incontrovertibly prove it as

atheistic (Jacobi, 233).

Jacobi is careful to separate what he thinks is the spirit of Spinoza's system from the "formula-method" of the geometers. This geometrical method of the *Ethics* is one borrowed from ancient sources, "lost in the traditions from which Pythagoras, Plato, and other philosophers have already drawn." But what actually constitutes Spinoza's system ("its soul") is the principle, *gigni de nihilo nihil, in nihilum nil potest reverti*: from nothing, nothing is generated; into nothing, nothing can return. "Spinoza made an issue [of this saying], but with more abstract concepts than the philosophers of the cabbala or others before him" (Jacobi, 187).

In terms of the traditional conceptions of God and creation, this principle does not allow for God to create something out of nothing. Yet such is the fundamental tenet of orthodox belief in starkest contrast to Spinoza, since, for the latter it is logically and conceptually impossible for something to arise out of nothing. The notion of creation out of nothing takes a leap of faith, while Spinoza's logic rejects "any transition from the infinite to the finite," i.e., any idea of creation. Jacobi even goes as far to say that Spinoza must reject the notion of transient causes altogether, arguing that Spinoza saw immanence as the only true cause, "eternally unchangeable in itself." This meant that the world was static, and Spinoza's God was forever "One and the same" (Jacobi, 188).[40]

[40] The demotion of transitive causation in favor of an overpowering immanent cause makes for an a-cosmist argument against Spinoza. "He [Spinoza] therefore rejected any transition from the infinite to the finite. In general, he rejected all *causae transitoriae, secundariae* or *remotae*, and in place of an emanating En-Soph he only posited an immanent one, an indwelling causes of the universe eternally unalterable within itself, One and the same with all its consequences…" Thus for Jacobi, everything in Spinoza's universe--except for God as an immanent cause--is rendered unreal. See Jacobi, ibid, 188.

What is left in Spinoza's God is then nothing else but pure being itself. This means that being is neither an attribute, nor "anything derived from some sort of power." It is not in a state of becoming or flux, but is the eternal ground of every coming-to-be as something that has always been. It is something that subsists totally in itself, subsuming everything that is only apparently outside of it. "If the finite was with the eternal from all eternity, it cannot be outside it, for if it were outside it, it would either be another being that subsists on its own, or be produced by the subsisting thing from nothing" (Jacobi, 217). We can conclude that God as eternal being is "what lies at the ground of every attribute, quality, and force—it is that which we designate with the word "substance." Nothing can be presupposed by it, and it must be presupposed by everything" (Jacobi, 205).

Again, if nothing can only come from nothing, this means God is stripped of his ability to create something from nothing. Thus, God loses his freedom since he can only act according to what Jacobi calls a blind necessity. In other words, God does not act at all. He is only an immanent infinite cause, "and as such is explicitly devoid of both reason [*Verstand*] and will." As a result of God's infinity, God is reduced to the status of an "it," and "it" cannot have any object for "its" thinking or will since God is not conscious but is rather brute existing reality. Since God is totally self-caused and one with necessity, it is "absurd" for it to create, will, or determine any objects.[41] Intelligence or thought then is not the cause of substance, but substance is "the source of thought. Hence a non-thinking something must be assumed before thought as being first—something that must be thought as prior to everything else…" (Jacobi, 192).

[41] Jacobi says that if God for Spinoza had "a particular and individual actuality of its own as its unity (to express myself in this way), if it had personality and life, insight would be the best part of it too." But the insight human beings have into Spinoza's God makes them passive and lifeless, as mere effects of infinite nature, a nature devoid of personality and purpose. See Jacobi, ibid, 190.

God as an immanent cause is underived from intermediate causes since it is by definition self-caused. It is also "equally effective at every point of extension and duration." This first immanent cause is one with nature and acts simply by virtue of what it is. Since "it is impossible that there should be a ground or a purpose to its being, so it is equally impossible that there should be a ground or purpose to its actions." For Jacobi, God in Spinoza is thus reducible to nature; it cannot have particular ideas or particular determinations of the will because nature does not think, reflect, or get angry, but simply *is* (Jacobi, 214).

For Jacobi, Spinoza's God is also reducible to "general prime matter," and cannot act according to intentions. "The first cause can no more act according to intentions or ends than it can exist for the sake of a certain intention or final cause" (Jacobi, 188). God does not have even a first motive or a final goal to perform. The motives and goals ascribed to him in traditional faith are illusory since there is no beginning or end to the universe or God. "What we call sequence or duration is mere illusion" since only God as the completely independent cause is real, and determines everything else perfectly as part of a static universe.[42] God as an immanent cause renders all other effects and causes unreal. Reality thus suffers from what Maimon called "a-cosmism," or a lack of real differentiation, for "since a real effect coincides with the totality of its real cause, and is distinguished from it only in representation [i.e., distinguished only according to human perceptions and thinking—HF], consequence and duration must in truth only be a certain way of intuiting the manifold in the infinite" (Jacobi, 188).

Spinoza's God lacks all individuality and is "the purge principle of reality in all that is real, the principle of being in all that exists, entirely without individuality, simply and plainly

[42] The "sum of all finite things, equally containing within itself the whole of eternity at every moment, part and future, is one and the same thing as the infinite thing itself." Jacobi, ibid, 217.

infinite." But from the direct expressions of the infinite Spinoza posits two attributes or expressions of God: thought and extension. They are "properties of God," and these two infinites make up his indivisible essence.[43] In turn, these two attributes help to express "individual, alterable, corporeal things," or modifications of attributes.

According to Jacobi, thought as an attribute in Spinoza is not so much independent from extension as it is its exact mirror. As he explains, thought in Spinoza's system is:

> [n]othing but the being that feels itself. The idea is being with a feeling of itself, inasmuch as it is determinate, individual, and in relation with other singular things...whatever comes to pass in extension must equally come to pass in thought; and every genuine individual is animated in proportion to its manifold and unity, or according to the degree of force by which it is what it is…[T]hought is necessarily joined to its representations (Jacobi, 212).

Jacobi is arguing here that the attribute of thought in Spinoza is essentially tied to objective and determinate bodies in motion, leaving no room for the freedom of the will. But since God is simply one with the universe and its attributes, he gets lost in the effects of that universe, i.e. its external "representations." Thus, in Jacobi's interpretation of Spinoza, we have a strange dialectical movement: from a concept of God as being the blind necessity that annihilates all finitude, to a concept of God as revealed to be reducible to mechanical bodies in motion. This may seem paradoxical, but since God does not create anything *ex nihilio* and is simply one with his creation, the immanent cause dissolves into its effects. In other words, from complete immanence, or the inability of God to separate himself from finite nature, he is revealed to be indistinguishable from finite nature. Jacobi's a-cosmism interpretation transitions to a critique of Spinozism as a form of naturalism.

[43] "[T]hought can no more derive from extension, than extension from thought. The two of them, extension and thought, are totally different beings, yet are only in one thing; that is, they are one and the same thing unum & idem, simply seen under different properties." Jacobi, ibid, 223.

If God is merely immanent to the effects of nature, then God "does not exclude a kind of plurality." This means the real divinity of Jacobi's theistic God is replaced by Spinoza's swirl of lifeless matter in motion, where God is simply an aggregate of bodies and forces. Worse, the attribute of thought is essentially a passive one, entirely subject to the mechanistic movements of extension.[44] Thus, Jacobi's interpretation makes the attribute of thinking dependent on the attribute of extension, as the attribute of thought works completely in tandem with extended bodies. Thought thus fails to exert any power over bodies as a force beyond nature. For Jacobi, it is this strict parallelism between mind and matter that leads to materialist fatalism, making thinking beholden to the movement of bodies alone:[45] The "modified thought that you [Jacobi is addressing a mock Spinoza here—HF] call soul is nothing but the idea or the concept of body, or nothing but the body itself seen from the side of thought" (Jacobi, 212).

What moves all things in Spinoza, from bodies to passions, is a brute mechanical force devoid of consciousness and will. It is something "which knows nothing of all that [consciousness and will—HF] and, to that extent, is totally bereft of sensation and idea." All sensations and ideas are epiphenomenal concepts of extension, movement, etc. Or, as Jacobi tells his character Lessing: "For the determinist, if he wants to be consistent, must become a fatalist: the rest then follows by itself." God is a collection of meaningless forces, or a blind mechanism of efficient causes that determines the rest of nature, including thoughts and volitions. Hence, as modifications of God, human beings do not exhibit actual freedom but are simply observers of

[44] Jacobi, ibid, 199.

[45] In his letter to Fichte, Jacobi will argue that transcendental idealism is itself a "materialism without matter," since Fichte's pure consciousness functions like a postulate for mathematical space. Or, more specifically, Fichte's ego replaced Spinozist substance, but appropriated all of its logical consequences as an impersonal abstraction: "Thus the two main avenues, materialism and idealism, or the attempt to explain everything from a self-determining matter alone or from a self-determining intelligence have the same aim. Their opposing courses do not take them apart at all, but rather bring them gradually nearer to each other until they finally touch." See Jacobi, *Jacobi to Fichte*, 1799, in *The Main Philosophical Writings*, ibid, 502.

nature. It is their "proper business…to accompany the mechanism of the efficient causes." In terms of human thought, it is essentially the thought of the body. "We know absolutely nothing apart from our body and what can be derived from the concept of it…" This, for Jacobi, is an "excellent indication of the true meaning of Spinoza's system" (Jacobi, 222).

Without a personal first cause of the universe, Spinoza condemns us to fatalism. Even the conversation Jacobi and Lessing are having about Spinoza is only a concern of fate and bodies in motion; it has nothing to do with choice or thinking, since all is reduced to the laws of cause and effect. The sequence of phenomena that we invest with so much importance is a reflex of mechanical nature. It is entirely reducible "to its elements: extension, movement, degree of velocity." Even the affects and the passions are predetermined, since "we only believe that we act out of anger, love, magnanimity, or reasonable resolve. Pure illusion!"[46] Such fatalism is anathema to Jacobi, where "no conviction is more vital than that I do what I think, and not, that I should think what I do" (Jacobi, 193).[47]

1.2.2. (*Non)-Knowledge of God*

> [W]hat we cannot so construct, we also cannot comprehend. (Jacobi, 374).
>
> I repeat: God is, and is outside me, a living, subsisting being, or I am God. There is no third. (Jacobi, 524).

Scholars such as George di Giovanni argue against the portrayal of Jacobi as an irrationalist philosopher: they argue that while Jacobi wants to delimit the scope of reason, he

[46] This creates what Jacobi calls "perfect skepticism" in Spinoza: "Jacobi: I draw back from a philosophy that makes perfect skepticism a necessity." Jacobi, *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza*, 1785, in *The Main Philosophical Writings*, ibid, 193.

[47] Contrast this sentiment with the words of Jacobi's Spinoza character in his letters to Mendelsohn: "Spinoza: Your faculty to will is a mere *ens rationis* that relates to this or that particular volition in the same way as "animality" relates to your dog or horse, or "humanity" to you or me." See Jacobi, ibid, 210.

does not want to annihilate reason *in toto*.[48] However, one can show that the kind of delimitation of reason Jacobi has in mind is irrationalist enough. In order for Jacobi's critique of Spinozist substance to succeed, he must invert the flow of thought from abstract concepts to a primordial source of will. This source is a creative human will, which finds its analogue in God's will as a divine kind of intelligence that is not reducible to the blind mechanisms of nature.

Jacobi makes a polemical opposition between the principle of sufficient reason and the principle of final causality. There can be no compromise or synthesis between these two ways of understanding the world; one principle must rule and subordinate the other. If the system of mechanical causality reigns, then all senses of providence, purpose, and freedom are treated as illusory. If the system of final causality reigns, these "supernatural" dimensions of reality are restored. According to Jacobi, the war of final causality against the principle of sufficient reason (or mechanical causality) is a war of the supernatural against the merely natural. The supernatural breaks through the blind mechanism of cause and effect to reveal the primordial will at the heart of being, where being itself is not a mere concept but an intelligent and living reality (Jacobi, 367).[49]

The most serious mistake of Spinozism is confusing what Jacobi names the concept of cause with the concept of ground (i.e., confusing a real concrete cause with a logical principle). In other words, for Jacobi there is more to heaven and earth than is dreamed of in a philosopher's words and concepts. What the rationalist does is to reduce cause "for speculative purposes to a *merely logical entity*." But neither the world of phenomena nor the world of

[48] For di Giovanni's position, see his editor's introduction, Jacobi, ibid, 43. For di Giovanni's criticisms of Jacobi's own self-understanding, see Jacobi, ibid, 164.

[49] "This activity, this energy, this primordial force in a being, is the faculty of being able to act upon the things that lie in one's sphere. This activity is directed in all possible directions, and this is what its freedom consists in; it is an indeterminate force that constitutes the aptitude to will, or the faculty of being able to will." Jacobi, ibid, 208.

experience can be captured logically or recuperated at the level of concept. Jacobi will argue how the experience of God and access to the world of phenomena are matters of personal feeling and not abstract reason for Jacobi. Accordingly, the experience of God as something (or rather, as someone) unconditioned and infinite cannot be grasped through abstract thoughts, but only through the experience of a living and feeling being. (Jacobi, 370 and 371).[50]

For Jacobi, the principle of sufficient reason or the principle of ground states that "everything dependent depends on SOMETHING," while the principle of cause affirms that everything "that is done, must be done through SOMETHING." If one confuses these two seemingly equivalent statements, then one cannot explain states of becoming, change, or the sequence of one thing coming after another. If the principle of sufficient reason with its abstract concepts swallows up the principle of cause (i.e., extra-logical cause), then particular empirical phenomena cannot be accounted for. One cannot deduce, for instance, the fact that I am here, sitting, and writing this dissertation from the speculative principles of substance, identity, and cause and effect. One has to experience these empirical things in the real world, and this experience is indicative of something pre-reflective and pre-rational, and not something conceptual, as the idealists would have it. "Even with all its clever tricks, idealism cannot help us out of the difficulty here" (Jacobi, 373).

Before performing his demonstration on the impossibility of demonstrating the existence of God, Jacobi asks us to think about the idea of becoming. For Spinoza, becoming is both part of the unceasing movement of the universe as a whole, and part of the "universal, eternal, [and] unalterable form of individual things…" And this movement has neither a beginning nor an end.

[50] From Jacobi's second edition to the letters to Mendelssohn. See Jacobi, *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza*, 1789, in *The Main Philosophical Writing*s, ibid, 339-378. We will discuss Jacobi's positive solution to the dilemmas of rationalism more below.

But, if that is the case, then individual things can never be said to have truly begun or ended either. They are instead things that exist simultaneously, since in the concept of reason, "there is no prior or posterior, but everything is necessary and simultaneous." The only thing that matters in the Spinozist universe is the relation of dependence, where everything gets lost in its connection to everything else. And since individual phenomena are part of an eternal chain of dependence we cannot say they are truly individual but mere abstractions, dissolvable in the soup of substance. "So the moment that Spinoza elevated the experimental concepts of movement, of individual things, of generation and succession, into concepts of reason, they were at once purified of everything empirical for him" (Jacobi, 370).

The empirical aspects of the universe—and, for Jacobi, its most intimate and concrete aspects—are drained of life before Spinozist substance. Concepts like "time, measure and number" are treated as abstractions from the infinite modes; their reality is degraded since they are deemed mere aids to the imagination without reality. As soon as our concrete experiences are brought back "to the truth" of Spinozist reason, they are reformed and liquidated of their own particular truth content (Jacobi, 372).

Thus, concepts of reason cannot conceive the phenomena of "individual finite things producing and destroying one another in succession." These things are not "naturally explicable," i.e., we cannot think them from the perspective of abstract time. The idea of eternal time, or the idea of things as part of an unending series of cause and effect, cannot account how particular things emerge and perish. In order to describe such states, one has to interrupt the series and set a beginning to it. But such an interruption in the logical chain is admittedly "devoid of sense" from the perspective of an eternal and unchanging time. To make sense of time, Jacobi posits the notion of an intelligent being as the source of these interruptions, since it

is in experience that we understand time. Only with this understanding of time as a product of both intelligence and experience, can we conceive of an "eternal Intelligence that subsists in itself and for itself, alone," and one that sparks the movement of time. Such a notion may seem absurd, but it is only absurd vis-à-vis the realm of the conceptual, since that realm cannot grasp what is totally unconditioned (Jacobi, 373).

We "know" of the existence of the world, the will, and God "outside the region" of concepts, "that is to say, outside that complex of conditioned beings which is nature" (Jacobi, 373). Further, when we search for the will or God, we are searching for something that is supernatural or an unconditioned condition which is not a condition of reason. In fact, to even call the unconditioned a condition is to both degrade the unconditioned into a concept and make it commensurate with mere human knowing. But we cannot hope to *know* the infinite for Jacobi, since as he puts it in his open letter to Fichte, to know God is to be God (Jacobi, 524). Since we are finite we cannot raise ourselves to the infinite and thus our reason is shut off from a true notion of God.

In order to "know" God, reason must step "outside its own purview." It cannot get closer to God by demonstrating his existence with finite concepts that will only degrade him into an it or a blind mechanism of nature. If reason is unhinged from concrete personal experience, it does violence to reality. For Jacobi, reason's "general occupation is the progressive making of combinations; its speculative occupation is the making of combinations according to recognized laws of necessity, that is to say laws of identity" (Jacobi, 374). Reason must unite what is disparate and synthesize what is other to itself, making it conform to abstract rules. But in reason's attempt to assimilate what is other than it, it loses that otherness:

> But the essential indeterminacy of human language and designation, and the mutability of sensible shapes, almost universally allows these propositions to

> acquire an external appearance of saying more than the mere *quidquid est, illud est* [whatever is, that it is]; of expressing more than a mere *factus* which was at some point perceived, observed, compared, recognized, and joined to other concepts (Jacobi, 374).

Whatever reason can produce through its constructions is merely the concept of a "natural" thing or a conditioned thing, since reason itself has a restricted scope. It cannot deduce the unconditioned from its own limits since it "belongs among these [limited] things." The whole of reason, and the whole of nature, cannot "reveal more to the searching understanding than what is conditioned in it, namely, manifold existence…never an actual beginning; never a real principle of some objective existence" (Jacobi, 374). Reason can only produce a counterfeit God or a blind nature masquerading as the divine.

This demonstration of the undemonstrability of God has two effects for Jacobi: one, it points to a "rational" irrationalism, or an irrationalism that is reasonable because of the insurmountable problems reason encounters. And two, it liberates the will from mechanism and from reason. Like the Sabbath, man was not made for reason, but reason was made for man. This means reason is an instrument of the will and a product of human history and human construction. Here is how Jacobi redefines reason against rationalism:

> If we understand by "reason" the soul of man only in so far as it has distinct concepts, passes judgments, and draws inferences with them, and goes on building new concepts or ideas, then reason is a characteristic of man which he acquires progressively, an instrument of which he makes use. In this sense, reason belongs to him (Jacobi, 375).

In this scheme Spinoza has things upside down. He makes man a product or an incarnation of reason while reason is a product of man. By treating man as a cipher of reason we reduce man to a series of unending causes and effects or to a meaningless spec in a monistic universe. Instead, Jacobi says that he "takes the whole man, without dividing him" (Jacobi, 375).

The whole of man consists in his conditional knowledge but also in his faith in what surrounds him. While reason cannot deduce the existence of the world and its diverse aspects (much less deduce the existence of God or you or me) we can have faith in the existence of these things because we experience them. In other words, we do not "think" God or existence abstractly: we feel them concretely as living things.

For Jacobi, to provide conditions for the unconditional, to "construct it in order to be able to comprehend it," is absurd. We cannot reduce things to a pure natural existence because there is no such thing as a pure natural existence apart from our concepts. Whenever we uncover a mechanism we discover a *telos* or a living will behind it, instead of the mechanism simply revealing to us another mechanism or an abstract principle. What remains is what is outside mechanical nature and outside of "every natural connection with it" (Jacobi, 376). Since nature is only the sum-total or aggregation of what is finite, it cannot be isomorphic with the unconditional, whether in the form of the human will or of God's will.

This critique of Spinoza reintroduces the idea of creation *ex nihilio*, where nature proceeds from the will supernaturally. For Jacobi, this means we reorient our conception from a universe whose substrate is blind mechanism to one whose substrate is "will." God, as a supernatural entity, as something unconditional, is not apprehended "through concepts…the supernatural cannot be apprehended by us in any way except as it is given to us, namely, as fact—IT IS!" (Jacobi, 376). Finite concepts and finitude cannot exist on their own, but are caused by something free, independent, and unmediated from mechanical necessity, namely, a living will. This will is "supernatural," insofar as it is independent of finite nature; the concrete principle of life, as opposed to dead matter and deadening necessity, We experience the supernatural in the living God for Jacobi, and God's personality and freedom are restored to him

as a genuine "intelligence" (as opposed to Spinoza's God of blind nature). "Intelligence," according to Jacobi, is "the highest degree of personality." In other words, this divine intelligence is personal and creative, and not a mere conceptual thing. This idea of "personality" is what Jacobi preserves against those in his view who wipe "out the principle of all intelligence, that is, of personal existence." The supreme cause of all things is not nature but a divine and creative intelligence (Jacobi, 376).

Like God, the human will is also a brute supernatural fact of existence. One cannot have a will if it is "nothing but a consequence of your activity and a mediated activity to boot." In order for the will to be real, it cannot be epiphenomenal, or an effect of one's body or one's material existence. Neither can it be part of the general order of nature. Since the human will does not admit of mediation, i.e., since it is independent of nature, it cannot be said to even participate in a sequence of cause and effect. Further, it cannot even be demonstrated to existence through concepts since "to request a demonstration of man's faculty to will is to request a demonstration of [man's] existence." But one does not demonstrate existence; one simply exists, and those who do not feel this existence are "something other than a man." Anticipating Schelling and Kierkegaard's criticisms of Descartes' *cogito*, instead of affirming existence through thought, Jacobi affirms existence through "existing," or feeling: not "I think therefore I am," but rather, "I am, therefore I exist" (Jacobi, 210).

Jacobi's intuition of human freedom is incompatible not only with the system of "physical necessity," but also the system of "moral necessity." The will is radically unbounded and cannot necessarily conform to the best choice (as, for instance, that which Leibniz's God conforms to). Nor is it necessarily grounded in impulses, natural desires, or anything that could turn human beings into automata. Thus, for Jacobi, there is no real system of natural necessity

that determines the human will. Rather, it is governed only by "a non-mechanistic concatenation," one "according to aims or pre-established goals." In other words, the will's connections are determined through its own purposes and not through antecedent causes. Jacobi does admit the existence of efficient causes, but these are in turn products of will. Behind the apparent chains of determinism, of cause and effect, lies the essential substratum of the will. Mechanism is a product of will, not the other way around (Jacobi, 367).

1.2.3. *The Hordes of Reason*

> Mendelssohn tells us…he had a strange dream. He dreamt that he too was traveling through the Alps, and that he had the aid of two guides. One guide was a Swiss rustic, who was strong and robust, but who had no subtle intellect; the other was an angel, who was gaunt and delicate, introspective and morbid. The guides came to a crossroads and went off in opposite directions, leaving poor Moses standing there completely confused. But he was soon rescued by the arrival of an elderly matron, who assured him that he would soon know the way. The matron revealed the identity of his two guides. The rustic went by the name of "common sense", and the angel by the name of "contemplation", She then told him that it often happens that these characters disagree with each other and go off in opposite directions. But, she consoled him, they eventually return to the crossroads to have their conflicts settled by her. "So who are you?" Mendelssohn asked the matron. She said that on earth she went by the name of "reason", while in heaven she was called…At this point, their conversation was interrupted by the arrival of a fanatical horde who had rallied around the angel of contemplation and who were threatening to overpower common sense and reason. They attacked with horrible screams. Mendelssohn woke up in terror.[51]

In his open letter to Fichte from March 3rd 1799, Jacobi charges the entire idealist tradition with *nihilism*. At the height of the atheism controversy in Jena, Jacobi intervened not so much to express his solidarity with Fichte—a man who thought himself a legatee of Jacobi's anti-Spinozism[52]—but to argue how even Fichtean idealism must become a Spinozism, albeit of

[51] Beiser paraphrasing Mendelssohn. See Beiser's *The Fate of Reason*, ibid, 99.

[52] For Jacobi's specific accusation of nihilism, see Jacobi, *Jacobi to Fichte*, 1799, in *The Main Philosophical*

an inverted kind.[53]

But what did Jacobi mean by nihilism? In the context of the letter, nihilism is a philosophical affliction that subjects all aspects of what Jacobi calls "non-knowledge" to rational scrutiny. This non-knowledge includes not only the supernatural facts of the will or of God recounted above, but all the other facets of human existence that are annihilated through idealistic abstractions. These include traditions and customs, and even irrational passions that cannot be justified through reason. For Jacobi, rationalism, Spinozism, and the mutations of Kant's philosophy in Fichte, cannot explain the "powerful economy" of human existence from which reason stems.

Reason is not something a priori for Jacobi; it is not something we can deduce as existing and residing in the actual structures of the universe. Nothing we do or think originates a priori, but only through concrete experience: "We find ourselves situated on this earth, and as our actions become [happen] there, so too becomes [happens] our cognition." It is the "heart" that shapes the human mind, and not the mind the heart (Jacobi, 237).

Reason itself is impotent to shape human beings, either in science or in morality. As we saw, Jacobi praises Spinoza's system for its consistency; but its abstractions do violence not only to God but to the reality of human freedom. Jacobi cannot even take seriously the last books of Spinoza's *Ethics* on human bondage and freedom and dismisses them as mere "sophistry": reason cannot deduce morality but only an abject submission to natural necessity. There is no room for morality in fatalism, since fatalism denies the free exercise of the will (Jacobi, 194).

Writings, ibid, 519.

[53] "Strange, that the thought never occurred to Spinoza of inverting his philosophical cube; of making the upper side, the side of thought which he called the objective, into the lower, which he called the substance or formal; and then of investigating whether his cube still remained the same thing; still for him the one and only true philosophical shape of reality….[But yours is] a materialism without matter, or a *mathesis pura* in which pure and empty consciousness counts for mathematical space." Jacobi, ibid, 502.

The real well-spring of human advancement stems from the powerful economy of man's historical existence. It is from history and the concrete circumstances that humans gain their morality and their character, even if from the perspective of a-historical reason such moral qualities are worthless or irrational. Jacobi cites the character and actions of the Spartans when they confronted the Persians. When Hydarnes offered Sperchis and Bulis "gifts" and "hospitality," trying to "persuade them to become friends of his King and be just as grand and happy as he," the Spartans rejected his offers. They rejected the offers fanatically and without a rational justification. "Sperchis and Bulis did not say to Hydarnis, "You are a fool, a man of weak spirit;" they admitted rather that he was wise in his measure, understanding and good." They did not become any more rational in their behavior before Xerxes either, who wanted to persuade them to be friends (Jacobi, 238).

In rejecting the offers of the Persians, the Spartans did not think things over, or deliberate, but merely asserted their traditional customs. "They had no philosophy, or rather, their philosophy was just history." And their history was self-legitimating as a force vis-à-vis the reason of the Persians since it proceeded "from the heart, and what one attends to as a principle…has a force that is unconquerable." They acted in accordance with their ancient custom and virtue or in accordance with their age. Instead of representing an abstract philosophy they incarnated a "living philosophy" full of a spirit and content that resists the procrustean bed of a so-called superior rationality (Jacobi, 239).

From a proper understanding of the relationship between philosophy and history, "one ought not to derive the actions of men from their philosophy, but rather their philosophy from their actions" (Jacobi, 239). Thoughts and ideas stem from the economy of history or from the economy of concrete human activity. But it would be wrong here to superficially associate

Jacobi with anticipating a kind of historical materialism—that being determines consciousness instead of consciousness determining being. At the heart of being and history for Jacobi lies the human will. It is a will that is obedient to itself as beyond natural necessity, i.e., obedient to something unconditional:

> Let us say it again: man's understanding does not have its life, and its light, in its self; nor is the will formed through it. On the contrary, man's understanding is formed through his will, which is like a spark from the eternal and pure light, and a force from the Almighty. Whoever walks in this light and acts by this power, will walk in purity from light to light; he will experience his origin and his destination (Jacobi, 248).

An unconditional will subscribes to an axiology that escapes the rational dialectic of nature. In such a rational dialectic, man is treated as an animal with sensuous desires for pleasure and comfort. But human beings are more than natural creatures; they are equipped with a will that defies a rational egoism or an Epicurean morality. For Jacobi, a proper axiology for the human will include values that transcend reason or what is desirable (i.e., pleasurable). "We want rectitude, patriotism, love of mankind, fear of the Lord—and what not else?" (Jacobi, 246).

But these traditional values are under threat from the rationalistic sentiments of the age. In treating human beings as desiring, materialistic animals, people are directed "to the comfortable life and the means thereto (riches, preeminence, and power)." The desire for these finite and conditional things cramps "the best properties of human nature to such an extent that one ceases to be aware of them…if pursued in a truly rational way, this practical education [directed towards sensuous things], comes down to this: that our progeny become duly skilled and ready in becoming worse" (Jacobi, 240).

Jacobi paints a picture of Europe not unlike the last men of history of Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. In losing appreciation for the freedom of the will and the appreciation of

history, “instead of a peace of God, which is only a chimera, [we have] a real peace of the devil, or at least the preconditions for it.” Enlightenment reason fosters these nihilistic preconditions, and it threatens to engulf Europe towards a non-heroic, meaningless, hedonistic existence. Jacobi sees the signs of the coming abyss: “I witness nowadays a total lack of direction in the ways of the good; the refusal to give countenance to the noble and great, to give encouragement and sensuous attraction to it, whereas whatever is attractive and chaste in it is being actively debased” (Jacobi, 241).

The rationalistic ethos of the European mind threatens to extinguish all acknowledgement of providence, and the real (non) knowledge of “God’s image in man.” It is this “image” of the primordial will that is man’s “only source of insight into the truth, and so too of all love of the good.” It is an image that is the “last and best form, and one that is beyond destruction.” Thus, the French materialists, Spinozists, and the Berlin Enlightenment help man forget his inner divinity but they cannot stamp out what is a primordial reality (Jacobi, 242).

The experience of freedom and providence was known in religion before philosophy: in the “traditional positive teaching out of which all philosophy has apparently originated.” Religion is grounded in a unique experience man has of things beyond this world, not tethered to material reality or “the earthly.” This is an awareness that announces itself to our feelings and elevates us to a supernatural state. Only when one intuits God from inner experience and not by “understanding alone” can God come out from hiding. With the right disposition, it will be “totally impossible for man to doubt the pervasive presence in him of his God—more impossible by far than for an earthly subject to doubt the reality of his lord…” (Jacobi, 243).

But when we forget this aspect of our nature; or rather, when we deny the supernatural within our natural frame, the animal overcomes the authentically human, resulting in

degradation. To resist this degradation man must grow in his virtue and purity against what is conditional, until he becomes aware of God's love: "Either you desist in the attempt, or you'll become aware of God in yourself, just as you are aware of yourself." Man is weak and imperfect but with sufficient resolve, obedience, and trust in the unconditional, he can redeem himself. Obedience in the unconditional is "his first virtue, and must also be his last" (Jacobi, 244).

This trust and faith comes from a "living philosophy," found in the products of the will as incarnated in institutions, laws, and traditions. Our behavior should not be determined by "laws of reason," but through "instructions, exposition, model, discipline, aid; from counsel and deed, service and command." Human beings, in their all-too-human frailty, need something higher than their animalistic passions and sensations to guide them. It took "one God" to look after them and all political constitutions:

> [Derive] from a higher Being; they were all theocratic in origin. The first indispensable need, both for the individual men and for society too, is a God (Jacobi, 244).

To restore Europe from a potentially enervating peace; to rescue people from transformation into lifeless automata, Jacobi exhorts a return to authoritarian government and theocracy:

> Complete submission to a superior authority; strict, holy, obedience--this has been the spirit of every age that has brought forth an abundance of great deeds, great sentiments, great men. The holiest temple of the Spartans was dedicated to fear (Jacobi, 244).

Without firm faith in authority predicated upon the unconditional authority of something supernatural our vanity and "personal conceit" will overcome us, dragging our virtue below to vice. History demonstrates for Jacobi that people lose their faith when they "let themselves be seduced by passion which has no law, and binds the spirit in chains" (Jacobi, 244).

In our obedience to the unconditional, we are like children to their parents. Children simply obey their parents without "comprehending the father's mind." And if they fail to obey they will never "interiorize" the laws of the father that help to make them virtuous. But if they are tractable and submit themselves they will "awaken" and know their father. But this awakening is entirely beyond pedagogy or instruction. It is a discipline we must accept on faith alone and a discipline that must "prepare instruction" and obedience (Jacobi, 245).

Understanding, reason, virtue, etc., when known in their right order, emanate from a ground of authority and command and not in the self-subsisting ground of reason. Also, the more "comprehensive, penetrating and sublime a command is, the more it relates to the inner nature of man and his improvement." In obeying something beyond reason we can then understand reason as a product of the will. But "the less can man discern the command's inner good before obeying it, the less capable is his reason to accept it, [and] the more does he need authority and faith" (Jacobi, 246).

Without obedience to the divine we capitulate to our animality; we become "like cattle, without light or right." In defying our animality Jacobi's system of values must posit something that transcends interest in pleasure or even rational self-interest (dismissed as so many forms of vanity). The highest value is what serves "something invisible" and something without rational justification. That highest value for Jacobi is honor:

> Whoever does homage to honor, swears by the altar of the Unknown God. He promises to obey a Being who sees into the heart: for the service of honor consists in this, that we are as we appear; that we do not arbitrarily or secretly transgress any law; in the brief, steadfast word, TRUTH! Go forth therefore, and obey your unknown God, faithfully and wholly (Jacobi, 246).

Jacobi's clarion call for Western civilization is to obey the God within us that we cannot understand rationally or conceptualize. Understanding is submission to what is other than

reason, a "fanaticism" of the will as we witnessed in Jacobi's example of Spartan defiance.[54] But it is not ostensibly pagan gods Jacobi asks for submission to, but the one God we can intuit and wholly give ourselves to.

Experience teaches us that it is action that determines thinking. But this action is that of the supernatural and unconditional will of not only God (a God that is revealed in our experience and is immanent to that experience) but of the human will itself. We obey "the majesty of the Lord," not because we can understand it, but because we can feel it. In "his goodness He descends to us, and through his grace the Eternal One becomes a presence to man." When the voice of God speaks we "fall silent" and we "prostrate glowing with thanks and delight" (Jacobi, 249).

1.4. *Jacobi's Religious Atheism*

> In his memoranda Mendelssohn had complained that here and there I had upset *the idea of Spinozism that he had formed in his mind*; that many passages in my letter were simply unintelligible to him; that he failed to see how others fitted into my system; that he could see himself being led around in a circle, and that he doubted equally whether, at the bottom of my heart, I was committed to atheism, or to Christianity (Jacobi, 215).

> I invoke Annihilation, like a divinity, against such a Danaidic, such an Ixionic bliss (Jacobi, 511).

Jacobi restates all his familiar positions in his open letter to Fichte; that his anti-philosophy rebels against not only mechanistic materialism, but the rationalism of the transcendental idealists (which includes Fichte's idealism). All creation is not governed by

[54] Jacobi is quite open about his fanaticism: "Call me an impostor before the whole world, a fool, a fanatic—what you will!" Jacobi, *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza*, 1785, in *The Main Philosophical Writings*, ibid, 247. Jacobi admits this when confronted with those who do not or simply cannot admit God into their hearts. Jacobi concedes that you can call him "an impostor" from a different standpoint, but his truth is not objective but his own. As we will argue below, since God is something beyond reason for Jacobi, but also not something objective, there is no other alternative except to admit that God is a product of subjective belief.

chance cause and effect, but displays inherent to it a "logical enthusiasm" of "purely self-intending and self-contemplating activity, simply for the sake of acting and contemplating." This pure activity is invoked against any rational purpose, justification, or intention and because it is unconditional it is the true foundation for nature and history (Jacobi, 511).

But as Jacobi's contemporary detractors noticed (including detractors like Hegel) Jacobi equivocates on the agent of this unconditional activity. Is the locus of activity in God's will or in the finite human will? If it is in God's infinite and unintelligible will, then how can the will of the human being be radically free? Conversely, if the human will is unconditional (a site for freedom above mechanism), then how can it be reconciled with the unconditionality of God's will?

As we saw in our exposition of Jacobi's epistemology above, Jacobi argues the discovery of nature and a supernatural God is immanent to experience, i.e., to human experience. But unless Jacobi avoids relapsing into a sort of irrationalist Spinozism—in giving God unconditional power compared to the human will—he cannot but advocate an inflated conception of the will immanent to human experience. And we know that whatever God is for Jacobi, he is a person. But now it is a question of whether or not Jacobi claims the mantle of God for himself. Perhaps, in the words of William Altman, Jacobi is guilty of self-deification.[55]

Jacobi claims there are two sides to human perception. On the one side is our more animalistic and passive side that perceives what is outside of us. On the other side, however, is a kind of reason that has the capacity to see what is "divine" in man, or the divine as it is itself. The merely human is what perceives passively, as a naturalistic observer of an

[55] See Altman's chapter on the "Self-Deification of German Philosophy" in *The German Stranger: Leo Strauss and National Socialism*, ibid.

external world beyond its immediacy. But the more than human (or perhaps the properly human), is what is divine itself. True divinity for Jacobi is pure personality and will unbounded by causal laws.[56]

The consequences of this divinization of the will are revealed when Jacobi tells Fichte that he does not know any non-epistemic conception of the good, i.e., "the good in itself," beyond experience. Perhaps he concedes he has some "intimation of it," but it is too far afield and transcendent that it makes little sense to believe it. And if it is a conception of the good that runs counter to his own will, as something superimposed and external, then he wants nothing to do with it. Because of this, Jacobi is then accused of "atheism, of true and genuine Godlessness" (Jacobi, 515).

But then, for a moment, Jacobi affirms the charge of this kind of "atheism," and it is worth quoting the full invocation of Jacobi's peculiar atheism below:

> Yea, I am the atheist and the Godless one, who, against the will that wills nothing, will tell lies, just as Desdemona did when she lay dying; the one that will lie and defraud, just as Pylades did when he passed himself off for Orestes; will murder, as Timoleon did; or break law and oath, like Epaminondas, or John de Witt; commit suicide like Otho, perpetrate sacrilege like David—yea, I would pluck ears of wheat on the Sabbath just because I have hunger, and the law is made for man, not man for the law. I am this godless man, and I scoff at the philosophy that calls me godless on this account. I scoff at it and at its highest Being, for I know, with the most sacred certainty that I have in me, that the *privilegium aggrantiandi* for such crimes against the pure letter of absolutely universal law of reason is man's true right of majesty, the seal of his worth, of his divine nature (Jacobi, 516).

[56] See Jacobi's 1815 preface to his *David Hume*. In this preface, Jacobi introduces a new terminological distinction (borrowed from the Idealists) between reason and the understanding (*Vernunft* vs. *Verstand*), where reason is what is life-affirming and divine, as opposed to the animalistic and passive nature of the understanding. In dissenting from di Giovanni's interpretation, which sees Jacobi's new distinction as a substantive change, we see it as essentially terminological, since the truly human as opposed to the animal or passive in man is made throughout his writings. See Jacobi *David Hume on Faith: Preface*, 1815, in the *Main Philosophical Writings*, ibid, 540. For di Giovanni's interpretation, see his translator's introduction in Jacobi, ibid, 153-167.

All of this can be dismissed as so much ironic bluster: it may be argued Jacobi cannot be advocating real atheism, but is making a rhetorical point about his relative atheism compared to the dead God of the philosophers and the rationalists. If their God is a God of abstract necessity and man is part of this God, then man cannot be but a cog in the system. But again, notice from our above discussions that Jacobi does not try to prove the existence of God as an abstract deduction or proof (that would defeat the purpose). Jacobi demonstrates that God is, against all other attempts at demonstration, something unconditional, but his method of demonstration is not an argument as much as it is internal access of God from within the human breast. God is not proven: he is felt and believed in. What allows access to God is this inner divinity that is the actual-- or supernatural--side of human beings.

Jacobi accords a divine creativity to the human will. Instead of perceiving the passive states of existence, instead of experiencing things as spectators in the stalls of a theater, we ourselves constitute our world through our activity. For at least in the seemingly exoteric message of Jacobi, the free activity of God outside of us creates nature *ex nihilio*, and thus imbues the world with divine purpose. In other words, final causality is not an illusion of the imagination as it was for Spinoza, or even a helpful heuristic principle as it is in Kant's *Critique of Judgment*. Rather, final causality is the first principle of a divine personality that gives meaning to the world through an act of creation.

But the question then becomes is it actually God's will that helps order reality and defines human experience? Or is it vice versa? Again, God is only something immediate to self-consciousness, a fact of consciousness. He is not a form of determinate knowledge, but something directly intuited at the level of feeling. But what is the status of this feeling? As Hegel points out, to even know in the unique way that Jacobi is claiming is still presented as form of

"knowledge." Specifically, it is even a form of "determinate knowledge" despite itself, since Jacobi through his feelings is trying to communicate something "unknown" via discursive means. If it was completely unknown, it could not be spoken of using what Jacobi treats as finite. Further, if God is treated as so ineffable and unknown, God cannot be known as infinite and thus we have no business in speaking about God something as divine and perfect. Indeed, if we are able to know purposes more immediately than knowing mechanistic causes, this is still a form of determinate knowledge, albeit without real divine content due to the "unconditional" (i.e., ineffable) nature of what is unknown.[57]

As Jacobi illustrates in his discussion of ancient religions, the Greeks dedicated an altar to the "unknown God." But since this God is unknown, and since the world finds its meaning in the locus of individual experience or in the will of the human being, then it is, as Hegel explains: "my subjective activity alone [that] remains to give determination to this thing without content." Thus, the dialectic of immediate knowing in casting away all limitations towards the unconditional still remains trapped inside a bad immediacy, i.e., in the finite. There is nothing truly supernatural about Jacobi's position since he has failed to demonstrate what the unconditional is apart from the finite determinations of the human will. In other words, his conception of God remains abstract, and God is degraded to the level of mere opinion.

> "We…lose our way in declamations about truth and God, but we do not want to know what such divine attributes are."[58]

If Jacobi's immediate claims cannot be proven, then they are matters which stem from individual faith and conviction. They derive not from the unconditional, but from the nature of

[57] G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on Logic*. Translated by Clark Butler. (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2008), 68.
[58] Hegel, ibid, 68.

consciousness. Since Jacobi rids himself of any need for mediation, argument, or demonstration, God is a subjective fact of consciousness. But, as Hegel wryly points out, "anyone surely has the right to reply "But this is not a fact of my consciousness.""[59]

Like Jacobi's conception of God, his axiology remains stuck in abstraction since he cannot demonstrate the need for unconditional values like, for instance, honor. To advocate so strongly for a particular axiology (one as theocratic and authoritarian as Jacobi posits) is to say too much: even so-called unconditional values like honor contain too much mediation and determinateness, as what is honorable depends on the values of particular societies. Thus, the content of what Jacobi means cannot be filled in by the unknown God, but by the meaning granted by the mores of the community or even the opinions of the individual.

Jacobi's intuitionism fails to establish an unconditional beyond human belief. If such an idea of the unconditional is truly independent, then it would condition the individual will as part of it. But then the freedom of the individual (as Jacobi conceives of freedom) would be lost. Hence, in order to preserve the freedom of the will, Jacobi has to degrade God to the level of the finite, lest an infinite idea of God overpower the supernatural status of the human. God has to be treated as radically indeterminate, contentless, and unknown, where his purposes are filled out from the subjective activity of human beings. But this is to make God dependent upon man, and not man dependent upon God.

For Jacobi's friend and fellow Counter-Enlightenment thinker, Johann Hamann, the failure of refuting Spinozism lies in the idea of refuting anything at all. Jacobi, according to Hamann, failed because he tried to fight the rationalists with a superior rationalism, where a higher reason can be intuited to prove the supernatural. To think of God as a clear and distinct

[59] Hegel, ibid, 67.

idea, even at the level of feeling, is to engage in a rationalistic argument by other means. Specifically, to argue that existence precedes our concepts and to demonstrate how that is the case is absurd, and commits one to a performative contradiction of using reason to undermine itself.[60]

Hamann loathed Jacobi's anti-Spinozist project, not because it was criticizing Spinozism—Hamann himself considered Spinoza pernicious and worthless—but because Jacobi conceded too much ground to Spinozism. Indeed, the unintended effect of Jacobi's letters to Mendelssohn was to help rehabilitate the legacy of Spinoza. It paved the way for the next wave of German philosophy that considered itself Spinozist to one degree or another. Thus, while the German Idealists did not necessarily subscribe to Jacobi's positive arguments for freedom, God, and an authoritarian politics, they were the heirs to the problems Jacobi posed to Mendelssohn and the German Enlightenment. In line with Hamann's anxieties, instead of burying the moderate Enlightenment, Jacobi helped to radicalize it further. Despite Jacobi's intentions, his anti-Spinozist efforts inadvertently unleashed a renaissance of Spinozism in early German Idealism.

[60] For Hamann's dismay at Jacobi's role in the Pantheism Controversy, see di Giovanni's discussion in Jacobi, *The Main Philosophical Writings*, ibid, 105.

Chapter Two: Spinoza's Cube

2.1. *Tübingen Spinozism*

The peasant woman lives within the circle of her Lisa, who is her best cow; then the black one, then the spotted one, and so on; also of Marti, her boy, and Ursula, her girl, etc. To the philosopher, infinity, knowledge, movement, empirical laws, are things just as familiar. And as her dead brother and uncle are present to the peasant woman, thus Plato, Spinoza, etc., are present to the philosopher. The one has as much reality as the other, but the latter are immortal.[61]

The story of Hegel's early reception of Spinoza must start not only with Hegel himself, but with his philosophical comrades-in-arms from the Tübingen seminary: Hölderlin and Schelling. In Hegel's student album (*Stammbuch*), filled with the collected devotions of his friends (for liberty, fraternity and other revolutionary themes), we find the curious contribution of Hölderlin's where he copied out Goethe's lines "*Lust und Liebe sind/die Fittige zu großen Taten."*[62] Underneath those same lines was added the Greek Spinozistic slogan of Lessing: *hen kai pan* (one and all). According to Harris, we do not know who added the pantheistic phrase. It might have been from either Hölderlin or Hegel's hand. "Whoever added it, there is no doubt that it was added because Hölderlin had adopted the words as a motto which somehow typified his attitude to the world."[63]

Hölderlin's letters to his mother detail his Spinoza studies, which included Jacobi's *Letters* (the 1785 edition and perhaps also the 1789 one). From Karl Rosenkranz, we also know that Hegel, Hölderlin, and other friends in the seminary liked to discuss Jacobi's letters together, perhaps in the summer of 1790. Hölderlin at that time acquired his Greek "symbol" (*hen kai pan*), and made "an excerpt from Jacobi, beginning with the account of a conversation between Jacobi and Lessing, in which the latter used the formula to express his own agreement with

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[61] Hegel, "Aphorisms from the Wastebook" in Jon Stewart's *Miscellaneous Writings of G.W.F. Hegel*, (Northwestern: Northwestern University Press, 2002), 246.
[62] "Lust and love are/the pinions of great deeds." Translation H. S. Harris's, H. S. Harris, *Hegel's Development: Towards the Sunlight* 1770-1801, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 97.
[63] Harris, ibid, 97-98.

Spinoza."[64] Here is Hölderlin's paraphrase:

> 1. Lessing was a Spinozist. Page 2. The orthodox concepts of the Divinity were not for him. He could get no nourishment from them. "hen kai pan: He knew no other."

Hegel for Harris was probably extremely interested in the *Pantheismusstreit*, and it seems clear that Hegel's early concerns were close to Lessing's *Education of the Human Race*, namely issues of culture, reform, and enlightenment.[65] Schelling too at the time praised Goethe's Prometheus poem in its defiance of Jacobian theism. Some years after they graduated from the seminary, Schelling wrote his famous letter to Hegel from February 1795, relating his conversion to Spinozism, with language borrowed from Lessing's conversations with Jacobi:

> For us, too, the orthodox concepts of God are no more.—My answer is: We can go beyond a personal being. I have meanwhile become a Spinozist!—Don't be amazed. You'll soon hear how.[66]

Schelling elaborates how the critical (i.e., Kantian) philosophy and the "dogmatic" (i.e., Spinozist) philosophies converge into one another:

> For Spinoza, the world (the object as opposed to the subject) was—everything; for me, this is true of the ego. The real difference between the Critical [Kantian] and the dogmatic philosophy seems to me to lie in the fact that the former starts from the absolute ego (not yet conditioned by any object), while the latter starts from the absolute subject or non-ego. The latter, pushed to its ultimate consequences, leads to Spinoza's system, the former to Kant's. Philosophy has got to start from the unconditional. The only question is what is unconditional, the ego or the non-ego. Once this question is decided, everything is decided.[67]

Here, in this letter to Hegel, we see in embryonic form the identity of thought and being, the subject-object, that Schelling and Hegel affirmed as the *sine qua non* of philosophy.

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[64] Harris, ibid, 99.
[65] Harris, ibid, 99.
[66] Schelling to Hegel, February 4, 1795, in Walter Kaufmann, *Hegel: A Reinterpretation*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1966), 304.
[67] Schelling to Hegel, February 4, 1795, in Kaufmann, ibid, 304.

The mystery of the question, as Schlegel once formulated it, "Spinoza + Fichte = X" would be resolved in Schelling and Hegel's attempts in the *Critical Journal.*[68]

Fichte, as the story goes, was not happy with Schelling's new-fangled Spinozism as a philosophy that could equally posit as necessary the two sides of reality as ideal and real, i.e., as intelligence and nature. Fichte wanted to emphasize the primacy of the ego against the non-ego and could not countenance the ideal and real sides as equally necessary. For Fichte, this was a relapse into dogmatic metaphysics and Schelling's early philosophy of nature was thus an extension of this illegitimate Spinozism.[69]

Fichte tried to negotiate the differences between himself, Schelling, and Hegel, and tried to dissuade Schelling from what he considered a betrayal of transcendental philosophy in favor of full-blown dogmatic metaphysics. Fichte even went so far as to declare that Schelling was not his real opponent, but only Spinoza:

> I would obviously desire that both you and Hegel do not raise anything further against this point of dispute [the alleged formalism of Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*], because it would, I believe, only exacerbate the misunderstandings... I do not want to make you, but solely Spinoza into my opponent.[70]

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[68] See Frederick Beiser, *German Idealism: The Struggle Against Subjectivism* 1781-1801, (Harvard, 2002). p. 458. "Schlegel states that the task of philosophy is to synthesize Fichte and Spinoza. The pole of the infinite represents the philosophy of Spinoza, while that of consciousness stands for the philosophy of Fichte. His philosophy is to be a synthesis of Fichte and Spinoza because it insists on the necessity of each pole and the complementarity of both." Whether Spinoza himself is sufficient as providing the basis for the subject-object philosophy Hegel is aiming with Schelling in these early works is something we will consider below, but this formula of Fichte + Spinoza was how some young Hegelians saw Hegel himself. Feuerbach and Bruno Bauer both assert Hegel as a synthesis between these two seemingly antithetical poles, and that accounts for Hegel's achievement but also for Hegel's conceptual tensions. See Marx and Engels, *The Holy Family, or the Critique of Critical Criticism* (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishers, 1956).

[69] On the split between Fichte and Schelling, and Hegel's role in the matter, see Georg Lukacs' *The Young Hegel*, (London: Merlin Press, 1975), 241-260.

[70] Fichte to Schelling, October 8 1801, in *The Philosophical Rupture between Fichte and Schelling: Selected Texts and Correspondence* (1800-1802), (New York: SUNY Press, 2012), 73. At least at this early stage, Schelling and Hegel did not see Spinoza as the enemy, but as their ultimate precursor. It is also interesting to see too how Schelling characterized the Identity-Philosophy as wholly Spinozist after his break from Absolute Idealism in 1808. Schelling even went so far as to accuse Hegel of merely repeating the same Identity-Philosophy (now called by Schelling in these later works "Negative Philosophy") as his own system. Schelling called Hegel's philosophy a neo-Spinozism, or a sophisticated Spinozism (as recounted by Kierkegaard in his letters to his brother). Feuerbach too, perhaps under the influence of Schelling's quasi-empiricist critique of Hegel (how concepts cannot fully capture the particularity of things), calls the identity-philosophy simply a species of Spinozism, and characterizes the

Fichte was most likely reacting to Hegel's first book (*Differenzschrift***,** 1800**)** which attacked Fichte's subjectivism in favor of Schelling's philosophy of nature. But one should keep in mind how in these 1801-1802 letters, Fichte was still reeling from the Atheism Controversy in Jena,[71] where he was accused of denying a theistic conception of God in favor of abstract principles of thought. In Fichte's appeal to his fellow-thinkers, such as Jacobi, he found no solace, but further accusation: for Jacobi, Fichte was guilty of crypto-Spinozism and speculative atheism. All of this was unfair in terms of Fichte's intentions though, and the break with Schelling made it abundantly clear that Fichte's conception of intellectual intuition could not extend to accessing the absolute as *causa sui*. For Schelling and Hegel, Fichte remained stuck in the categories of the finite understanding, with the ego positing the non-ego as a beyond that could never be reached or consummated in knowledge. While Fichte yearned for the absolute, that yearning was still mired in the finitude of subjectivism.

2.2. *Hegel's Acquaintance with Spinoza*

Hegel's first in-depth acquaintance with Spinoza came when he helped to edit the first collected edition of Spinoza's works in German with Paulus in Jena (1802).[72] But Hegel did

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relationship between Hegelian spirit and Spinozist substance in much the same way Schelling does in his *Lectures on Modern Philosophy*: "Identity philosophy only differs from Spinozist philosophy in that it animates the dead, phlegmatic thing of substantiality with the *spiritus* of idealism. Hegel in particular made autonomous activity, the autonomous power of discrimination and self-consciousness an attribute of substantiality. Hegel's paradoxical statement that "consciousness of God is God's self-consciousness" rests on the same foundation as Spinoza's paradoxical statement: "expansion or matter is an attribute of substantiality" and means nothing else than "self-consciousness is an attribute of substantiality or God, God is I." See F. W. J. von Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 159. For Schelling's comments about Hegel's Spinozism as recounted by Kierkegaard, see Niels Thulstrup, *Kierkegaard's Relation to Hegel* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), 271. For Feuerbach's comments, see Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Fiery Brook: Selected Writings*, (London: Verso, 2014).

[71] For more on the Atheism Controversy, see Bowman, Estes, *J.G. Fichte and the Atheism Dispute* (1798–1800) (Vermont: Ashgate, 2009).

[72] G. H. R. Parkinson argues that Hegel's understanding of Spinoza was never deep, and that the Paulus edition was laced with errors. But even though Parkinson ably defends Spinoza from some of Hegel's later criticisms, he does not investigate Hegel's early readings or defenses of Spinoza. This is a significant gap in Parkinson's reconstruction of Hegel's understanding of Spinoza, and such a gap may color how he reads Hegel's understanding of Spinoza as "shallow". See G. H. R. Parkinson, "Hegel, Pantheism, and Spinoza*" Journal of the History of Ideas* Vol. 38, No. 3 (Jul. Sep., 1977). 449-459.

address Fichte's anti-Spinozism head on in his first book, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy* (1801). Hegel starts his defense of Spinoza by citing Fichte's assertion[73] that "Spinoza could not possibly have believed in his philosophy, that he could not possibly have had a full inner conviction…" Hegel argues that Fichte's assertions derive from the idiosyncratic form of his philosophy, i.e., its subjectivistic manner. There is also an indirect comment made towards Fichte's attitudes within the course of the text, when Hegel states "the most obvious symptoms [*Erscheinung*] of an epoch-making system are the misunderstandings and the awkward conduct of its adversaries."[74]

Hegel admits that "no philosophical beginning could look worse" than Spinoza's in book one of the *Ethics*, where Spinoza begins with a definition. This problem of the beginning in Spinoza will come back to haunt Hegel later, particularly when he criticizes Spinoza's supposed Euclideanism for deriving speculative truth through mathematical deductions. However, Hegel here comes to Spinoza's defense and it is worth quoting this passage in full since it is seldom referred to. Here, Hegel contrasts Spinoza favorably with the empiricizing and formalizing tendencies of philosophers like Karl Reinhold, who reduce matters of truth to "facts of consciousness":

> No philosophical beginning could look worse than to begin with a definition as Spinoza does. This offers the starkest contrast to "founding and grounding" [here Hegel is referring to Reinhold's formalistic method of philosophizing--HF] or the "deduction of the principles of knowledge," or the laborious reduction of all philosophy to the "highest facts of consciousness." But when Reason had purified itself of the subjectivity of

[73] From Fichte's second introduction to the *Science of Knowledge*: "Spinoza could not have been convinced of his own philosophy. He could only have thought of it; he could not have believed it. For this [Fichte's] is a philosophy that directly contradicts those convictions that Spinoza must necessarily have adopted in his everyday life, by virtue of which he had to consider himself free and self-sufficient…He was convinced that a purely objective mode of reasoning [devoid of subjectivity] must necessarily lead to his system, and he was right about this." See Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Daniel Breazeale*, Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre and Other Writings*, 1797-1800 (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), 98.

[74] G. W. F. Hegel, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy* (New York: SUNY, 1977). 87, 82. G.W.F. Hegel *Werke in zwanzig Bänder* 2, *Jena Schrriften* 1801-1807 (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 1970), 12.

> reflection, then Spinoza's artlessness which makes philosophy begin with itself, and Reason come forward at once with an antinomy, can be properly appreciated too.[75]

Against Fichte, Reinhold, Jacobi, and Kant, Hegel praises Spinoza for starting with philosophical reason or the true itself, as Spinoza starts the *Ethics*, with definition one: "I. By that which is self-caused, I mean that of which the essence involves existence, or that of which the nature is only conceivable as existent."[76] Philosophy in this sense does not need to clear its own throat with an investigation into the facts of consciousness, or an analysis of the organon of cognition before knowing reality. Instead, for Hegel, we can follow the example of Spinoza and start with what is true itself.[77]

Hegel returns to defend Spinoza's starting point in his review of Johannes Schulze's *Critique of Theoretical Philosophy* (1802).[78] This review provides us with a crucial piece of information concerning Hegel's early take on Spinoza since it expands on similar points made against Fichte. Hegel works out the conceptual content of Spinoza's "declarations," starting with E1D1. Spinoza's definition of substance as of something self-caused seems to bring together ideas that exclude one another for the skeptical post-Kantian: the idea of essence as distinct from the idea of existence. Spinoza's argument that the essence of substance necessarily

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[75] Hegel, *Difference*, ibid, 105-106.

[76] Baruch Spinoza, *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, trans. and ed. Edwin Curley (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 408.

[77] The process of discovering philosophical truth as starting with the true itself is the main point of the Critical Journal's opening manifesto Hegel co-authored with Schelling: "However, the true needs no leading-reins to guide us to it; but must bear within itself the power to step forth on its own account; and the limited [starting point of Reinhold's] is itself recognized here for just what it is, that is to say it does not have the stuff of its own subsistence in it, but is understood to be only something hypothetical and problematic, even though in the end it is due to be verified as a veritably true [being]. It is evident therefore that the salvation of finitude was the principal concern." G. W. F. Hegel and F. W. J. Schelling, *The Critical Journal of Philosophy* "Introduction on the Essence of Philosophical Criticism Generally, and its Relationship to the Present State of Philosophy in Particular." Translated from *Kritisches Journal der Philosophie* I, no. 1 (1802) iii-xxiv. As we know, Reinhold was the philosopher in question who advocated positing a hypothetical foundation before grasping the real foundations of being. For the translation, see See Di Giovanni and H. S. Harris, *Between Kant and Hegel: Texts in the Development of Post-Kantian Idealism*, (Indianapolis, Hackett, 2000). 281.

[78] G.W.F. Hegel, *On the Relationship of Skepticism to Philosophy, Exposition of its Different Modifications and Comparison of the Latest Form with the Ancient One* (1802). Translation and Notes by H. S. Harris. Di Giovanni and H. S. Harris*, Between Kant and Hegel,* ibid, 313-362.

entails its existence is seemingly confounding for the modern skeptic, who assumes like Kant the absolute divide between concepts and reality (for instance, the distinction between the concept of a hundred dollars as opposed to the reality of a hundred dollars in my pocket). As Hegel explains, for the standpoint of the skeptical understanding, the one concept (either existence or essence) must seemingly exclude "the other; the one is only definable as long as there is an opposition to the other; let both be posited [assumed] bound together as one, and their bonding contains a contradiction, so that both are negated together."[79]

Spinoza in his first definition suspends the seeming opposition of essence and existence, or the typical Kantian divide between a concept and reality. Something self-caused must necessitate its existence, or it would not be truly self-caused, i.e., it would be dependent upon something else other than itself for its existence, which would be absurd. To also deny the existence of substance would be to put something finite in its place as self-caused, which would be equally absurd as well. Thus, instead of treating the idea of something self-caused as absurd, because it combines within itself the seemingly opposite notions of essence and existence, or concept and reality, Spinoza allows Hegel to slice through the Kantian opposition to obtain a conception of Reason that necessarily entails its reality. Hegel also points to Spinoza's proposition that God is the immanent, but not the transient cause of the world. With this idea of immanent cause, Spinoza has "negated the concept of cause and effect." Hegel explains why in his review:

> For in positing [i.e., in assuming the proposition] the cause as immanent, he posits it as one with the effect,--but the cause is only cause, inasmuch as it is opposed to the effect; the antinomy of the one and the many is equally sovereign [over the finite concepts]; the one is posited as identical with the many, substance as identical with its attributes.[80]

Hegel here points out that an immanent cause will be efficacious, i.e., that from

[79] Hegel, *On the Relationship of Skepticism to Philosophy*, 1802, in Di Giovanni and Harris, ibid, 324.
[80] Hegel, *On the Relationship of Skepticism to Philosophy*, in Di Giovanni and Harris. ibid, 324.

something truly infinite will flow the infinite variety of effects that constitutes existence. The idea of an immanent cause overcomes the antinomies of cause and effect as they relate to finite things and concepts. Understood speculatively, this antinomy of the one and the many, or of an immanent cause as related to its effects, transcends finite relations, where finite cause becomes finite effect, and vice versa in reciprocal relations. Only an immanent conception of cause can act as the one source for relating all aspects of reality under one principle of Reason.[81] The one cause now is united and is identical with the many as its effects, and substance is one with its attributes which are infinite aspects of the self-same reality.

Hegel traces out the dialectic of these concepts within Spinoza's propositions of Reason, since each proposition "permits resolution into two strictly contradictory assertions." Hegel lists the "contradictions" as follows:

> God is a cause, and God is not cause [i.e., God is an immanent but not a transitive cause]; He is one and not one, many and not many; He has an essence which is itself eliminated once more, since essence can only be comprehended in antithesis to form, and His form must be posited as identical with His essence; and so on.[82]

In order for Reason (*Vernunft*) to come into its own, it must in Hegel's words "violate" the so-called "principle of contradiction," through fusing these seemingly antinomical ideas into one conception. Spinoza escapes the formalism of the contemporary scene, due to the non-formal status of his propositions. A strictly formal proposition as Hegel defines it is "posited alone and on its own account, without equal affirmation of the contradictory that is opposed to it." But without an affirmation of its contradictory, without the ability to relate these contradictory terms together, truth remains fractured. Hence, this principle of (non) contradiction declares its mere formality, and cognizes "its falsity at the same time."[83]

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[81] Hegel, *On the Relationship of Skepticism to Philosophy*, in Di Giovanni and Harris, ibid, 325.
[82] Hegel, *On the Relationship of Skepticism to Philosophy*, in Di Giovanni and Harris, ibid, 325.
[83] Hegel, *On the Relationship of Skepticism to Philosophy*, in Di Giovanni and Harris, ibid, 325.

Every genuine philosophy according to Hegel has a negative or skeptical side.[84] By implication, Spinoza's philosophy is granted its rights to the negative, since its propositions genuinely sublate contradictions and deny the existence of the finite as something that can stand alone. One can argue according to Hegel's criteria then that Spinoza is more of a genuine skeptic than Schulze, since Spinoza is skeptical towards the finite, while Schulze posits the finite facts of consciousness absolutely.

2.3. *Kant Spinozified*

Much of Hegel's discussion of Spinoza in *Faith and Knowledge* (*Glauben und Wissen*, 1802) depends on the re-working of sections 76 and 77 of the *Critique of Judgment*.[85] For our purposes, we want to sketch out below Hegel's position on Spinoza with some of this post-Kantian background in mind. Hegel sees a way out of Kant's bifurcation of teleological and mechanistic explanations of phenomena in a Spinozistic reading of Kant's archetypal intellect. Kant assumes a unity in principle between a relation of cause and effect on the one hand and what Hegel calls here "nature's teleological technique [*teleologische Technizismu*s]" on the other.[86] This unity would pose as an "original primordial identity", or an identity that accounts for the whole of nature, not through finite concepts, but through intellectual intuition.[87] However,

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[84] Genuine philosophy is "the philosophy that includes skepticism within itself as well." Hegel, *On the Relationship of Skepticism to Philosophy*, in Di Giovanni and Harris, ibid, 330.

[85] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*. translated by Werner S. Pluhar. (Indianapolis, Hackett, 1987). For sections §76 and §77, see 283-294.

[86] G. W. F. Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*. Translated by Walter Cerf and H. S. Harris, (New York, SUNY Press, 1977), 88. Cerf and Harris translate *teleologische Technizismu*s as teleological technique, but it could also be rendered as teleological "technics" based on Pluhar's rendering of Kant's phrase from section §72 of the *Critique of Judgment*, in Kant, ibid. p. 271. For the original statement, see G.W.F. Hegel *Werke Bänder* 2, *Jena Schrriften* 1801-1807, (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 1970), 326.

[87] G. W. F. Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, ibid, 70. For Kant, intellectual intuition of the absolute is impossible, since as finite creatures while are only capable of sensible intuitions, but not intellectual ones, But Schelling and Hegel do not presuppose the absolute divide between human beings and God. Hegel and Schelling share with Spinoza that human understanding is not simply finite. Hegel had his doubts about intellectual intuition after his break with Schelling as a form of immediate knowledge. But while Schelling aestheticized intuition as a quasi-mystical gift for the privileged few, Hegel developed the original program of intellectual intuition into his philosophical system. Intuition of the absolute was not enough as a start point: it must be demonstrated through a system. Instead of letting a philosophical construction rest upon an unproven intuition, the truth of intuition must be tested, For Hegel's retention and reconstruction of intellectual intuition after his break with Schelling, see Stephen Houlgate's *The*

Kant can only assume the possibility of this divine intellect; he cannot assert its substantial reality, since the universal idea and the particular existence, (or rather, identity and difference) are "completely sundered" (Hegel). In the course of his discussion of the archetypal intellect, Kant also invokes the example of Spinoza, and recognizes in Spinozism "an idealism of final causes." Idealism here is meant in the negative sense, i.e., that final causes are things of the mind but not realities. But Hegel makes a distinction between final causality as a necessary assumption of the finite mind, and final causality as synonymous with the coherence of nature. This idea of teleology is recalibrated to fit Spinoza's conception of a unitary substance, in that the unity of the infinite precedes the finite.[88]

Hegel asserts that Spinoza did not "wish to divest the Idea of final causes of all reality," which is a seemingly odd statement to make considering Spinoza's abjuration of final causality in the *Ethics*.[89] However, it is necessary to emphasize how Hegel is rearticulating the concept of teleology here, as a principle of coherence of all things in nature as related as one. Hegel rescues Spinoza from Kant's formalization of Spinozism, which misses the point that Spinoza was not merely a philosopher of the "intellect" (or of finite categories) but a philosopher of Reason (or a philosopher of the infinite), where the unity of finite and infinite is grounded in infinite reason itself.[90] Hegel argues that if Kant took his idea of the intuitive intellect to its logical extreme it

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Opening of Hegel's Logic: From Being to Infinity, (Lafayette: Purdue, 2006). For the history of the fortunes of intellectual intuition in German Idealism from Kant to Hegel, see Frederick Beiser, *German Idealism: The Struggle Against Subjectivism* 1781-1801, (Massachusetts, Harvard, 2002).

[88] Hegel, ibid, 90.

[89] Baruch Spinoza, *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, trans. and ed. Edwin Curley, (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1985), E1, Appendix, 441.

[90] Hegel, ibid, 90. The distinction between reason (*Vernunft*) and the understanding (*Verstand*) is something Hegel assimilates from Kant, but also transforms it. Kant argued that as finite beings, we are limited to a finite understanding that can never achieve absolute knowledge of the infinite. Reason can only posit or assume a regulative ideal of the whole, but it cannot know the whole. Spinoza and Hegel, since they do not assume the finitude of human knowledge, claim that knowledge of the infinite is possible, and that it can rise above the contradictions Kant assumed for knowledge in his transcendental dialectic. To simplify matters, the understanding sees categories like the finite and the infinite as fixed opposites, while reason can advance to a higher level of knowledge where such oppositions are reconciled. For a discussion of the distinction between reason and the understanding and how it operates in Hegel, see the entries on Reason in Glenn Alexander Magee's *The Hegel*

would have resulted in Spinoza's metaphysical unity. In Spinoza's unity, "concept and intuition, possibility and actuality, are one." Also, Spinoza's unity is not lacking in Kant's "purposiveness," i.e., teleological coherence, but is an "absolutely intelligible and in itself organic unity." In Spinoza, this unity is determined by the whole itself, or determined by the whole having precedence over its parts. With this substantive metaphysical principle, Spinoza's overcomes Kant's formalistic principle, of teleological reasoning as a mere heuristic for human judgment. To borrow H. S. Harris's analogy, if Kant was a philosophical Moses who described the possibility of the unity of infinite and finite, of *telos* and causality, Spinoza arrived at the promised land where this unity was already a reality.[91]

2.4. *That Worthy Sentry of the Town Walls*

With this reading of Spinoza in mind, Hegel proceeds in *Faith and Knowledge* to address Jacobi's *Letters* to Mendelssohn, or those letters which contain Jacobi's critique of Spinoza. Jacobi represents to Hegel another philosopher of subjectivism, or another turn in the Copernican Revolution towards the absolute primacy of finite consciousness. In Jacobi, God is elevated (or rather degraded for Hegel) into a beyond that we can only feel personally but can never know objectively. This personal God is opposed to Spinoza's God, which Jacobi mocks as a dead pantheistic "it" and not a properly theistic "he."[92]

Hegel engages Jacobi's attack against Spinoza first on the problem of time and the

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Dictionary (New York: Continuum, 2010), 194. See also Michael Inwood's much more extensive (and philological) investigation of the distinction in *A Hegel Dictionary* (New Jersey: Blackwell, 1999), 242-244.

[91] See H. S. Harris, *Night Thoughts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 60. This form of rewriting of the Kantian project with Spinozist metaphysics crops up again in the course of Hegel's *Theses* for his Latin dissertation on the orbits of planets. In thesis seven, he asserts that Critical philosophy lacks genuine ideas, and is an "imperfect form of Skepticism." Further, in thesis eight, Hegel makes the astonishing claim that if the critical philosophy remains true to the postulate of reason, it will destroy that very same philosophy, since the postulate of reason is "the principle of Spinozism". What Hegel means by the postulate of reason may refer to Kant's transcendental deductions, the unity of apperception, or it could mean the kind of intellectual intuition Kant refers to in the *Third Critique*. See Hegel in Jon Stewart, ibid, 171-172.

[92] "For *natura naturans*, God is not a "He" but an "It."" Jacobi, *David Hume on Faith*: *Preface*, 1815. *Main Philosophical Writings*, ibid, 573.

succession of finite things. As we saw in chapter one of this study, Jacobi makes a distinction between the principle of sufficient reason, which he relegates to an abstract realm of concepts, and a principle of causality, which refers to things in and of themselves. This is how Jacobi, according to Hegel, founds the "absoluteness of the finite," and how Jacobi can argue that Spinoza lacks a concept of real succession of things. According to Jacobi, Spinoza subsumes the finitude of things under an absurd idea of "eternal time", which makes everything happen simultaneously as part of a static universe.[93]

In this interpretation, Spinoza cannot transition from the infinite and the eternal to the finite and contingent without doing violence to finite things. Spinoza wants a natural explanation of the finite by means of a concept of Reason (i.e., the principle of sufficient reason), but he cannot allow it, since in this concept of Reason there is no before and after. Everything according to Reason is necessary, and Spinoza cannot help seeing matters this way if he cognizes the universe *sub specie aeterni.* Thus, as Hegel quotes Jacobi, this does not make for "an objective and actual succession [of things], but only a subjective and ideational one." But there cannot even be an ideational or abstract succession Hegel argues if it weren't grounded on something real.[94] For Jacobi, that something real is actually "the subject that produces it [i.e, the actual succession of things] in thought," making this real succession of things dependent on the psychology of the finite subject. Hegel exposes how Jacobi, while asserting this realm of objectivity, is still trapped in a subjectivistic kind of objectivity as even this finite succession is dependent upon a finite subject to think about it. The status of this objectivity is thus immediately rendered ambiguous: is it something the subject directly intuits, (which is still a subjectivistic way of putting things), or is it something that the subject produces and constitutes in thought? As Hegel puts it: "The subjective and ideational succession presupposes [for Jacobi]

[93] Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, ibid, 104.
[94] Hegel, ibid, 104.

an actual succession in the subject…[This] either says nothing or it says something false."[95]

The main contrast Hegel highlights between Jacobi and Spinoza is in their treatment of time. Hegel claims that the absolute ground of Jacobi is time, but it is a specific conception of time founded upon some kind of creative intelligence. It is this conception of finitude and time that constitutes a realm of causality independent from the realm of Reason and Jacobi demands their absolute separation. Hegel sarcastically explains: "Of course, if we do not forget the principle of causality is separate from the principle of sufficient reason, we are laid motionless in time, which is Jacobi's absolute demand."[96]

Hegel counters that in fact all of Jacobi's ideas of the finite and temporal succession do "perish" in the highest Idea of the eternal, and that Jacobi's warnings are less well-argued points than shrill exclamations. "These warnings are very much like the famous signals of that worthy sentry of the Town Walls, who shouted to the approaching enemy who was ready to fire, not to shoot because this might cause misfortunes—as if such misfortune was not what was intended in the first place."[97] Hegel here defends Spinoza's idea without compromise, even at the risk of offending Jacobi's intuitionist program and other traditional conceptions of piety.

While Hegel does not want to sugar-coat Spinozism as something benign and friendly towards common-sense, he does not want to overlook the status of the finite in the eternal either. Hegel's may not be the same conception of finitude as Jacobi and his romantic fellow-travelers believe, but it is not an illusion for infinite Reason. Jacobi argues that the eternal concept of Spinoza will treat matters of finite succession as "mere appearance," but what else can we call finite things if not appearances of what is infinite? Hegel quotes approvingly Mendelssohn's

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[95] Hegel, ibid, 104.

[96] Hegel, ibid, 105. Slightly modified translation from the Cerf and Harris."Vergesse man aber den Satz der Kausalität und seine Verschiedenheit vom Satze des Grundes nicht, so sitze man in der Zeit unbeweglich fest; und dies ist bei Jacobi absolute Forderung." Hegel, *Werke* 2, ibid, 342.

[97] Hegel, ibid. p. 105.

argument that time and duration are "necessary determinations of a thinking that is restricted."[98]

Jacobi seems to have taken pride in this proposition that finite things are demoted to the status of appearances when the concept of Reason is applied. But Hegel accepts what Jacobi finds so hateful and argues that if time is placed in God then time belongs only to *natura naturata* (nature viewed as passive and finite) and not to *natura naturans* (nature viewed as active and infinite).[99] The status of the finite as part of the realm of appearances is not some polemical discovery that Jacobi may use as a bogey against Spinozism, since Spinoza already affirms such a proposition.

As for the idea of an eternal time, Hegel finds this idea completely absurd from Spinoza's own perspective. Spinoza does talk about a subordinate form of succession, but only as form of an infinite series of finite things. This is an abstract series though, and it is not so much a series proceeding from a pure concept of Reason as one that stems from the imagination. This form of succession is thus only an aid to the imagination, and not a thing of the intellect. "Surely," Hegel points out, sarcastically, "Jacobi is familiar enough with Spinoza's distinction between *intellectus* and *imaginatio*?"[100]

Hegel deflates Jacobi's pretentions towards originality with regards to the assumption that the absolute "destroys" the substantial independence of the finite. If we understand by the "doctrine of the absolute *simul*," the doctrine that God is the immanent, and not the transitive cause of things, and that things outside of God are nothing in themselves, and hence things in

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[98] Hegel, ibid. p. 105.

[99] From Spinoza: "Before I proceed further, I wish to explain here—or rather to advise [the reader]—what we must understand by *Natura naturans* and *Natura naturata*. For from the preceding I think it is already established that by *Natura naturans* we must understand what is in itself and is conceived through itself, or such attributes of substance as express an eternal and infinite essence, i.e. (by P14C1 and P17C2), God, insofar as he is considered as a free cause. But by *Natura naturata* I understand whatever follows from the necessity of God's nature, or from any of God's attributes, i.e., all the modes of God's attributes insofar as they are considered as things which are in God, and can neither be nor be conceived without God." Baruch Spinoza, *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, trans. and ed. Edwin Curley, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985), E1p29Schol, 434.

[100] Hegel, ibid, 106.

time, and time itself are nothing—then every line of Spinoza's system makes the proposition that time and succession are mere appearance so utterly trivial that not the slightest trace of novelty and paradox is to be seen in it.[101] Jacobi considers the claim of the succession of finitudes as mere appearances in Spinoza's system as his own original insight, instead of admitting that it was Spinoza himself who utters such a shocking truth. Time, measure, and number are aids to the imagination, "abstracted from this [or that] mode."[102] Contra Jacobi, the finite form cannot be reified into something self-subsisting, and thus, the self-subsisting character of finitude "perishes" in the infinite. Spinoza's principle of sufficient reason does not include time in Jacobi's sense because it cannot entertain the notion of a time that is self-subsisting outside of the infinite. So, it is not so much how Reason is impossible and contingent as much as how Jacobi affirms contingency as absolute, which damns his enterprise to absurdity.

Jacobi insists that Spinoza does have a concept of eternal time in the guise of that infinite finite series. But Hegel makes clear the distinction between the actual infinite in Spinoza, and the infinite of the imagination. For Spinoza, the actual infinite is "denied by those who, because they are ignorant of the true nature of things, confuse the things of imagination, that is, number, measure and time, with the things themselves." The actual infinite is defined as "the absolute affirmation of the existence of any nature" by Spinoza,[103] while the finite is only a partial negation of the infinite. Hegel affirms this definition of the true infinite, and states that this infinite is "equal to itself and indivisible" and includes in its essence "the particular or finite in

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[101] Hegel, ibid, 106. As Spinoza puts it in Letter 12, "Next, from the fact that when we conceive Quantity abstracted from Substance and separate Duration from the way it flows from eternal things, we can determine them as we please, there arise Time and Measure—Time to determine Duration and Measure to determine Quantity in such a way that, so far as possible, we imagine them easily. Again, from the fact that we separate the Affections of Substance from Substance itself and reduce them to classes so that as far as possible we imagine them easily, arises Number, by which we determine [these affections of substance]. You can see clearly from what I have said that Measure, Time, and Number are nothing but Modes of thinking, or rather, of imagining." Baruch Spinoza, *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, trans. and ed. Edwin Curley, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985), 203.

[102] Hegel, ibid, 106. See footnote #101 on Spinoza's Letter 12.

[103] Baruch Spinoza, *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, trans. and ed. Edwin Curley, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985), EIp8Schol1, 412.

itself at the same time..."[104]

It is important to note here how Hegel affirms Spinoza's conception of the infinite as including itself and its other. In the *Science of Logic*, Hegel will characterize Spinozist substance as a God that does too much, rendering the finite totally illusory before the annihilating force of a neo-Parmenidean conception of being.[105] But we can see how far Hegel is from that in this earlier text. In his polemic with Jacobi, he is happy to characterize Spinoza's infinite as dialectical, i.e. as a self-differentiated unity. Indeed, as Hegel states, "In this intuitive cognition [i.e., intellectual intuition], the particular and the finite are not excluded [from the infinite] as opposites..."[106]

The means of accessing this infinite Idea is through "the cognition of it…[as] intellectual intuition" and it is this form of knowing via intellectual intuition that grasps the unity of the infinite and the finite. But the infinite of the imagination is apprehended when according to Spinoza (from the previously mentioned Letter 12) we, "determine and divide the existence and duration of modes…not [according to] the order of nature itself, but the particular essence [of modes] insofar as their concept is not the concept of the substance itself." Further for Spinoza, measure "and time originate for us when we conceive quantity in abstraction from substance, and duration in abstraction from the way it flows from the eternal things."[107]

It is in the imagination that we posit and partially negate the infinite through the finite. For Hegel, what Spinoza means by imagination is closely related to what Hegel and Schelling

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[104] Hegel, ibid, 107.

[105] G.W.F. Hegel, *The Science of Logic.* Translated and edited by George di Giovanni (Edinburgh: Cambridge, 2010), 71.

[106] Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, ibid, 107. It is only in what Hegel calls the empty concept (*leeren Begriff*) and infinite abstraction (*Unendlichkeit der Abstraktion*) that keeps the infinite and the finite separated. Hegel, *Werke* 2. ibid, 345.

[107] Hegel, ibid, 107. The translation of Spinoza's letter here is from the Elwes edition that Cerf and Harris rely on. See Spinoza's letter on the infinite to Lewis Meyer, in *The Chief Works of Benedict de Spinoza*, translated by R. H. M. Elwes (Dover, 1955), Letter XXIX. (XII.) For the Curley, see footnote #101.

mean by the categories of the understanding or reflection that operate according to stark oppositions without resolution. In the imagination, as in the categories of the understanding, the partially negated thing is posited "for itself and opposed to what is in itself not negated, to what is strictly affirmative, [and] turns this infinite [i.e., the true infinite of Reason—HF] itself into something partially negated."[108]

This infinite is not the infinite of Kant, for whom it is brought into antithesis with the finite only to be treated as an abstraction of finite thought. The eternal, properly speaking, is the identity of the finite and the infinite, whose antithesis is "nullified" in the eternal. But even if the finite is considered apart from the infinite, Hegel is not saying that it is illusory or unreal. Even the empirical infinity of finite moments has partial validity, because "duration, simply as it is posited by imagination, is a time moment, a finite." But as with anything finite, what is empirical is something that is determined externally, as being "also another moment." As Hegel explains, "…this other moment which likewise receives its actual being through the imagination, is yet another moment. This negation, remaining what it is, and made positive through imagination, results in the empirical infinite, that is, in an absolute, unresolved contradiction."[109] The implication though is not so much that the empirical infinite is false or illusory, but partial and related to what is only a series of finite moments. It is false if it is reified or absolutized at the expense of what is truly absolute, i.e., the infinite of Reason.

Jacobi assumes these single things, or things that could constitute this empirical infinity, as absolute, "in the form of a thing that senses and a thing that is sensed." Jacobi thus operates from the feeling and intuiting subject. In contrast, Spinoza takes these single things to be "strictly nothing in themselves." Jacobi accuses Spinoza of promoting this empirical infinite at the expense of real succession, where the empirical infinite becomes a meaningless collection of

[108] Hegel, ibid, 107-108.
[109] Hegel, ibid, 108.

finite things, or a dead monotonous conception of nature.[110]

Hegel contends that Spinoza is as far from this conception of the infinite as can be: "no philosopher was ever farther removed from assuming anything of the sort than Spinoza was: for since he regards finite things as nothing in themselves, this empirical infinite and time disappear at once."[111] Jacobi has Spinoza assert that things objectively arise and follow one another in an eternal time, but this again is mistaken insofar as the true infinite is distinct from the collection of finite things. It is the imagination or reflection that is concerned with abstractions or with the finite.

But the imagination or reflection cannot grasp what Reason does: that the infinite and the finite are "identical" in the infinite, or "nullified." Jacobi too cannot understand this since he posits an abstract entity like time or single things, (which are products of the imagination), as absolute things. He cannot see how if "the single thing and time are restored to the eternal substance from which they were taken, they cease to be what they only are if torn away from it."[112] Thus, there is a transformative process that Reason makes possible, which Jacobi, retaining time and singularity as absolute, resists. Not only does treating the finite as absolute resist Reason; in Jacobi, it distorts the real meaning of the finite qua finite.

According to Hegel, Jacobi could have arrived at a proper understanding of time Spinozistically by abstracting it directly from an objective totality, by moving from the infinite to

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[110] Paul Franks and Yitzhak Melamed respectively cite Jacobi's conception of Spinoza as nihilistic as opposed to a-cosmist. The nihilistic way of framing things is to reduce God to meaningless physical nature, while the a-cosmic reading is to reduce finite nature to God (or God as lacking a cosmos; hence a-cosmic). But it seems that Jacobi combines both strategies in his criticisms: first by attacking Spinoza as reducing everything to a block universe, thereby annihilating the finite, but then characterizing this block universe as a mass of meaningless nature (i.e., bodies in motion). From such a thin conception of God, God becomes a blank placeholder for absolute contingency, effectively dissolving into material effects. We shall see how Hegel accepts Jacobi's descriptions of Spinoza's system in the later *Heidelberg Writings* and connects Jacobi's description to Hegel's own critique of Spinozist a-cosmism. See Paul Franks, *All or Nothing: Systematicity, Transcendental Argument, and Skepticism in German Idealism*, (Mass: Harvard, 2005). See also Yitzhak Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance and Thought* (New York: Oxford, 2013).

[111] Hegel, ibid, 108.

[112] Hegel, ibid, 109.

the finite. Specifically, time can be arrived at from abstracting from absolute substance and eternity thus can "truly be the basis of the cognition of time and even of the explanation of time."[113] This is wholly different from understanding time as a "deduction" from a community of single things, which is how Jacobi thinks Spinoza reifies the empirical into an infinite succession of things, i.e., into an eternal conception of time.

Jacobi claims this reification process informs Spinoza's "natural" explanations of things, but Hegel half-jokingly says that by this criterion of what counts as natural, the way Spinoza actually argues for the infinite is entirely "supernatural." It is "supernatural" in the sense that it is not dependent on anything finite, and oddly with and against Jacobi, Spinoza too doesn't think there is any "natural" explanation of things. Hegel shows that Jacobi is hoisted by his own petard; that the charge of naturalism falls back onto him for reifying the finite above the properly infinite. Hegel calls attention to Spinoza's "supernatural" (i.e., non-finite) conception of Reason as separate from any kind of mechanical-empiricist thinking: "The point is that this naturalism, that is, mechanism, the causal nexus and time, like the knowledge that proceeds by way of pure identity [i.e., proceeds by way of formal identities, such as A=A, appropriate to finite things--HF] and by analyzing facts, just are not there at all for Reason."[114]

Hegel concludes his anti-critique on Spinoza's behalf by discussing Spinoza's mathematical similes. Jacobi associates the "ideational successions" of finite things reified into an infinite series with these mathematical ones. But since Hegel demonstrated how these ideational successions were more things of the finite understanding or imagination, he shows how Spinoza's similes were meant to stand up against "the deception of imagination" as metaphors of the actual infinite.[115]

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[113] Hegel, ibid, 110.
[114] Hegel, ibid, 110.
[115] Hegel, ibid, 111.

The symbol for true infinity in Spinoza is the same as it is in Hegel: the circle. The authentic symbol in Spinoza is the space enclosed by two circles that do not have a common center,[116] a space that surpasses any representation through number. According to Hegel, through means of this symbol, Spinoza "had dragged the empirical infinite back from imagination's endless pushing on and on and conjured it into facing him." If the inequalities between these two circles in this space are truly infinite, then it is a thing that transcends numerical (i.e., finite) determination. In this bounded space is the actual infinite and in this symbol "we behold the infinite, which was defined above as absolute affirmation or absolute concept."[117] Here, in the space enclosed by two circles, we have the absolute concept as the identity of opposites.

The empirical infinity, or the infinity of the imagination, is a result of the particular treated merely as particular. If this particular is treated as actual, i.e., is treated apart from the true infinite, it is expressed in numbers, raising itself into the infinite series of mathematics. This happens when the particular "is set free from subsumption under the concept [of the understanding] and [is] broken up into parts; these parts are absolutely determinate and absolutely unequal [or unlike] among themselves…" These parts are no longer in an intuitive identity (as in what Hegel calls an intuitive concept) but are only in relation. Hegel makes the analogy of transforming the true infinite into the empirical infinite the transformation of geometry into "analysis."[118]

This idea of the infinite as transcending number or parts "yields the true character of thought…" The absolute concept is the infinite, which is itself an absolute affirmation turned against the opposite and the finite as its absolute negation. But it's an absolute negation that is

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[116] This symbol Hegel tells us adorned the front of Spinoza's *Principles of the Cartesian Philosophy*. See Hegel, ibid, 111.

[117] Hegel, ibid, 112.

[118] More precisely for Hegel, (or perhaps more cryptically as we delve into the Schellingean philosophy of mathematics), "it is the transformation of the Pythagorean theorem, which contains all authentic geometry, into the series of functions of curved lines." Hegel, ibid, 112.

also identified with its opposite, and it subsists through the positing and nullification of opposites, which Hegel illustrates with the following formula: + A – A = 0. The nothing exists as A and not A, and this is "in its essence infinity."[119]

Hegel says this kind of abstracted infinite of absolute substance (expressed in these similes and formulas) is expressed by Fichte subjectivistically as the Ego, or pure self-consciousness. Pure self-consciousness in Fichte functions like the Spinozistic infinite, where through its own nature it undertakes "the eternal producing of the difference which reflected thinking is aware of always and only as product [as finite]." But the production of difference relates itself back to an "ultimate relation," or where opposites vanish "both together." In Spinoza, parts or differences can only be posited within the whole, which negates their character as true parts or as truly different than the whole. The authentic concept, "the true equality of whole and parts, and the affirmative infinity, the *actual* infinite, is present for intuitive, i.e., geometrical, cognition."[120]

It is the Idea of the infinite in Spinoza, one of the most important "ideas" in Spinoza, that has been neglected in these philosophies of subjectivity and subjectivism (Kant, Jacobi, Fichte). It has to play a greater role in any exposition of Spinoza's system, and Jacobi has not begun to treat it in earnest. Instead, it is in Jacobi "an idle predicate of thinking, extension, etc." For in this Idea lies for Hegel the "most crucial" matter of all: "the cognition of the point of union of the attributes." Jacobi, lacking this Idea, can only exposit Spinoza's system as lifeless, and only in a "formal, historical fashion." Jacobi even goes so far as to describe the attributes and modes as qualities of substance, instead of essences of God.[121]

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[119] Hegel, ibid, 112.

[120] Hegel, ibid, 113.

[121] Hegel, ibid, 113. Unfortunately, Hegel forgets this lesson, and in later writings, treats Spinoza's attributes and modes as synthetic unities. This is to treat them as qualities of substance, or of making Spinozist substance as something formal, and its attributes and modes as contingent predicates. See Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, ibid, 283.

If Hegel is right that Spinoza's Idea is a true conception of the infinite, then it must constitute in itself an identity of the universal and the particular, or "an identity of the infinite and finite themselves." This form of the infinite is not an infinite of the imagination or of mere subjective concepts. But, in Jacobi, this infinite can only appear as "something otiose or as the empirical infinite of the imagination." As a point of exegesis, Jacobi overemphasizes this mathematical infinite in Spinoza, since for Hegel there is only one example of it in Spinoza's letters and in the *Ethics*. The mathematical example is not even Spinoza's, but something Spinoza "adduces…from his opponents" in E1P21.[122] But since Jacobi cannot think the true infinite of Spinoza, or the true speculative infinite that can unite the finite with itself, he is forced to construe the infinite in Spinoza as an empirical or—to use a phrase common to Hegel's later *Science of Logic*—a *spurious* one.[123]

Because Jacobi cannot rise to the level of the true infinite, he can only find Spinoza's idea to be a hodgepodge of empirical and abstract elements. Spinoza wasn't thinking of empirical successions in time in his examples of the infinite, but Jacobi "finds at least a subjective succession in it, so the example has for him a psychological and empirical significance, instead of a philosophical one." But Spinoza's Idea is still wanting, since it still is not empirical enough for Jacobi. Hegel thinks Jacobi is in a polemical bind: either he "complains about the absence of succession and finitude [in Spinoza] and simply demands their presence in

[122] Hegel, ibid, 114.

[123] Jacobi's idea of eternal time in Spinoza resembles Hegel's "bad infinite" in the Doctrine of Being. We cannot hope to exhaust the issue here, but it is worth following Houlgate's lead here on the question. Houlgate comments that the bad infinite is not an illusion or necessarily false. In one form, the infinite can exist as a series of finite things that succeed one another, ad infinitum. But the true infinite is not reducible to one finite thing coming after another; i.e., it is not simply an unending series of finite things. Neither is it the mere negation of what is finite. Instead, it is the reconciliation of the finite as a moment of a broader whole. The true infinite is "simply the process whereby being unites itself through the demise of finite things," integrating those finite, perishable moments as part of one single process. The true infinite is thus not separate from finitude, but is the whole process whereby the finite "constitutes being that unites with itself." True infinity is thus the self-relation of itself and what is finite. See Houlgate, ibid, 428. See also Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, ibid, 109-123.

speculation, or he reads them into Spinoza and then finds absurdities."[124]

Hegel concedes in passing how Jacobi occasionally makes remarks that are sensible; that even his statements on experience and subjectivity have "*esprit*," "because there is the allusive echo of speculative Ideas in them." But all of that remains an echo, and all of Jacobi's music can never "blossom into *Logos*." *Logos* can never be grasped by Jacobi, defined by Hegel as the "scientifically articulated word which is what one expects where the issue is philosophical." When Jacobi only allows Reason a formalistic function—"only the capacity to analyze a fact and link facts"—he reveals his basic idea. Consciousness can only work to unite opposite ideas in formal unities without real synthesis.[125]

Here, Hegel anticipates his later *conceptual personae*, the unhappy consciousness, with Jacobi as a prime exemplar. Jacobi cannot unite a conditioned finite nature with the beyond he seeks. There is no way to link the conditioned to the unconditioned, the natural to the supernatural, and man in Jacobi remains unutterably divided against himself. Human experience may be loftier than that of the beast, but Jacobi can only see these aspects as antagonistically at war with one another. He "already takes man as divided, in that he deals with him as he appears in consciousness," and Jacobi can only understand the human being as a whole, as uniting within itself the finite and the infinite, if we have access to what Jacobi so firmly denies: the "principle of cognition and Reason," i.e., "the undivided identity of the conditioned and the unconditioned."[126]

This would take us to Spinozism, to the inclusion of the finite within the infinite, which Jacobi has already condemned as absurd. For Hegel, we see in Spinoza the nullification of an antithesis between the finite and the infinite assumed as illicit by not just Jacobi, but the entire

[124] Hegel, ibid, 114.
[125] Hegel, ibid, 115.
[126] Hegel, ibid, 116.

tradition of subjectivist critical philosophy from Kant to Fichte. The closer we get to Spinoza, the farther away we are from the domination of "reflection," which "absolutizes the opposition [of the finite and infinite] and makes the opposites into things-in-themselves."[127]

The Spinozist Idea is recast here as the point of indifference, the middle of a bipolar circle where the opposition of identity and difference, the one and the many, are cancelled. It is an Idea of knowledge that is quite "different…from that which merely analyzes given facts and proceeds by way of similarities." In contrast, Jacobi with his subjectivistic method cannot proceed systematically; the aphoristic qualities of his prose "raises reflection above itself [as] the sole outlet for Reason to express itself, once finitude and subjectivity are made into something absolute." Presented in aphoristic garb, Jacobi can guard his ideas from ever "lifting" themselves up into the infinite. This prevents his ideas from ever becoming the common property of all, since they are all inflated with the stamp of his ego and thus can never rise to the level of exoteric science.[128]

Jacobi's subjectivism is compared to a piece of superfluous skin attached to the pure ring of Reason. Jacobi's method

> remains affected by subjectivity, it remains something personal and particular. Attached to the ring, which it offers as a symbol of Reason, there is a piece of the skin from the hand that offers it; and if Reason is scientific connection, and has to do with concepts, we can very well do without that piece of skin.[129]

Jacobi's "skin" or the peculiarities of his ego obstruct the way to science. Since Jacobi's modus operandi is subjective, the object of his inquiry can never be objective, but must be a projection of his own egotism in turn. Jacobi complains that Spinozism has no real place for the finite; that the finite is something "in-itself." This includes the in-itself of "man," and Jacobi wastes no breath praising man as "the perennial focus of meditation," the seat of rational

[127] Hegel, ibid, 116.
[128] Hegel, ibid, 117.
[129] Hegel, ibid, 117.

instincts. But all of this is for nothing according to Hegel if we do not have a concept of what reason is, and praising man per se cannot arrive at such a thought. Hegel contrasts Jacobi's hyper-humanism with Epictetus's maxim, (which Hegel calls "manforgetful"): "But since I am a rational being, it is my business to praise God…This is my vocation, I will fulfill it." It is Spinoza's superiority to start with things of God—objective and universal truths—and not things of "man", or—in Jacobi's case—things of the subjectivistic ego.[130]

2.5. *Spinozistic Froth*

Not all attempts of a return to Spinoza were equal though. When it came to Herder's own Spinozism, Hegel agreed with Jacobi's characterization of the latter as a "Spinozistic froth, a preaching that confuses Reason and language alike." This may strike one as strange, particularly when it comes to Jacobi's own campaigns against Herder's Spinozism in the second Pantheism Controversy. Jacobi's anti-Spinozism encouraged its own form of German Spinozism; for instance, in the German Romanticism of Schlegel and Schleiermacher. But Herder was Jacobi's main target in the supplements the latter wrote to the second edition of his own letters to Mendelssohn.[131]

But despite Jacobi's anti-Herder polemicizing, even Hegel argues that Herder lacks a proper way of grasping the absolute or the Spinozist Idea. Instead of treating the Idea as something rational, Herder plays "a game with concepts of reflections, or in sporadic

[130] Hegel, ibid, 118.

[131] See Jacobi, ibid, 365. The cultural effects of Herder's Spinozism for Jacobi are also important as contributing to the general nihilism of the European intelligentsia. These alleged effects were not lost on Jacobi's fellow counter-Enlightenment figure, Joseph de Maistre. Maistre "could not "restrain his indignation" when reading in Herder that the honour of "Leibniz and other geniuses of the first order...paled before [Spinoza's]." He averred how "much patience is needed" when being told further that "Spinozism is only in reality a development of these words of St. Paul; *in ipso vivimus, movemus et sumus*."..." Herder's Spinozism upset the reactionary Savoyard so much that he professed "Mysogermanism" in his letters, and denounced "everything that Germany had produced in the eighteenth century," he would "not hesitate to imitate Omar."" What he meant by imitating Omar was to burn all the Spinozistic literature to ash. See Armenteros, Lebrun, *Joseph de Maistre and His European Readers*, (Boston: Brill, 2011), 232. Armenteros explains Maistre is referring to the myth that the Library of Alexandria was burned down on the orders of Rashidun Caliph Umar the Great.

invocations…" Herder's Spinozism is thus guilty of the same fault Hegel accuses Kant and Jacobi of: subjectivism masquerading as objectivity.[132]

The rational in Herder can only be expressed as a "beautiful feeling" (*Empfindung*) of the individual. Even if the form of Herder's philosophizing is more "objective" than Jacobi's, it is only the case of Herder's superficial emphasis on the objective. Instead of genuine objectivity, we have expressions of feeling as the organon for the absolute. "This veils the rational" as Hegel explains, and Herder and Jacobi form a subjectivistic camp, despite Jacobi's hatred for Herder's Spinozism. In Herder's *Gott* dialogues his characters turn Spinoza's philosophy into a Leibnizian system of forces. Hegel quotes from *Gott*. When "unfolded the concept of might as well as the concepts of matter and thought all coincide in the concept of a basic force according to the Spinozistic system itself." Herder argues how "The real concept, in which all forces [*alle Kräfte*] are grounded, but which even in their totality they do not exhaust—this infinite excellence is actuality, reality, active existence; it is Spinoza's core concept."[133]

Nature in Herder is a realm of living forces, but according to Hegel this philosophy of force does not rise to the level of the true Idea. Hegel goes so far as to say that Herder shares in Jacobi's effort to "abolish the scientific form of rational cognition wherever it is present." Hegel's evidence is the following (quoting Herder):

> I do not know any *substantive word* under which the actual and operative activities, *thought* in the spiritual world, and *motion* in the corporeal world, could be comprehended with so little constraint as they are under the concept of *force* [*Kraft*], *power* [*Macht*], *organ*. With the *word*, "*organic force*" one signifies at the same time the inner and outer, the spiritual and the corporeal. But it is still only an *expression*, for we *do not understand* what force is, *nor* do we claim to have *explained* the *word* "body" by it.[134]

Hegel unearths in these words of Herder Jacobi's main project: to replace "philosophical

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[132] Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, ibid, 118.

[133] Hegel, ibid, 119.

[134] Hegel, ibid, p. 118. See also Johann Gottfried Herder, *Gott Einige Gespräche über Spinoza's System nebst Shaftesbury's Naturhymnus*, (CreateSpace, 2013), 31.

Ideas with expressions and words which are not supposed to give knowledge or understanding." This supposed enemy of Jacobi; this terrible Spinozist, is unmasked as a crypto-Jacobian. Perhaps these words and expressions (e.g., "organic forces") have philosophical meaning, but that meaning cannot be redeemed subjectivistically. These profusions of emotion over thought, or feelings over cognitions, result in a "sort of chilly and insipid emotional effusion that comes from the "Reason as instinct," to which Jacobi forever appeals…"[135]

Hegel faults Schleiermacher's *Speeches* for the same kind of pseudo-Spinozistic pantheism. This is interesting to note in light of Hegel's later polemics against Schleiermacher, Since in his letters to Niethammer and elsewhere, he makes no distinction between Spinozism and Schleiermacher's philosophy.[136] But here, Schleiermacher falls into the Jacobian camp's philosophy (or anti-philosophy) of feeling. In contrast though to Jacobi's emphasis on individual caprice and "the way of the heart," Schleiermacher extinguishes all the finite facts into the broader the universe. But this universe isn't to be confused with the Spinozist Idea but an "eternal beyond," and the "partition between the cognitive subject and the absolutely unattainable object is torn down, grief is assuaged in joy, and the endless striving is satisfied in intuition."[137]

This may seem Spinozistic since the individual casts away their subjectivity in

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[135] Hegel, ibid, 120. In Herder's defense, one might say after H. S. Harris that there is a "*systematic urge*" to Herder's Spinozism that Hegel is missing in his review. Harris goes so far as to call Hegel's polemic "superfluous excrescence," but it seems Hegel's main point that Herder's forces are grasped as expressions instead of as genuine cognitions is well taken, making Herder closer to Jacobi. In terms of whether Herder and Jacobi are at opposite ends in terms of Spinoza interpretation, this is true when it comes to Herder's positive reception of Spinoza, but it can be argued that Herder subjectivizes Spinoza a la Jacobi. This process is similar to how Schleiermacher read Spinoza: on the basis of Jacobi's (mis)reading. Thus, while they are against rejecting Spinoza, the romantics tended to accept Spinoza on Jacobi's presuppositions about feeling and understanding. See Harris on Herder in Hegel, ibid, 29.

[136] Here's one representative sample of Hegel's later conflation of Spinozism with Schleiermacher: "If you call me a friend of little faith, you have not wished to do so, my dear friend, in reference to yourself. Nor will you blame me for having little faith in a certain element [Ding] in which you-unlike those thistleheads the Spinozists--admittedly do not in general view man as a portion of seawater sealed off in a bottle floating adrift in the ocean." Hegel to Niethammer, November 22, 1808, in *Hegel's Letters*, edited by Clark Butler, (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1984), 180.

[137] Hegel, ibid, 150.

their divine intuition into this beyond. But Hegel still sees this as too "particular and subjective," because the character of this objectivity--this beyond--is still afflicted with the earnestness of "religious yearning." The character of the intuition is that of the religious or artistic "virtuoso," and the intuition is less a manifestation of something objective as much as it is something each private and distinct particularity gives expression to. This form of intellectual intuition is not intellectual as much as "otiose and even unremarkable."[138]

As this intuition of the divine ultimately rests with the subjectivity in question, or rests with the virtuoso able to seek God in the hidden-depths of feeling, this does not produce a monism as much as a "pervasive atomism," where different intuitions of the divide sit side-by-side together. "In this Idea of pervasive atomism an intuition of the Universe cannot be an intuition of it as spirit; for that which is spirit is not present in the Universe in the atomic state."[139] Even if Schleiermacher has raised the subjective into the objective, or the finite into the sea of the infinite, he is still doing so from a position of subjectivism. "So, although the subjectivity of yearning has raised itself to the objectivity of intuition, and reconciliation is effected, not with actuality, but with that which lives, not with singularity, but with the Universe, still even this intuition of the universe is itself transformed back into subjectivity."[140]

If intuition is reduced to virtuosity, and this virtuosity cannot express itself in terms of a lawful, deductive development, (what Hegel means by "organic"), it cannot achieve the

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[138] Hegel, ibid, 151.

[139] Hegel's attack on the separation between church and state here may strike most as illiberal and authoritarian, but while it addresses the epistemological authoritarianism and egoism of Jacobi and others (whose views cannot be verified or subject to criticism because of their personal nature), this critique of liberal atomism is something Hegel shares with Spinoza and Rousseau. Spinoza was not a typical 20th century liberal when it came to the separation of church and state, and he argued, as Hegel would, that the state has a role to play in shaping "outer piety", or what is acceptable insofar as public displays of religion are concerned. Spinoza and Hegel agreed that religions should be tolerated as public entities as long as they were in accord with the public faith. This did not extend to issues of private belief. See Fluss's "Revisiting the Cult of the Supreme Being" on a Spinozistic casting of the debate on the separation between church and state. https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/01/robespierre-rousseau-religion-separation-church-state-kim-davis/

[140] Hegel, ibid, 152.

kind of objectivity and reality needed to constitute "the body of a people and of a universal church." Instead, it contributes to the atomization of contemporary society we see in the separation of church and state, where individual opinion is raised into something universal, over and above a true universality. Instead of anchoring outward expressions of opinion in objectivity, outward expression has only a "strictly inward significance." In Schleiermacher, it can only "be an immediate outburst or emulation of some singular and particular enthusiasm."[141] Genuine externalization of the universal is not present then, and the Herderian and Schleiermacherian universes are merely microcosms of particular egos.

Again, what is unique about Hegel's polemics against Herder and Schleiermacher is his attempt to dissociate them from a proper Spinozism. A true Spinozism would be a rational and not a subjective or mythological apprehension of the Idea. Hegel exposes Herder and Schleiermacher as reducing the Idea to feeling, or of effectively repeating Jacobi's anti-philosophy under the guise of a superior Spinozism. But while Jacobi's position is explicitly anti-Spinozist, the Herderian and Schleiermacherian one is at bottom a Jacobian subjectivism in a Spinozistic costume.[142] Unfortunately, Hegel in subsequent treatments of Herder and Schleiermacher fails to separate their Spinozism from their Romanticism. Romanticism and Spinozism, at least in Hegel's post-Jena period, are indistinguishable: one is just as "a-cosmic" as the other.[143]

2.6. *Spinoza's Turtle*

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[141] Hegel, ibid. p. 152.

[142] One may want to point out how the Leibnizian factor in Herder contributed to subjectivizing Spinoza as a philosopher of organic forces. This made Spinoza an ultra-teleological thinker, since forces expressed the living and purposive nature of the universe, instead of forces simply acting according to natural and deterministic laws (which Herder in *Gott* rejects). Herder's vitalistic Spinozism can be compared to Deleuze's Bergsonian Spinozism of immanence, in that the latter turns Spinozist substance into a play of living bodies. For an in-depth assessment of Deleuze's Spinozism, see Fluss and Frim's "Substance Abuse: Spinoza Contra Deleuze" (forthcoming).

[143] For a systematic account of Hegel's anti-Romanticism (which sometimes intersects with his "mature" anti-Spinozism), see Jeffrey Reid's *The Anti-Romantic: Hegel Against Ironic Romanticism* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014).

In Jacobi's open letter (1799), Jacobi addressed Fichte as the new "speculative messiah," who advanced over Spinoza in positing the omnipotence of thinking over the omnipotence of matter:

> I continue and first proclaim you, more ardently and audibly, once again among the Jews of speculative reason their king; threaten the obstinate with recognizing you as such and accept the Baptist of Konigsberg [Kant] merely as your forerunner. The sign which you have given is the union of materialism and idealism into One inseparable essence—a sign not completely unlike that of the Prophet Jonah.[144]

Even if Fichte could not be acknowledged as the heir to Kant, Jacobi wanted to reassure the atheist unbelievers that Fichte was the ultimate speculative-rationalist-messiah of the day:

> Just as 1800 years ago the Jews in Palestine repudiated the Messiah, for whom they had yearned for so long, at his true appearance because he didn't bring with him that by which they wanted to recognize him, because he taught: neither circumcision nor foreskin mattered, but rather a new creature, so you too have had to become a stumbling block and rock of anger for those whom I call the Jews of speculative reason.[145]

Fichte remained stuck in Spinozism, insofar as his transcendental idealism condemned the individual to an abstraction as much as is the case with absolute materialism. Indeed, an absolute idealism, taken to its logical conclusion, becomes fatalistic and, in Jacobi's terminology, "nihilistic." The Fichtean philosophy produced "a philosophy which is all of one piece, a genuine system of Reason;" it is the only way speculative philosophy "can be done." The "divine" Spinoza of Jacobi is downgraded to Fichte's precursor, and Spinoza's geometric "cube" of reason is replaced by Fichte's "I":

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[144] Jacobi, Jacobi to Fichte, 1799, in *The Main Philosophical Writings*, ibid, 503.

[145] Notice the subtle (or not so subtle) proto anti-Semitism in Jacobi's descriptions of foreskin and circumcision. He goes on to say in his letter to Fichte, "I am Nathanael among the heathens. Just like I didn't belong to the old league but remained in the foreskin, so I also refrain from the new, out of the same incapability or stubbornness." Thus, Jacobi is here to expose the fact that all these transcendental idealists are "Jews" like Spinoza. Jacobi, in contrast, keeps his "foreskin," while all his opponents are either explicitly Jewish, or crypto-Jewish, i.e., circumcised by reason. It is one of the flaws of the young Hegel's polemic that he does not address Jacobi's proto anti-Semitism. He never engaged it theoretically, though he did oppose Jacobi's followers' political anti-Semitism, as in the case of Jacob Fries. See Jacobi, ibid, 503. For Hegel's hostility to Fries, see Terry Pinkard, *Hegel: A Biography* (Edinburgh: Cambridge, 2000), 396.

> Strange that the thought never occurred to him [Spinoza] of turning his philosophical cube over; of making the upper side, the side of thought which he calls the *objective* side, into the lower side which he called the subjective, *formal* side. So he never investigated whether his cube would remain the same and preserve the sole true philosophical shape of the matter. Unfailingly such an experiment would have changed everything for him. What had been substance for him, the cubic, the *one* matter of two totally different beings would have disappeared before his eyes. Instead of it, a pure flame would have flared up, a flame burning solely out of itself, a flame of need of no *place* and of no *nourishing fuel*: Transcendental Idealism.[146]

While Jacobi thinks Fichtean idealism is an advancement over Spinoza in terms of its conceptual coherence, Hegel thinks it constitutes a regression. There is no inverting Spinoza's "cube" according to Hegel, particularly from Fichte's position that cannot know the absolute, but can only strive towards it from an incomplete form of knowing. Playing on Jacobi's metaphor of Spinozist substance as a cube, Hegel writes "Spinoza's cube cannot be turned over [on the side of thought against matter or nature--HF]; it floats in free ether and there is no above or below for it. Much less is there any ball or turtle on which it is grounded. Rather, it has its balance and its ground within itself, it is its own ball and turtle."[147]

Spinozist substance does not need the supplement of critical philosophy, or the supplement of the Fichtean "I." Hegel rejects all attempts at limiting the absolute in favor of something finite as the starting point for philosophizing, and that includes provisional starting

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[146] Jacobi, ibid, 502.

[147] Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, ibid, 160. These references to the "cube of Spinoza" from Jacobi and Hegel strike the reader as mysterious. Harris attempts to relate the metaphor back to the idealist attempt to intuitively construct space in Hegel's first philosophy of nature: "Hegel's adoption of this mathematical model for the genesis of space confirms our interpretation of the proposition [from Hegel's dissertation theses] "*quadratum est lex naturae*"; and it helps to us to understand the occasional mysterious references to "the cube of Spinoza."" What Harris doesn't do is walk the cube reference back to Jacobi, which remains an obscure reference to Spinoza's "Euclidean" deduction of nature from speculative definitions and axioms. Nature is the cube, and Fichte for Jacobi is continuing the Spinozistic geometry, albeit from the angle of thought and not from matter. See Harris, *Night Thoughts*, ibid, 91. Hegel's reference to the turtle may have been inspired by Maimon's critique of Reinhold's philosophy of representation: "The universality of this concept of representation (that every modification of consciousness is referred to something qua representation) completely annuls the concept, for it is exposed to a question like that of the Indian, who, upon being told that the world rests on a pair of elephants and the elephants on a large turtle, innocently went on to ask: "...and what does the turtle finally rest upon?"" See Salmon Maimon's *Letters of Philaletes to Aenesidemus*, Translated by George di Giovanni, in di Giovanni and Harris, ibid, 170. Hegel though has found the "true turtle" in Spinozistic substance, or rather, a "self-caused" turtle.

points a la Reinhold. But how does Fichte's overturned "cube" fare with Spinoza's according to Hegel? Hegel mockingly refers to Fichte's "cube" as the "irregular polyhedron of formal knowledge": it rests on an earth "that is alien to it, an earth in which it is rooted and which bears it. So there is an above and below for it." Unlike Spinozist substance, there is an outside to Fichte's "I" or a beyond that cannot be demonstrated to exist. Fichte's formal knowledge (as opposed to real, substantial knowledge) starts in the "atmosphere" above ground, the atmosphere of thinking that encounters experience "only negatively and ideally."[148]

Proper cognition, as opposed to the formalistic cognition of Fichte and Jacobi, starts with the Absolute. It "begins with the Absolute, and the Absolute is neither a part nor incomplete. Its truth and certainty are not just for experience, nor are they [reached] through abstraction, but through genuine intellectual intuition."[149] In contrast, Fichte's form of cognition begins from a deficiency or a lack. It rests on a dogmatic "givenness of objects" that thought opposes to itself. It is this dogmatic "givenness" that defines Fichte's position, along with Jacobi and his follower Köppen. The only difference for Hegel between Fichte and Jacobi is that while Fichte sees this external givenness as a negative, i.e., as something to be overcome through the striving of the I, Jacobi sees it as something positive. In Jacobi, "the objective, the given, is called the first upon which the concept supervenes later. Fichte, on the contrary, makes the empty knowing, the Ego into the first, which is essentially one and the same as the empty intellect of the analyzing philosophy; or, in other words, Fichte's Ego is an identity upon which determination supervenes subsequently as something alien…"[150]

For Hegel, this difference does not make much of a difference regarding the dogmatism

[148] Hegel, ibid, 160.
[149] Hegel, ibid, 160. Whether Hegel retains this model for knowledge after his break with Schelling is subject to debate. Ostensibly, Hegel seems to break with intellectual intuition altogether, but scholars such as Stephen Houlgate argue that Hegel retains it in important ways. See also footnote #87.
[150] Hegel, ibid, 156.

Jacobi and Fichte share, since when it comes to subjectivism and the givenness of objects, they are both voluntarists. If external reality is nullified by the absolute act of the will in Fichte, or if external reality remains part of a pre-conceptual realm in Jacobi, it is the same dogmatic assertion of dualism between concepts and intuitions (or the givenness of objects). If Fichte wants the concept to dominate intuition, then Jacobi wants intuition to resist the concept.[151]

In responding to Fichte, Jacobi in his open letter said "*Either* God exists and exists *outside* of me, a living being subsisting apart; or else I am God. *There is no third way*." In the previous chapter, we analyzed the implications of this statement, and how Jacobi falls into an insurmountable contradiction. How Hegel resolves the contradiction is indicative of his Spinozism: against Jacobi, Hegel asserts that there is actually a third way. Authentic philosophy for Hegel predicates that God not only has being, but has thought, i.e., "Ego." God is the absolute identity of being and thought, where being and thought are simply two aspects of the same essential reality. There is nothing outside of God, contra Jacobi, and hence "God is not an entity that subsists apart, one that is determined by something outside of it, or in other words, not something apart from which other things have standing." Jacobi's either-or is condemned in the harshest terms from the standpoint of a higher Reason, as a principle of "all formal logic and of the intellect that has renounced Reason."[152]

What Jacobi's either-or excludes is the middle position of Reason, which integrates in itself thought and being. Hegel calls this the "absolute middle" and the authentic conception of

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[151] For Hegel's critique of the logic of domination of the concept over intuition in Fichte, see Gillian Rose's *Hegel Contra Sociology*. Interestingly, Rose's discussion of *Faith and Knowledge* includes no mention of Spinoza. As Rose describes Hegel's critique of Fichte (and Schelling): "Hegel argues that Fichte's and Schelling's intuition justifies and does not resolve the oppositions and aporias of Kant's theoretical and practical reason. Intellectual intuition does not resurrect the intuition which is dominated and suppressed in Kant, but establishes even more strictly the primacy of the concept of practical reason. "Intellectual" and "productive intuition" [in Schelling—HF] are new ways of justifying the domination of the concept." Rose counterposes Hegel's "triune" concept against the dualism of Fichte and others, but she never mentions how the early Hegel found in Spinoza a "resurrection" of the "intuition" suppressed in Kantian philosophy. See Gillian Rose, *Hegel Contra Sociology* (London: Verso, 2000), 70.

[152] Hegel, ibid, 169.

God. Jacobi's either-or statement encapsulates perfectly a formalistic reasoning hostile to a Reason that exhibits transcendence and immanence. God is transcendent, since he is not reducible to human thought, but he is also immanent, since God can be known. But Jacobi cannot maintain his categorical either-or, since how else could Jacobi even speak of God if he did not know God as part of him or as inherent within? Hegel points out how Jacobi contradicts himself blatantly when he says "I affirm that man finds God because he can only find himself in God."[153] As we argued before, Jacobi is forced into a theoretical bind because of his animus towards Spinozistic metaphysics. Either he cannot know God as a being totally outside of himself, which renders all of his statements about God absurd, or he can only know God as himself, which commits him to complete subjectivism and egoism, or, indeed, to atheism.

But this is not how Jacobi sees it. Metaphysical reason is automatically condemned as smuggling in atheism if it tries to resolve the dualism he posed to Fichte. Jacobi felt that Fichte's transcendental idealism—his nihilism—would "tear the heart out of his breast" by sacrificing a living God to the abstractions of Reason. Against this God of Reason, Jacobi calls himself "an atheist." In his hostility to the main concept of philosophy (namely, the Spinozistic conception of God), he is also led to "despise the concept in its objective ethical form and above all to despise the pure law, the formal principle of morality." In other words, whether Spinozist, Kantian, or Fichtean, Jacobi's extreme subjectivism cannot be bounded by any principles of morality grounded in reason. Hegel quotes this familiar passage from Jacobi's letter to Fichte (which he calls "beautiful and quite pure"[154]):

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[153] Hegel, ibid, 169. For the Jacobi quote, see Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi's *Werke* 3, (Leipzig, 1816), 48.

[154] Hegel, ibid, 143. As sarcastic as Hegel can be in this polemic, he does admit some of the poetic power of Jacobi's prose, which is informed by Jacobi's uncompromising subjectivism compared with other Enlightenment figures. Kierkegaard, whose anti-Hegelian polemics paralleled Jacobi's anti-Spinozistic ones, said Jacobi's prose "in its pungency and substance and lyrical effervescence, ranks with Shakespeare." However, Kierkegaard charged Jacobi's conversations with Lessing as having a lack of artistic discipline, since he could not control is "bubbling enthusiasms": "The enthusiast unable to express his enthusiasm to any human being in a contrasting form is not in general the stronger but the weaker party, and has only the strength of a woman, which is in frailty." Kierkegaard

> Yea, I am the atheist, the godless one, the one who, in defiance of the will that wills nothing, wills to lie as dying Desdemona lied, or to lie and deceive as Pylades did in feigning to be Orestes; to murder like Timoleon, to break law and oath like Epaminondas, or John de Witt; who wills suicide like Otho, or temple-robbery like David—yes, I even will to pluck the ears of wheat on the Sabbath for no other reason save that I am hungry, and because the law is made for man and not man for the law…For I know, I know with the most holy certitude within me—that the *privilegium aggratiandi* for crimes of this sort against the pure letter of the absolutely universal law of Reason, is man's authentic right of majesty, the seal of his dignity, of his divine nature.[155]

The young Hegel admires this passage, since it goes against the "dead letter" of Kantian reason and the "dead concept" of reflection. Kant "abstracted in absolute fashion [the concept of law and objectivity] as the only one, utterly subjecting the individual vitality to it, and killing it." But while Jacobi expresses pure vitality and subjectivity in this passage, he is missing objectivity. For all the beauty of Jacobi's sentimentalism it is still utterly hollow since he neglects the lawful or objective side of things. As Hegel puts it, it is Jacobi's notion of experience that determines the "ethos": it is experience and subjectivity that posits what is holy and divine.

What Jacobi considers rational and divine is treated as "vulgarly empirical," as these things fall prey to an individual, contingent, and dependent subjectivity. Even when Jacobi describes the Spartans' ethical conduct, Hegel argues he robs them of the "supreme energy of ethical freedom," since he treats their conduct as vulgarly empirical and not grounded in real divinity. The Spartans for Hegel acted as a people, while Jacobi describes them individualistically. Jacobi cannot understand the greatness of a people with his subjectivism; he cannot understand individuals in a relation to a genuine whole, but atomistically. Thus, Hegel

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mocks Jacobi here with misogynistic language (he also accuses Jacobi of self-seeking egoism), but it seems clear that for both Hegel and Kierkegaard, Jacobi's brilliance cannot be subtracted from his enthusiasm (*schwärmerei*) and extremism. See Soren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, (New York: Cambridge, 2009), 86.

[155] Jacobi, *Jacobi to Fichte*, 1799, in *The Main Philosophical Writings*, ibid, 516. Hegel, ibid, 143.

mocks this philosophy as tantamount to the edifying discourse of a "sentimental bourgeois."[156]

At the end of Hegel's polemic, Jacobi's philosophy is condemned as the logical outcome of the subjectivism inherent in Protestantism. Indeed, it is Protestantism itself that is found deficient and in need of supersession by a new kind of speculative religion.[157] Thus, like the young Hegelians after him, the young Hegel did not simply consider his philosophical efforts to be a renovation of Lutheranism, but its replacement. Speculative religion would replace traditional religion, just as the speculative "Good Friday" would replace the historical one. As Rosenkranz reports:

> Once the alien consecration has been withdrawn from Protestantism, the spirit can venture to hallow itself as spirit in its own shape, and reestablish the original reconciliation with itself in a new religion, in which infinite grief [where humans cannot know the absolute—HF] and the whole burden of antithesis [between man and the divine—HF] is taken up.[158]

Given Hegel's pro-Spinozist argumentation in *Faith and Knowledge*, it would be fair to say that this new religion would be, in turn, Spinozist. In fact, it is in this period that Hegel anticipates the Spinozist millennium that the young Hegelian Moses Hess would prophesize in his *Holy History of Mankind*. For Hess, Hegelianism represented a second reformation, but it was Spinoza who took the critical first steps towards the new era. As Hess put it, Spinoza is the real godfather of German Idealism,[159] and Hess only repeats what the young Hegel confirms as Jacobi's worst suspicion: that the roots of modernity are Spinozist.[160]

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[156] Hegel, ibid, 146.

[157] See Harris's commentary in Hegel, ibid, 43. See also Eric Voegelin, "On Hegel: A Study in Sorcery" in *Published Essays*, 1966-1985 (Louisiana: Louisiana State, 1990), 213-255.

[158] In Hegel, ibid, 44.

[159] "But the true founder of German philosophy—if one wishes to name a personal representative for the spirit of the age—is none other than the thinker whose world view lies equally at the foundation of French social philosophy—Spinoza." Moses Hess, *The Holy History of Mankind and Other Writings*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 101.

[160] "With our immortal Teacher [Spinoza], the foundations of the new age have been laid; with him began the history of revelation of God as the Holy Spirit, or the purest knowledge of God. When Spinoza was fully formed he united once again, like his ancestors Adam and Christ, the conflicts of his age in his divine soul into a living whole." Moses Hess, ibid, 37.

2.7. *The Double-Headed Eagle*

Hegel and Schelling were co-editors of the Critical of Journal of Philosophy where *Faith and Knowledge* appeared, so it wasn't clear at the time who wrote it. But Jacobi could tell it was Hegel, based on the different--and for Jacobi, poor--writing style. Jacobi reacted accordingly to the polemical nastiness of Hegel's arguments in his correspondence with Köppen. Köppen included the letters in the appendix to his own book against Schelling's "philosophy of absolute nothingness [nihilism]."[161]

Jacobi starts the first letter bemoaning how he waded through all the "stamping, hissing, grinding and screaming" of this new polemic, "brought to me by the gentlemen Schelling and Hegel." For all their salvos against Jacobi's "house" (or thoughts), he only heard "the roaring and rattling of stones which aimed amiss at my windows, ricocheted off the masonry, flew up again from the pavement, and here and there injured the heads of those who hurled them." Jacobi boasts to his friend that nothing the absolute idealists said astonished him—not even when they remarked that he is a mere "blusterer and pounderer devoid of thought."[162]

Jacobi tells his friend that he is accused of the most monstrous things: "that I preach and present an abominable religion and an equally abominable morality in my writings; that both are from Hell, since I teach to honor not God, not the human race, but only the human being, and if reason erects a temple for the deity (through Spinoza, Schelling and Hegel), it wants to be sure that the devil is left his chapel beside it." Jacobi sarcastically addresses Hegel's critique of his hyper-empiricism: of how Jacobi talked about the mores and customs of peoples as facts, not properly imbued with the spirit of Reason. "Didn't I, in a letter to Mendelssohn, call that which is most alive—fatherland, folk, and laws—things? Things. To which Spartias and Bulis, two

[161] See Ernst Behler's editor's introduction to Friedrich Jacobi, "On Faith and Knowledge in Response to Schelling and Hegel, (1803)," in *The Philosophy of German Idealism*. Edited by Ernst Behler, (New York: Continuum, 1987), xxii.
[162] Jacobi, "On Faith and Knowledge" ibid, 142-143.

Spartans I presented there, are accustomed as one is accustomed to things?"[163]

As Jacobi understands the critique, he is accused of "the utmost subjectivity and inner idolatry…The damnation of Hell is to be found in my very person; boredom, impotence of existence, and fornication with one's self is the reason for the catastrophe of the unnovelistic occurrences of the heroes Woldemar and Allwill [Jacobi's literary creations—HF]." All these charges, and others like them, are repeated *ad nauseum* to brainwash the reader against him, or at least to browbeat them into submission. Jacobi does find it astonishing to be parodied with Herder, with Jean Paul, and "yes, even with Grandfather Kant, who is indeed supposed to be avenged through me; and with Father Fichte."[164]

Jacobi presents Hegel's attack as an instance of Oedipal rage; that Schelling and Hegel "considered themselves painfully insulted by a man whom they had long thought highly of, frequently praised, and overwhelmed with eulogies." [165] Jacobi complains how "this school" (of transcendental idealists) had always shown him such "respect and affection," which was all the more "flattering as it was unique in its related tolerance of my assertions flatly oppositional to the basic doctrines of the school." But even in the face of such virulence, he is proud to be banished from the realm of the new philosophy as a subjectivist:

> I have now had such a release [from their bonds], and what makes my satisfaction complete is that Kant and Fichte have been simultaneously expelled and banished with me. We are brothers in one and the same crime [of subjectivism], completely similar

[163]Jacobi, ibid, 143.

[164] Jacobi adds "On the other hand, Kant and Fichte are again scolded just as thoroughly with me and just like me, are also scolded here and elsewhere with Locke and Hume; we are together in the same damnations; the one fares no better than the other in the face of truth." See Jacobi, ibid, 144.

[165] Jacobi figured out that it was Hegel, and not Schelling, who wrote *Faith and Knowledge*, due to what he found as Hegel's pedantic and scolding style: "Had I made the above letter public at the time when it was written then I would have thought it necessary to have expressly left out Mr. Hegel at this point. Now since I have again read the third section of "Faith and Knowledge," Fichtean Philosophy more attentively, I may no longer do so…By the way, one must do justice to Mr. Hegel that he knows how to beware of Jacobian style and art, and if one excludes the boasting and scolding, he would be just as hardly recognizable in his speech as a pupil of Schelling's. One can therefore assume with confidence that in the composition if the treatise on "Faith and Knowledge," Mr. Hegel guided the pen." See Jacobi, ibid, 145.

> sinners and deserving of death. A variation in the execution is produced only incidentally because of secondary reasons.[166]

Jacobi waxes sarcastic how *Faith and Knowledge* was an "exquisite" read, "if one has overcome the admittedly rather sour toil of understanding the dismay in spite of all patience and applied efforts at still not being able to understand several pages." What Jacobi especially found "exquisite" was how Hegel's philosophical "sinners" were divided up to be "summarily confronted and neutralized." Kant represents the most objective dimension out of the three, while Jacobi is the "subjective" and the Fichtean "the synthesis of both." Jacobi repeats Hegel's charge that "the triune Kantian-Jacobian-Fichtean philosophy is [according to Hegel] "nothing but completed and idealized empirical psychology, Lockeanism, eudaemonism, enlightenment in its nakedness.""[167]

Besides lapsing into vulgar subjectivistic empiricism,[168] Jacobi's ultimate sin resides in the separation between the finite and the infinite, or the positing of an infinite beyond in the name of faith. This is the death of philosophy, and the "triune inventors" are responsible for this death. But such a death of metaphysics does not faze Jacobi: he will, in contrast to Hegel, "rejoice in such a glorious and meritorious decline." Indeed, "can the world not now be liberated from it once and for all since they [the triune] have concluded the totality of error in themselves?" Instead of despairing at these facts, Jacobi will die as a "redeemer of the human race."[169]

While Hegel reduces Kant, Jacobi, and Fichte to the status of "bats" (as they are all

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[166] Jacobi, ibid, 146.

[167] Jacobi, ibid, 148. See also Hegel on the Lockeanism of the subjectivist idealists, ibid, 78.

[168] As is clear throughout the letter to Köppen, Jacobi is keen on mocking Hegel's amalgams between Kantianism, himself, and vulgar empiricism. Later, Hegel will elevate the Jacobian position to be closer to Descartes's intuition of the cogito in the *Logic*, though this elevation arguably does not negate Hegel's main point about Jacobi's extreme subjectivism, even if that subjectivism is not reducible to the sensationalism/impressionism of English empiricism. See Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic*. Translated and edited by Geraets, Suchting, and Harris, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991). § 16, 114.

[169] Jacobi, ibid, 149.

collectively stuck in darkness), Jacobi thinks Hegel's proper bird is the

> double eagle with a name, identity of the finite and the infinite, the temporal and the eternal, of existence and non-existence. He hovers "in the absolute middle," [Hegel's words] grasps with one of his golden beaks the object, with the other, the subject; makes both indifferent in the swallowing and digests them in the infinity of his intestines, which consumes all finiteness and absolutely unrestricts the restricted, to the absolute Absolute.[170]

What is unique about this neo-Spinozist bird of absolute substance is how it actually doesn't eat anything but itself: "Yet basically and according to the true Truth, he consumes just as little as he emits; he remains eternally with an empty stomach and is eternally satiated; what devours and is devoured there is absolutely the same in him." Jacobi characterizes the dynamism of this bird as an illusion, since it is only capable of producing from its internal structure itself, or its double. The reality, or the finite that is supposed to be posited from the depths of the infinite, is not a real finite at all, but a counterfeit, since an Idea that swallows everything up can never see what is outside itself. It is stuck the conceptual realm, incapable of grasping the empirical referent. Coming back to the bird analogy, "its fodder is thus produced for the devourer, the devouring one for the fodder. And the infinitely double creature tells itself that there is no doubled one there: I am who I am Not, and will become who I will never be."[171]

Everything must be integrated into one single principle, which for Jacobi eliminates the either/or logic needed to make God a beyond from what is finite. Schelling and Hegel instead treat God as a "stupid thing beyond nature," and what they call the understanding (which Jacobi and others have failed to "annihilate") preserves this theistic intelligence. Speaking sarcastically from the perspective of the dialectical bird, Jacobi writes "Blindly you plunge into the ditch which understanding digs for people, in that it first tempts it to eudaemonism, then to idolatry…For understanding turns everything upside down, that is its nature: a God above and a

[170] Jacobi, ibid, 150.
[171] Jacobi, ibid, 151.

reason below."[172]

Jacobi states he is accused of vanity; of substituting his own empirical ego's feelings for God himself. The striving for the infinite, for beauty and truth, is reduced to a striving for oneself, but not for God. However, Jacobi in the course of this letter—for all his complaints about Hegel's slanders and the ridiculousness of Schelling's identity-system—seems to reaffirm his subjectivism against Hegel's absolute. In fact, he never directly refutes Hegel's criticisms in this letter; nor does he refute Hegel's anti-critique of Spinoza.

While Jacobi's imagery is thought provoking, particularly when it comes to symbolizing Hegel and Schelling's absolute as a double-headed bird, representing it as a single entity with two aspects (i.e., a single substance with two attributes), he is not interested in refuting Hegel as much as he cares to mock his alleged stupidity and misreadings. Jacobi stubbornly insists that Hegel's neo-Spinozism cannot distinguish the finite from the infinite, or grasp the true idea of the beyond, but he does not address Hegel's positive argument on behalf of Spinozist substance, as capable of uniting within itself the infinite and the finite.

In the course of his intellectual biography, Hegel will move closer to Jacobi's own position in contrasting living spirit with Spinozist substance. In the Heidelberg Review (1817) of Jacobi's works (discussed in the next chapter), Hegel recasts his appreciation of Jacobi as someone who understood the limitations of Spinozism, or the inability of Spinoza to think through how substance becomes subject. The question then becomes whether Hegel's defense of Spinoza *Faith and Knowledge* and is compatible with Hegel's praise of Jacobi over a decade later. At least in *Faith and Knowledge*, there is no inversion of the Spinozist cube in favor of spirit: substance is genuinely self-caused, i.e., it genuinely posits the finite from within its own unconditioned nature. In subsequent sections, we will compare the "young" Hegel's

[172] Jacobi, ibid, 151.

early dialectical defense of Spinoza with his “mature” reservations in subsequent sections.

Chapter 3: Spinoza's Abyss

In modern times Jacobi has asserted...that all demonstration, all scientific knowledge leads back to Spinozism, which alone is a logical method of thought; and because it must lead thither, it is really of no service whatever, but immediate knowledge is what we must depend on. It may be conceded to Jacobi that the method of demonstration leads to Spinozism, if we understand thereby merely the method of knowledge belonging to the understanding. But the fact is that Spinoza is made a testing-point in modern philosophy, so that it may really be said: You are either a Spinozist or not a philosopher at all.

--Hegel, *History of Philosophy* Vol. 3

We have a magnificent mutual friend in Jacobi.

–Hegel to Paulus (May 2, 1816)

Politics is about choosing who your friends are.

--Ignazio Silone

3.1. *The Party of Jacobi*

This chapter will attempt to contrast Hegel's evolution from his pro-Spinozism of the early Jena period (1801-1804), to his new position on Spinoza as fully revealed in the Heidelberg period (1816). Even though Hegel does break with Schelling in the *Phenomenology*, a systematic position on Spinoza is still missing, and is not completely developed until Hegel situates himself in Heidelberg.[173] There, he attempts to collapse Spinoza, Schelling, and the German Romantics in his general criticisms, but it is necessary to understand how he adopts Jacobi's critique of Spinoza as his own in key ways. Later, Schelling will re-activate key features of Jacobi's critique of Spinoza for his own rejection of the Hegelian system, accusing Hegel of being a sophisticated Spinozist and nothing more. But at least in the Heidelberg period that we seek to examine here,

[173] This does not mean Hegel did not criticize Spinoza until his rapprochement with Jacobi. There are references to Spinoza's "oriental" conception of substance even in the *Phenomenology*, but there is not a fleshed out and systematic account of Spinozism until Hegel writes the *Science of Logic* and reveals his fundamental agreement with Jacobi's characterizations of Spinoza in the Heidelberg review in 1816. See G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. Translated by A. V. Miller, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 489, § 803.

Hegel tries to out-Jacobi Jacobi, while Jacobi in his last writings sees Hegel as stuck in Spinozist metaphysics.[174]

In tandem with the conceptual story is also a professional one: that without Jacobi's academic network of colleagues and friends, Hegel could not have advanced as far in his career as he did. After Jena, and during Hegel's Bamberg and Nuremberg periods, Immanuel Niethammer suggested to Hegel that he reconcile with Jacobi's party to form a broader Protestant front against Bavarian Catholicism.[175] This suggestion from Niethammer that Hegel heeded is significant in understanding Jacobi as the intellectual benefactor of Hegel's rise professionally. Hegel's *Heidelberg Review* of Jacobi is the culmination of years of building such an alliance, after so much polemical opposition in the early Jena period. Thus, while the break with Schelling is important to understand Hegel's better accommodation of Jacobi's philosophy of spirit and subjectivity, the professional context needs to be taken into consideration as well.

Hegel's circumstances had changed from the time he wrote *Faith and Knowledge*, to when he was seeking new avenues of academic advancement in Bamberg and Nuremberg. Leaving behind the sarcastic tone against Jacobi in that earlier polemic, Hegel consolidated an alliance with the Protestant Jacobi by the time he arrived in Heidelberg in the summer of 1816. This alliance was necessary for Hegel to counter the growing Catholic reaction in the heart of German Bavaria, and even if Jacobi was not a metaphysical rationalist, he was a philosopher of *spirit* and subjectivity, as opposed to the positivity of Catholicism.[176]

This wasn't the first time Hegel and Jacobi were paired up. Against Hegel's own intentions, one of his first reviewers of the Jena *Phenomenology* dismissed the book as not only

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[174] For Hegel's Heidelberg review of Jacobi and Jacobi's correspondence on the review, see G. W. F. Hegel, *Heidelberg Writings*. Translated and edited by Brady Bowman and Allen Speight, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). For Schelling's late criticisms of Hegel, see F. W. J. von Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[175] On Niethammer's role in Hegel's rapprochement with Jacobi, see Clark Butler's discussion in *Hegel's Letters*, translated and edited by Clark Butler, (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1984), 93.

[176] See *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 93.

Schellingean and Jacobin ("filled with French Revolutionary rage"),[177] but accused it also of having Jacobian characteristics. Since Jacobi was no fan of either Schelling or the French Revolution, Terry Pinkard gives the most plausible explanation for this amalgam, arguing that "the only halfway plausible reason for the reviewer's putting Jacobi and Hegel into one pot had to do with Jacobi's impassioned defense of the sciences in his inaugural address as the president of the Munich Academy of the Sciences in 1807." Pinkard goes on to comment: "Small wonder...that Hegel soon started describing himself as being in "Jacobi's party."[178]

Jacobi's follower Köppen, one of the targets of Hegel's 1802 *Faith and Knowledge* and one of Jacobi's main correspondents from that time, was most likely the author of an anonymous review of the *Phenomenology*. It contained a nondescript summary, but it was hardly polemical or hostile to Hegel either. Köppen stressed that Hegel's break with Schelling was real; that "Hegel was doing battle with his old philosophical self." But the results of Hegel's break were mixed:

> Köppen claimed that although Hegel had thus exposed the false formalism of the Schellingean *Naturphilosophie*, he had fallen into the opposite error of trying to make "all speculative philosophy into logic"…The error into which Hegel had fallen, he said, was typical of all philosophical thought: This "blunder of the philosophers is not new, to hold the logical *abstractum* of the universal for the truth of things."[179]

Köppen's ended politely but with reservation: "we wish [Hegel's system] well but cannot, in light of former logic, come to declare such a thinking of contradictions to be a supersession of logical thought in general."[180]

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[177] Terry Pinkard, *Hegel: A Biography* (Edinburgh: Cambridge, 2000), 258. The reviewer was anonymous.

[178] Hegel to Niethammer, December 23, 1807: "You know that I was not upset by it [Rottmanner's criticism] because I belonged to Jacobi's party in advance." *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 153.

[179] Pinkard, ibid, 261.

[180] Köppen's review is cited in Wolfgang Bonsiepen, "Erste Zeitgenossische Rezensionen der Phanomenologie des Geistes," *Hegel Studien*, I4 (1979), 24. Pinkard's translation, in Pinkard, ibid. p. 261. Hegel wasn't pleased with Köppen's review, and he was even more jealous of Köppen's appointment to the new university of Landshut. Hegel to Niethammer, May 30, 1807: "Köppen's call to Landshut is, of course, quite characteristic; and what seems to me his complete incapacity for any solid thought is all the more shocking because it shows how great is the power [Jacobi] has courted." See *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 129.

This tone was at the very least a sign of change in the Jacobian party's attitudes towards Hegel, even if they could not subscribe to his speculative ambitions. Jacobi too was--according to Pinkard--"getting contradictory messages from various people about Hegel's qualifications." Jacobi's followers in 1807 were divided in their opinions, with Jean Paul praising Hegel and Jacob Fries writing him off professionally. Jean Paul assured Jacobi that Hegel's *Phenomenology* had thrown off the old Schellingeanism, adopting a new philosophical system, while Fries informed Jacobi that Hegel's book was just a "universal history of the universal spirit," or "Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* carried out on the side of spirit." As Pinkard summarizes Fries' reaction: "the whole thing [Hegel's *Phenomenology*] was in any event completely self-contradictory since it declared all knowledge to be in flux and relative, while at the same time declaring itself to speak from the absolute standpoint."[181]

When Hegel arrived in Bamberg in 1807, Niethammer wrote that his academic future was dependent upon a reconciliation with Jacobi. Jacobi was too much of an institutional force to avoid, and Niethammer told Hegel that he had to put an end to the long-standing feud that existed since the turn of the century. Hegel initially reacted to Niethammer as follows:

> As to what you kindly told me of conditions in your area inasmuch as they may immediately affect me, I have found in it confirmation of what I feared. You are, to be sure, kind enough to keep up courage for me [*Sie haben zwar die Güte, für mich sehr guten Mut noch zu haben*], but at the same time the condition at once seems to be added *sine qua non* that I should become reconciled to Jacobi, that from my side I must do something or other which—however delicate the turnabout might be—could only, I fear, be a "Father, forgive me!" You know that you can command me unconditionally; but I am convinced you will spare me this.[182]

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[181] Pinkard, ibid, 261.

[182] Hegel to Niethammer, May 30, 1807. *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 129. For the original, see Hegel, *Briefe von und an Hegel*: 1785 bis 1812. Band 1. Edited by Johannes Hoffmeister, (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1953), 205. Hegel continues to say how "Jacobi's relationship to me is more [a matter of] pain than opinion. If it were only a matter of opinion, some alteration would be possible. But the pain would be hard to alter—without transferring it to me instead, without receiving coals of fire upon my head, which I would even help to heap on myself." After this first letter, we notice in the correspondence a noticeable shift in Hegel's feelings towards Jacobi, moving away from the intense polemical furor of *Faith and Knowledge* to one of personal warmth.

We start to sense a change of tone in an August 8th letter to Niethammer: "I was pleased to hear that you are on an intimate footing with the Academy through its president [Jacobi]." This warmth is shown right from the beginning of July 1807, when Hegel expressed sympathy for Jacobi's inaugural address as president and requested copies of it from Niethammer.[183] As Butler explains, "Upon reading Jacobi's praise of free scientific inquiry, steeped in religious instincts and allusion to the prior degenerateness from which South Germany was now emerging, Hegel voiced mild approval."[184]

In a new vein, Hegel writes to Niethammer in August: "Hail to the President of the Academy [Jacobi], since the Academicians have found him to be just as you described him to me. The picture that you draw of him surprises me. I had not imagined him like that."[185] Jacobi had expressed in his address "noble sentiments...on science," which "are to be heartily approved." Hegel even deemed the address subversive against religious orthodoxy in its praise of science, and voiced the rumor that people "were even saying here that the sale of the speech was to be suspended, that the president would be stripped of his office, and so on."[186] Thus, the address was of a much different character than the one Hegel expected from old Jacobi.

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[183] See *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 136. Hegel is interested in reading Jacobi's entire speech to the Academy of Sciences. Hegel to Niethammer, August 8, 1807: "I have so far read only a few lines of Jacobi's address ["On Scholarly Societies, Their Spirit and Aim"] in the Munich paper. Here—as happens with Fichte [*The Basic Characteristics of the Present Age*, 1806], among others—the age is being hounded out once more, though I do not know why. But I hope this is only the reverse side of the coin that will be properly turned over in the hopefully better times that are now beginning for the Academy. I ask you quite urgently to please send me by mail coach a few copies of this speech." *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 137.

[184] As Hegel explains to a correspondent: "You wish me to define more precisely the sphere of my scientific activity…To indicate more precisely the type of writings I have in mind, I mention for instance Jacobi's and Schelling's addresses before the Academy of Sciences in Munich, along with the brochures which have appeared against them. They have caused much excitement in Bavaria and could be of wider interest in showing the Bavarian way both in general and in particular, especially its way of assimilating the products of a higher foreign culture." Hegel to Creuzer, June 28, 1808. *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 94.

[185] See Butler in *Hegel's Letters*, ibid. p. 93. Hegel further remarks on Jacobi's charming nature. Hegel to Niethammer, August 8th, 1807. "By the way, what you add to establish your impartiality about having to look askance at the charm which your wife, too, finds in him has rather struck me as somewhat suspicious. For as it stands we have no way of knowing that you are not merely following your wife's judgment no matter what…Experienced people have assured me, however, that on occasion it is the case." *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 136.

[186] Hegel to Niethammer, August 29, 1807. *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 140.

It was when Karl Rottmanner--a Bavarian Catholic--openly attacked Jacobi as part of a Protestant wave taking over Bavaria that Hegel fully turned the corner.[187] Hegel's judgment upon Rottmanner's criticisms is contemptuous: "To have done with someone like this is truly to vaunt one's ignorance [*Einen so abzufertigen ist die wahre Manier großtuender Unwissenheit*]."[188] Rottmanner's worst criticism according to Hegel was,

> …the base insinuation that Jacobi seeks to hold back and hide what he really thinks, but that a philosophical and discerning observer easily notices it: namely, that he is only interested in the Protestant Church, and that he speaks out against something only because it is Catholic. With that this gentleman has spoken both for himself and for all others like him. If you talk about the ignorance of this or that person, or of the baseness of this or that publication or curriculum plan, you find yourself talking to blockheads on whom, due to their close-mindedness, everything runs off without effect. "No matter what you chose to attack," they keep repeating in their heart, you cannot seduce, deceive, dupe us; we know full well that your real target is Catholicism and that all the rest is but a smoke screen.[189]

Hegel thus joined the party of Jacobi as part of a united Protestant front against what he and his academic comrades considered as an insidious bulwark of reactionary Catholicism.[190]

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[187] "You know that I was not upset by it because I belonged to Jacobi's party in advance." Rottmanner had associated himself "with all the vulgar Bavarian views" and all that he could say against Jacobi "amounts to five lines of the most commonplace prattle." Rottmanner attacks Jacobi's conception of reason, as the capacity for final ends, and therefore, for Rottmanner, "Jacobi does not grasp reason in its totality; so his conception of it is a mere concept of the understanding, and is consequently deficient and unphilosophical." Hegel to Niethammer, December 23, 1807. Hegel jokes to Niethammer that at least they were never so hard on Jacobi. *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 153.

[188] Clark translation. Hegel's Letters, ibid, 153. For original, see Hegel, *Briefe von und an Hegel*. *Band* 1, ibid, 205.

[189] *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 153. It is still a question though whether Jacobi is practicing a kind of esotericism in his arguments about the relationship between God and belief. See Chapter 1 of this thesis and Altman's *The German Stranger*. William Altman, *The German Stranger*, (Maryland, Lexington Books, 2011), ibid, 29-74. Hegel thought his defense of Jacobi good enough to share with him: "I had to rack my brains to realize from what I recollected of my last letter that it contained enough about Jacobi that was presentable for it to be shown to him." *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 156.

[190] Niethammer helped to spearhead this effort: From Butler: "Niethammer mentioned confidentially in his letter of February 16 that he expected to be called to Munich to help work out a new plan for the Bavarian secondary schools to replace the 1804 plan of clericalist Kajetan von Weiller, a follower of Jacobi. Von Weiller was a known opponent of Schellingean-Hegelian speculative philosophy. Von Weiller and other like-minded Bavarians put an empiricist-utilitarian imprint on the Bavarian Academy of the Sciences—much to Hegel's dismay. With Hegel's support, Niethammer championed classical humanism over empiricism and utilitarianism in his new secondary school plan…With Niethammer's growing influence in Munich, Hegel could hope for an eventual role." But as we said above, in order to consolidate Protestant forces in Bavaria, Niethammer advised Hegel early on to reconcile with Jacobi. See *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 126.

Full of disparagement, Hegel mocked the slavish Catholic attitudes in Germany: "We are still perhaps much accustomed to this traditional German habit of gawking admiration, this heaping up of praise like the good Catholic singing the praises of his Creator, instead of the sort of intelligent discernment and recognition that shows insight."[191] Hegel would even cast all of Germany as neo-Catholic, since the German people were not considered by their rulers as mature or autonomous enough to act independently in a constitutional manner.

In Hegel's wordplay, *Bavaria* was interchangeable with *Barbaria*:

> The wife of our friend Paulus…is in the habit of saving the Swabians by saying: it is not that people are dumb, but that they are asses, not people!...Of course this contrasts greatly with what may be declared up and down about the inhabitants of *Barbaria*—which I have often heard pronounced so softly that it almost sounded like *Bavaria*.[192]

This Protestant front was also sympathetic to the French cause;[193] according to Hegel, the Protestants were helping the French to bring about the descent of heaven to earth on an international scale.[194] Despite some criticisms of Napoleon, Hegel did believe that the emperor "incarnated the will of heaven." This, however, did not stop others from condemning the party of

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[191] Hegel to Niethammer, August 29, 1807. *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 140.

[192] Hegel to Niethammer, November, 1807. *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 149-150.

[193] As for Hegel's own French sympathies, one could say the *Phenomenology of Spirit* was itself a post-Jacobin, Bonapartist manifesto, heralding the dawn of a new and rational age with the emperor at the forefront. In a letter to Niethammer from 1808, Hegel states that the will of heaven is incarnated in the will of the emperor, since Napoleon was, for Hegel, the only agent capable at the time to carry through the ideas of the revolution. Hegel to Niethammer, February 11, 1808: "But the importance of the Code still cannot be compared to the importance of the hope which we might draw from it, namely, that further parts of the French or Westphalian constitution might be introduced. This will hardly happen voluntarily or out of our own insight—for where is this insight to be found? It is only from heaven, i.e., from the will of the French Emperor that matters can be set in motion..." *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 160. What's ironic though is Napoleon spoke approvingly of Pierre Royer-Collard's defense of faith, which was much closer to Jacobi's philosophy of faith. As Butler puts it "Napoleon wanted an uncomplicated philosophy which would support civic morality by supporting essential points of traditional religious faith: God, immortality, and free will; and in that respect he would surely have preferred the Jacobin current in Germany…Despite Hegel's Bonapartism, Napoleon would not have approved of dissemination of Hegel's arduous and hence ambiguous philosophy from a Parisian lectern." *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 172-173.

[194] Hegel exhorts Niethammer in his official capacity as a school reformer to hurry up making political changes. Hegel to Niethammer, November 1807: "Establish that Millennial Kingdom soon from which devouring wolves masquerading as sheep are excluded, in which all of "us" will be reunited—but found it in the actual world, for in thought I have already inhabited it a long time now, notably alongside you." *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 152.

Jacobi from being subversive, anti-Napoleonic agents, though. Christoph von Aretin from Bavaria denounced Jacobi, Niethammer, Schelling and others to Napoleon as accomplices of the Prussians and the English. Jacobi with Niethammer filed suit against von Aretin, but the Bavarian court simply relieved von Aretin of his duties as a librarian in Munich.[195]

3.2. *From Bamberg to Heidelberg*

If you answer our call, for the first time since the founding of the university, Heidelberg will have a philosopher—Spinoza received a call from Heidelberg, but in vain as you undoubtedly know.
--Karl Daub to Hegel, July 30, 1816[196]

As a result of these political, cultural, and professional factors, the rapprochement between Hegel and Jacobi was sealed. Encouraged by friends and the embattled situation Protestant intellectuals felt in Bavaria, it behooved Hegel to change his polemical tune from denouncing Jacobi to feeling predisposed towards him. Jacobi visited Hegel in Nuremberg, and according to Jean Paul at the time "Hegel loves him now."[197] Hegel, in turn, visited Jacobi in

[195] See *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 206. Slightly modified version of the Clark translation. From the original: "Nun wurde aber Heidelberg an Ihnen, wenn Sie den Ruf annahmen, zum erstenmal (Spinoza wurde einst, aber vergebens hierher gerufen, wie Sie vermutlich wissen) seit Stiftung der Universität einen Philosophen haben." Hegel, *Briefe von und an Hegel*: 1813 bis 1822. *Band* 2. Edited by Johannes Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1953), 95.

[196] Hegel was invited to accept a position at Heidelberg, and—unlike Spinoza two centuries before—Hegel accepted. Pierre Macherey cites this difference pointing out Hegel's philosophy as complicit with authoritarianism in contrast to Spinoza's supposedly more libertarian philosophy. See Pierre Macherey, *Hegel or Spinoza* (Minnesota: Minnesota University Press, 2011), 7-8. Hegel responded to Daub on the condition that his salary be increased to meet with higher rental rates, and that he would start in winter semester towards the end of the year. See *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, p. 342.

[197] Hegel, *Heidelberg Writings*, ibid, xii. Hegel's own relationship to Jean Paul was more intimate than with Jacobi. As Bowman and Speight tell us, "During Jean Paul Friedrich Richter's (1763-1825) first visit to Heidelberg in the summer of 1817, Hegel suggested that he be awarded an honorary doctorate. There was some initial resistance stemming from questions as to Jean Paul's Christian faith and his love of drink, but Hegel overcame it. Together with Friedrich Creuzer, the scholar of comparative mythology, Hegel handed over the honorary diploma to Jean Paul personally on July 17, 1817." See Hegel, ibid. p. 137. That's not all: as Pinkard relates in his Hegel biography, Heinrich Voss held a "punch evening" at his home in honor for Jean Paul (a few nights before Jean Paul was awarded a degree). All "the men present got thoroughly plastered," with Hegel and Jean Paul jokingly planning to write a philosophy book for young girls together. Hegel would provide the "spirit" and Jean Paul "the decorative garment." At the end of the evening, Hegel looked at Jean Paul and insisted he be made a doctor of philosophy. Marie Hegel soon joined in the festivities, and the entire party went down to a neighboring town. In their Sunday travels, there was much drinking, and they even played "spin the bottle," where "Marie was allowed to give Jean Paul eight kisses." Clearly, Hegel was firmly within the party of Jacobi—or at least, the Jean Paul as opposed to the Jacob Fries wing of the party. See Pinkard, ibid, 379-380.

Munich in 1815 and the two men exchanged books (Hegel gave to Jacobi the second volume of the *Science of Logic* and Jacobi gave Hegel the second volume of his collected works).[198]

With Hegel's arrival to Heidelberg in 1816, his professional fortunes had shifted; he could now relate to Jacobi not as a struggling critic, but as an established philosopher. He could situate Jacobi as one of his precursors (like Kant or Fichte) and not as one of his opponents. The rapprochement with Jacobi was sealed as Hegel replaced the other Jacobian, Jacob Fries, as a Professor of Philosophy at Heidelberg. All this was the academic context of Hegel's review of the third volume of Jacobi's collected works.[199]

Pinkard offers a sketch of Hegel's attitude as he wrote the review: "That Hegel was feeling more at home with both himself and his work also manifested itself in one of the first pieces Hegel wrote for the *Heidelberger Jahrbucher*...The [Jacobi] review was striking both for the overview Hegel gave of his own thought and the conciliatory tone he adopted throughout the piece."[200] Gone was the polemical tone of *Faith and Knowledge*; gone too was Hegel's exegetical criticisms of Jacobi as a bungler when it came to the history of philosophy. As Hegel concedes, not only did Jacobi have a point about Spinoza, but Jacobi also revolutionized the

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[198] The most intimate detail was how Hegel and his wife wanted Jacobi to be named godfather to their expected child, though Hegel's wife suffered a miscarriage in 1815. Hegel, *Heidelberg Writings*, ibid, xii.

[199]Hegel also assumed editorship of the Heidelberg Yearbooks at Daub's insistence. See Pinkard, ibid, 384. Hegel only published two pieces in the Yearbooks: one on the "Estates Assembly of the Kingdom of Wurttemberg," and the other on Jacobi's collected works. "The four Jacobian texts included in the volume concern Jacobi's critique of Kant (the essay *On Critical Philosophy's Attempt to Bring Reason to Understanding and to Transform Philosophy as Such*), his contribution to the so-called "atheism dispute" over Fichte's departure from Jena (the famous public *Letter to Fichte*), and his contribution as well to the so-called "dispute on divine things" that featured a disagreement between Jacobi and Schelling (the two essays *On Divine Things* and *Their Revelation and On a Prophecy by Lichtenberg*)." Hegel, ibid, xii.

[200] Pinkard elaborates: "By the time [Hegel] reached Heidelberg...he was a man in his late forties with a family, a good marriage, a secure, well-paying position, and, most importantly, the world seemed to be going his way. He and what he cared about had, so it seemed at the time, won the day. He could afford to be generous." We could disagree though with the last statement. Perhaps it wasn't that Hegel felt generous to Jacobi as much as he felt he owed him a professional debt. As we have seen, without Jacobi and company, it would have been difficult for Hegel to navigate the academic road, and his academic success is largely due the Jacobian network. Thus, it is not that Hegel was writing generously as much as he was writing a grateful review to his real intellectual benefactor. See Pinkard, ibid, 384.

history of philosophy with his Spinoza obsession.

Hegel begins his review by wishing Jacobi and his readers the best in their efforts to continue publishing Jacobi's collected works. However, it seems unfortunate that the *Letters* to Mendelssohn on Spinoza did not precede the current volume, since "these *Letters* respond to a historical interest that is older and prior to the forms of philosophy dealt with by these treatises…" In order to do proper justice to Jacobi then, Hegel starts his overview with the *Pantheismusstreit*, as this is where Jacobi made his real debut and earned his philosophical celebrity. The *Letters* "also offer a more extensive and reasoned presentation of Jacobi's views on the vacuity of claims to scientific knowledge of the divine." The writings in the third volume display Jacobi's views and polemical style, but they lack the kind of systematicity found in the Spinoza *Letters*.[201] One can only fully appreciate the third volume once one takes a detour through Jacobi's critique of Spinoza, or "how Jacobi immersed his mind in the study of Spinozism…"[202]

3.3. *Switching Sides*

Hegel sketches the intellectual situation from which Jacobi emerged as a battle between Cartesianism and Lockeanism. While the Cartesians wanted to ground being in thought, the Lockeans sought "to derive thought from the immediate givens of the *world of appearance*." What served as a substratum for this appearance was an indeterminately conceived nature, "onto which a few barren determinations of reflection" were tacked as so many superficial predicates. These artificial relations included "totality [*Ganzem*], forces, composition, and similar forms of externality and mechanism [*Ganzem, Kräften, Zusammensetzung und*

[201] This is in contrast to Jacobi's *David Hume*, which is not a statement of interconnected principles but a dialogue. The Letters to Mendelssohn for Hegel remain Jacobi's most important work. For Jacobi's *David Hume*, see Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, *The Main Philosophical Writings and the Novel Allwill*, translation by George di Giovanni. (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1994).

[202] Hegel, Review, *Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi's Works, Volume III* (1816), in the *Heidelberg Writings*, edited by Bowman and Speight, ibid, 4.

dergleichen Formen der Äußerlichkeit und des Mechanismus]...."[203]

So far Hegel is repeating Jacobi's critique of the Enlightenment: that it reduces things to pure external mechanism, while it erodes the traditions "of venerable doctrine and mores." What was received as a cultural given—or even as divine--had been crushed under the light of reason. Hegel likewise repeats here his criticisms of the Enlightenment from the *Phenomenology of Spirit*: that whatever was considered merely positive or asserted through tradition and authority was rendered a "*caput mortuum*." Under the Enlightenment gaze, all that "self-consciousness found in itself were finite purposes and the things related to such purposes by *utility*."[204] But while the Enlightenment comes as a necessary moment in Hegel's *Phenomenology*, the Heidelberg Review treats it more polemically to highlight Jacobi's contribution.

Jacobi did not counter the Enlightenment by merely reaching within the depths of his soul. Instead, he sought the most coherent conceptual expression of Enlightenment thought, and "delved down to their [the concepts] undiluted purity." That ultimate ground of philosophical cognition was found by Jacobi in Spinozism and specifically in Spinoza's "infinite intuition." If the Enlightenment lacks Spinoza's infinite ground and the cognition "of the one substantial being," then one lacks a foundation (*Grundlage*) to measure (*mißt*) any other possible determinations, and the relation linking various finite determinations to truth "will be missing." Hence, without Spinoza's infinite, the Enlightenment project crumbles into incoherence.[205]

With intellectual intuition, the relation between the finite and the infinite is grasped *sub specie aeternitatis*. But Hegel argues that the "purity of this intuition was [also] present in Jacobi" and Jacobi expressed it with "exceptional superiority." With Spinoza and Jacobi, we

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[203] Hegel, Review, ibid, 5. G. W. F. Hegel, *Werke* 4. *Nürnberger und Heidelberger Schriften* 1808-1817. (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 1986), 431.
[204] Hegel, Review, ibid, 5.
[205] Hegel, ibid, 6. Hegel, *Werke* 4, ibid, 432.

have two thinkers who approach the infinite as a matter of intuition directly, and not as "representation or sentiment." Representation and sentiment remain "external" to God; finitude, or the "subjective grappling" a finite perspective advances, "is [by Jacobi and Spinoza] consumed in the one absolute." Hegel calls Jacobi's accomplishment uniquely "Spinozist": that Jacobi's vision of the infinite is tied to the logical consequences of pure thought, and that "every consistent system of philosophy must in the end lead to Spinozism."[206]

But Jacobi does not want to end his project in Spinozism, i.e., in a rationalist system. Hegel recasts Jacobi's spirit here as superior to Spinozist substance, since the truth of substance is poor as opposed to the truth of spirit. If Spinozist substance, as expressing the infinite idea, was superior to Jacobian subjectivism in Hegel's *Faith and Knowledge*, the opposite is true here: it is Jacobi's intuitionism that is an advance over Spinoza, since instead of relating itself to an empty substance, it relates to a living self-consciousness.

This does not mean the Spinozistic phase of thought was unnecessary for Hegel. But as a moment in the history of thought, it can only be a beginning and not the end of reason.[207] Jacobi hence represents the negative moment in the dialectic of asserting the rights of personality and intelligence against mere substance. "The unshakeable feeling was manifest in Jacobi that in this initial immediacy the truth [*das Wahre*] could not suffice for spirit, which is not something immediate [as in intellectual intuition], and hence that the truth had not yet been grasped as absolute spirit." Reason in its progression comes to "reject the truth of sensuous belief"--of Being as treated as a pure abstraction of thought. In the immediacy (i.e., in the unmediated substance) of Spinoza, Jacobi and Hegel find that "infinite being is only something abstract, unmoving, and non-spiritual." The freedom prized by Jacobi "is missing in that abyss [of

[206] Hegel, Review, ibid, 7.

[207] This is also Hegel's point about Spinozistic substance as akin to Parmenidean being in the *Science of Logic*. Like Parmenidean being, Spinozistic substance is fundamentally pure indeterminacy, but it is still a necessary beginning for thought as thought advances towards the self-differentiated Absolute Idea. G.W.F. Hegel, *The Science of Logic*. Translated and edited by George di Giovanni (Edinburgh: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 71.

Spinozist substance] into which all determinateness has been cast and destroyed."[208]

Once Hegel accused Spinozist substance in its Schellingean form as being "the metaphysical night in which all cows are black" (1807).[209] Now this accusation is accorded its real Jacobian pedigree. Spinozist substance is not the sublation of Kantian antinomies—the unity of teleology and mechanism, of necessity and freedom—but poses its own antinomy against finite determinations and the rights of personality. Hegel is here siding with the Protestant party of Jacobi against the infinite of Spinoza, which is treated as an annihilating sublime. The Protestant Jacobi is superior to the Jewish (and in other of Hegel's writings, Oriental) Spinoza, as the Christian Jacobi privileges living spirit over substance. As a fellow-traveler of Jacobi's party, Hegel rewrites his entire relationship to Spinoza, who is no longer a philosopher who already landed in the promised land of absolute idealism, but is a precursor to a properly understood Christian philosophy of spirit.[210]

This treatment of Spinoza suppresses the anti-Protestant elements in Hegel's early Jena Period, in which Spinozism was considered not as precursor to a philosophy of spirit, but was previously viewed as the ground for a new speculative religion.[211] At that time, against Jacobi's vulgar subjectivism, Hegel saw Spinozism as an idealism that sublated the poles of immanence and transcendence. Now, it is treated as falling short of Jacobi's struggle for the freedom of subjective personality. The living personality represents "the infinite [i.e., highest] point of determination" and is pitted against the undifferentiated "abyss" of Spinozism. Spinozist substance is allegedly not truly self-caused or infinite, but is "one unalloyed substance" of

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[208] Hegel, ibid, 7. Hegel, *Werke* 4, ibid, 433.

[209] "To pit this single insight, that in the Absolute everything is the same, against the full body of articulated cognition, which at least seeks and demands such fulfillment, to palm off its Absolute as the night in which, as the saying goes, all cows are black this is cognition naively reduced to vacuity." G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. Translated by A. V. Miller. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), §16, 9.

[210] See Hegel's original position on Spinoza contra Jacobi in G. W. F. Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, (New York: SUNY Press, 1977), 70.

[211] In Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, ibid, 44.

abstract thinking. It "represents only one side of freedom, namely the side on which it has only just arrived at the simple element of universality and left the two finitudes of being and consciousness behind it. In other words, Spinozist substance is only a universal abstraction that doesn't do justice to finite reality or finite spirit. Substance is "free" insofar as it is free of anything determinate.[212]

In evacuating Spinozist substance of its causal powers and determinations as a true infinite--as he once described it--Hegel fully accepts and assimilates Jacobi's critique: that substance crushes the finite under its own weight, specifically the finite spirit of human self-consciousness. "Self-determination" and "personality" cannot be found in substance, and thought is downgraded to a mere attribute of substance, rather than being something primary.[213] Indeed, thought, extension, and the modifications of substance do not even follow from substance's causal nature, since "substance is the undifferentiated and undifferentiable unity…" The fundamental determinations of substance lack any substantial reality apart from it, due to substance being fundamentally indeterminate. These determinations of substance—as Hegel calls them in the *Science of Logic*—are "synthetic unities," meaning that they are synthetically tacked on instead of being actual moments of the self-development of substance.[214] Spinozist substance thus lacks for Hegel internal principles of self-differentiation.

Spinoza cannot resolve the main task of metaphysics, namely, the transition from the infinite to the finite. Spinoza's "being, however, contains no transition from itself to an understanding or to anything singular."[215] Spinoza lacks any demonstration of how the absolute

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[212] Hegel, Review, ibid, 8.

[213] Compare this to Hegel's statements from the early Jena period on Spinozistic substance as being the true infinite, i.e., a true Idea, and not a blind indeterminate nature. See chapter 2 of this thesis.

[214] Hegel, Review, ibid, 8. See di Giovanni's discussion of synthetic unities in his translation's introduction to Hegel's *Science of Logic,* in *The Science of Logic* (Cambridge, 2010). ibid. p. 74.

[215] As Hegel puts it in the "Wastebook Aphorisms" from 1803-1806 (and this time against the epigones of Schelling): "better the understanding without reason than reason without the understanding." See Hegel, "Aphorisms from the Wastebook" in Jon Stewart's *Miscellaneous Writings of G.W.F. Hegel*, (Northwestern: Northwestern University Press, 2002).

contains divine attributes, "for it is merely assumed that there are such attributes," just as the categories of the understanding and the objects of the understanding (i.e., finite things) have merely been assumed as well. The finite is not given its due, but is "constantly being revoked as untrue and immersed in the infinity of substance." Attributes and finite things are merely negations of substance and not part of substance's process of self-differentiation.[216]

Hegel sums up the lack of an internal dialectic within substance, as if it were a clock without springs. Absolute

> substance is not understood as the point of departure for distinctions, particularization, individuation, or whatever form distinctions may take, be it as attributes, modes, as being and thought, understanding, imagination or what have you. And hence everything is merely submerged and perishes in a substance which remains motionless within itself and out of which nothing ever resurfaces.[217]

After conceding to Jacobi his description of Spinozist substance as a void, abyss, and undifferentiated mass, Hegel backtracks a bit. "Upon reflection," there is an internal principle of negativity within substance, but not within substance as Spinoza defines it. It is rather a substance that contains within itself "absolute negativity," a moving principle of determination that is "itself a source of freedom." Everything depends now "on the correct understanding of the status and significance of negativity," and this is where Hegel sees himself as departing both from Spinoza and Jacobi at once. If negativity is taken as only concerning finite things, and not substance itself, then "we are already thinking of it outside of absolute substance and have allowed the finite things to fall outside of it."[218]

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[216] Hegel, ibid, 8.

[217] Hegel, ibid, 8. Carrying ourselves back to *Faith and Knowledge*, we recall how Hegel mocked Jacobi's tenderness towards the finite and the individual before the night of substance. The perishing of the finite was not a problem, but perfectly just, since the finite does not deserve its own substantial reality apart from the infinite. Hegel argued that Spinozistic substance did not lack the finite, but it certainly lacked the status of the finite Jacobi inflated at the expense of the true infinite. Hegel defended with polemical relish this "perishing" of the finite within substance, as the finite of Jacobi needed to perish in the war of philosophy against un or anti-philosophy. See Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, ibid, 105.

[218] Hegel, Review, ibid, 8-9.

Spinoza's infinite as Hegel described is totally incapable of handling the finite. The infinite banishes from itself the finite as its outside, since it lacks the motor of negativity, or the second negation of the infinite working through the finite to return back to itself. What holds Spinozist substance down is the principle of *omnis determinatio est negatio*: that all determination is negation. According to Hegel, Spinoza does not grasp the true significance of this principle, since instead of negation being internal to substance, substance is treated as something that contains no negation. Hence its undifferentiated status.

This is exegetically true and false on Hegel's part. It is false for the reason that *omnis determintio est negatio* does not literally occur as a phrase within Spinoza's corpus. It actually comes from Jacobi, as we see in Jacobi's *Letters* (the 1789 edition): "XII: *Determinatio est negatio, seu determination ad rem juxta suum esse non pertinet*. Therefore particular things, to the extent that they exist only in a certain determined manner, are non-entia; and that undetermined, infinite being is the only true *ens reale, hoc est, est esse, & praeter quod nullum datur esse*."[219] What is exegetically true is how Spinoza defines substance as indeterminate and lacking negation: "that which is absolutely infinite, contains in its essence whatever expresses

[219] Jacobi, ibid, 220. Bowman and Speight rightly point out the Jacobian origin of this principle. This origin is ignored by the majority of contemporary continental scholarship on Hegel and Spinoza (most recently in the English translation of Pierre Macherey's *Hegel or Spinoza* and in Vittorio Morfino's *Plural Temporality*). The only thing in Spinoza's corpus that approximates *omnis determinatio est negatio* is from Spinoza's letter to Jarig Jellis, where Spinoza writes: "As to the doctrine that [geometrical] figure is negation and not anything positive, it is plain that the whole of matter considered indefinitely can have no figure, and that figure can only exist in finite and determinate bodies. For he who says, that he perceives a figure, merely indicates thereby, that he conceives a determinate thing, and how it is determinate. This determination, therefore, does not appertain to the thing according to its being, but, on the contrary, is its non-being. As then figure is nothing else than determination, and determination is negation, figure, as has been said, can be nothing but negation." If we understand this passage correctly, we can see that Spinoza does not say finite figures lack determination or being, if they are thought of as figures of finite and determinate beings. These do have a substantial existence within substance, but to perceive a figure apart from extension is not to perceive a mere abstraction, and thus this represents a partial negation of substance. The implication here is that substance does contain positive beings (i.e., finite and determinate bodies) and in that sense, substance can be said to contain dialectical "negativity," because the infinite contains itself and what is other, i.e., what is finite. We will return to this point later. For Spinoza's letter, see Spinoza to Simon de Vries, Letter XXVII. (IX). *In Improvements of the Understanding, Ethics, and Correspondence*, translated by R. H. M. Elwes. Dover, 370.

reality, and involves no negation."[220]

How we interpret the phrase *determinatio est negatio* according to Hegel will mean the difference between treating substance as merely the negation of the finite, or as the sublation of the finite, i.e., as "the *negation of negation*." As the negation of negation, "substance is absolute *affirmation*, and just as immediately it is *freedom* and *self-determination*."[221] And here comes the core difference between Spinozist substance and spirit:

> Thus the difference between determining the absolute as substance and determining it as spirit boils down to the question whether thinking, having annihilated its finitudes and mediations, negated its negations, and thus comprehended the one absolute, is conscious of what it has actually achieved in its cognition of absolute substance, or whether it lacks such consciousness.[222]

Thus, Hegel's original position on Spinoza seems to have been completely abandoned when he credits Jacobi, and not Spinoza, for making the "transition from absolute substance to absolute spirit."[223]

God is not simply substance for Hegel and Jacobi; God is, with Hegel quoting Jacobi, "spirit, the absolute is free and has the nature of a person." This insight into the personality is "the utmost significance" philosophically, and Jacobi brings to us a knowledge of God as a living personality "so distinctly and emphatically." Hegel implies that in contrast to Spinoza, Jacobi recognizes that God is not "dead," but a "living one;" "indeed, he is more than merely a living God, he is spirit and eternal love." Jacobi brings back to man reason as a

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[220] See also Spinoza's *Ethics*, EID6. We will return to this statement of Spinoza's soon enough to show why it is not necessarily the case that negation here is the same as what Hegel means by negativity. There are two senses of negativity: one dialectical and one merely contradictory. When Spinoza argues that substance lacks negation, he means that it is not self-contradictory, which is different than saying that it excludes the finite. In that sense, Spinozistic substance is a form of "absolute negativity," and it arguably does operate according to a logic of contradiction. Insofar as it is truly infinite, it can contain the infinite and the finite, essence and existence, within its own nature. But not all contradictions are dialectical, and the form of contradiction or incoherence that Spinoza says is excluded from substance is the non-dialectical form of negation (like a logically incoherent square circle).

[221] Hegel, Review, ibid, 9.

[222] Hegel, ibid, 9.

[223] Hegel, ibid, 9.

supernatural and divine access to God--as an awareness of God as part of a "unity of life, feeling of self, personhood, and self-knowledge." As life and spirit, reason is essentially "mediation," and Jacobi is given the role of a champion of mediation against the blind immediacy of Spinozist substance: "Only an inert, sensuous thing has its immediacy otherwise than by mediating itself with itself."[224]

3.4. *Hegel's (New) Critique of Jacobi*

Jacobi is a thinker of mediation, but he is also a thinker that excludes mediation from the purity of intuition. Even if Jacobi is credited as a thinker of the transition of the finite to the infinite, he remains ultimately stuck for Hegel in immediacy as well. In "Jacobi's thought the transition from mediation to immediacy has more the character of an external rejection and dismissal of mediation." This rejection comes from how the reflective self-consciousness of Jacobi's spirit excludes the dialectical movement of reason as an "obstacle to…intuition and ruinous of it."[225]

Hegel repeats Jacobi's distinctions of finite ways of knowing and ways of knowing God. Finite ways of cognition are "concerned exclusively with objects and forms which do not exist in and for themselves, but are conditioned and grounded by something other than themselves. The very character of such cognition thus consists in mediation."[226] But in contrast to Jacobi's direct

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[224] One of the Jacobian devils in the Hegelian details is this focus on mediation. Jacobi is unique in introducing this concept in his discussions and criticisms of Spinozistic substance and Kant's transcendental philosophy. For more on Jacobi as an important thinker of mediation for Hegel, see Bandy Bowman's *Hegel and the Metaphysics of Absolute Negativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 169. See also Marina F. Bykova's entry on "Mediation and Immediacy" in the *Bloomsbury Companion to Hegel*: "This fundamental unity with its opposite is the essential characteristic of the notion of mediation, which Hegel develops in response to the doctrine of immediate certainty formulated by F. H. Jacobi." See *The Bloomsbury Companion to Hegel*, edited by Jeffrey Edwards and Allegra de Laurentiis, (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 231.

[225] Hegel, Review, ibid, p. 10.

[226] Hegel, ibid, p. 10. We recall from our first chapter how this logic of mediation was used against Spinoza by Jacobi: how God in Spinoza's system was understood through the mediating concepts of reason, and not through pure intuition. This was argued for in Jacobi's supplements to the *Letters*, written for the benefit of refuting Herder. Here Spinoza and Herder had confused the principle of reason with the principle of cause, and reason could not understand particular causes but only through abstract concepts. It was thus the extra-logical sense of reality that was missing from Spinoza's speculative logic, with God being the ultimate extra-logical entity, which could not be captured in concepts.

access to God as a matter of the heart, Hegel introduces a second sense of mediation:

> The second type of cognition is the reflection just referred to, which recognizes both the first, subjective mode of cognition itself and its objects as not absolute. This on the one hand this second mode of cognition is itself mediated, for it essentially refers to the first mode of cognition, having it as its presupposition and object. On the other hand though, it is the sublation of that first mode of cognition. Therefore…it is a mediation which is itself the sublation of mediation, or in other words it is a sublation of mediation only to the extent that it is itself mediation.[227]

With the sublation of mediation, cognition becomes immediate again, as a second immediacy. This self-reflexivity of cognition then does not end in pure immediacy or mediation, but in a mediated immediacy. As Hegel puts it, "if cognition does not understand its immediacy in this way, it fails to grasp that this is the only sense in which it is the immediacy of reason, and not that of a rock." There is no real natural consciousness of God, and knowledge of God can only appear in its fullest sense as a result of reason. The way we perceive a rock and the way we know God is not the same: "the business of philosophical knowledge is to recognize in what the activity of natural consciousness truly consists, to recognize that its immediacy is a living, spiritual immediacy that only arises within a self-subsisting process of mediation. This insight is precisely what natural consciousness lacks…"[228]

Jacobi reacts against a mediated view of God as so much formalism: that we are pushing our idea of God through a series of proofs and deductions, treating him more like a mathematical proof than a living being. These deductions included the famous proofs of God's existence, which for Jacobi "could not count as knowledge of God without first formally working through the chain of inferences, concepts, and implications contained in those proofs—which is like

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[227] Hegel, ibid, 10. All things contain immediacy and mediation, two seemingly opposite things. To say that is the same as to admit the nature of dialectics, i.e., that contradiction can be thought. "There is in fact nothing, either in heaven or on earth, either in the spiritual or the natural world, that exhibits the abstract "either-or" as it is maintained by the understanding." But as we know from chapter 2, Hegel once cited Spinoza as a philosopher who had the power of thinking a thing in terms of its immediate and mediated aspects, or in terms of its opposites. Hegel affirms this in his essay on Schulze's skepticism, in his comments about Spinoza's propositions in the *Ethics* as containing opposites from the standpoint of Reason, and not simply of the Understanding.

[228] Hegel, ibid, 10.

telling a man that he could not digest, walk, see, or hear without first having studied anatomy and physiology."[229] Jacobi can only understand the "mediating process of cognition" as making God a thing, and hence as something dependent upon reason. To make God dependent upon human reason is akin to treating God as a conceptual fiction. Thus, the ground for God can only be from himself, and not from logic.

Hegel confronts Jacobi with how mistaken he is against needing a proof of God. God is the first and highest point of consciousness, but he is only revealed to be the first if we can demonstrate that. God as a result of thinking will also reveal God to be the beginning, just as the end of thought reveals its purpose. When "we discover it to be that purpose, indeed the absolute purpose, we recognize the product as the immediate first mover." Progress means a return, and the process of cognition is a process of anamnesis. But what is important to realize is how this process of thinking about God does not take away from God. It is God himself who demands this process of thinking him through to the end, or it is a form of "repelling [from the beginning] that is in itself its own self-repelling" of God.[230]

The process of knowing God and God himself are not at loggerheads: they are part of one process of thought. In other words, God is thinking itself, and thinking is an "active final purpose that creates itself." Spirit cannot merely stop at the beginning, content with itself as an immediate knowledge of God without much further cognitive ado. Hegel shows why that sense of beginning is a false one, since it raises the question of how this super-discursive knowledge of Jacobi's was achieved in the first place. Intuition in the Schellingean, Jacobian (and perhaps by implication, Spinozist) senses is not a beginning, but a stultifying end. Knowledge is not simply immediate--like a shot from a pistol as Hegel once said in the *Phenomenology*--since there is absolutely nothing between heaven and earth that lacks

[229] Hegel, ibid, 10-11.
[230] Hegel, ibid, 11.

immediacy and mediation. That includes the absolute itself.

"If spirit were immediate being without effective activity, it would not be spirit, indeed it would not even be life." Spirit is purposive activity, and spirit discovers "in its own product [through thinking] that its activity consists wholly in its own merging with itself, a mediation that mediates its own determination in immediacy." The truth is thus the whole, and every determination is a necessary unfolding from the beginning towards a determined (and absolute) end. To "dismiss" as Jacobi does the mediation inherent in cognition, inherent in God, is to fail to appreciate how God is essentially this process of mediation.[231]

Jacobi "remains fixated in the form of immediate, merely substantial knowledge." But this means he is also stuck in a form of Spinozism, insofar as "the sole content of Spinoza's simple, fundamental intuition is substantiality." What Jacobi and Spinoza are missing is this sense of dialectical negativity that goes with thinking the divine. If intellectual intuition too knows itself to be intellectual, then it must demonstrate the existence of God beyond mere static substance "in its motionless rigidity." "Spirit must dispense with this one-sided immediacy, or this leftover form of substantiality. For it is precisely life and cognitive movement within itself by which alone absolute spirit differs from absolute substance."[232] Hegel sees himself as refuting Spinoza and Jacobi simultaneously: against Spinoza, this movement is spiritual; against Jacobi, this movement is intellectual.

3.5. *Jacobian Dialectics*

Jacobi's great conviction is "the absolute must be conceived as spirit." But without a process of cognition--without mediation--Jacobi is not entirely innocent "of having provided ignorance and lack of spirit with a convenient pillow upon which to rest their conscience and even of having given them occasion for arrogance." This follows from Jacobi's claim that

[231] Hegel, ibid, 11.
[232] Hegel, ibid, 12.

science cannot grasp the divine and thus takes rigorous philosophy out of philosophizing. But Hegel tries to prove Jacobi's dialectical merits in other ways, particularly in Jacobi's "dialectical" critique of Kant. Because of Jacobi's steadfastness towards intuition, he shows the "deficiency of the Kantian theory of practical reason." Since the ideas of "God, freedom, and immortality are indemonstrable for theoretical reason" in Kant, they are essentially unknowable. They can only be postulated as regulative ideas, and Jacobi's rebuke of Kant here "is of utmost importance, especially since it has become a widespread prejudice that everything of truth is to be found in the practical sphere."[233]

Jacobi is at least aware that "God *is*, that freedom *is*, that immortality *is*"[234] and thus is completely different from postulates, i.e., that these ideas are mere oughts instead of realities. "The mere "ought" by itself, the subjective concept without objectivity, is devoid of spirit, just as mere being without the concept, without its own "ought" to which it must conform, is an empty illusion." Jacobi continues his critique of the *ought* in favor of the *is* in the *Letter to Fichte*, where Jacobi draws attention to Fichte's failure to "capture concrete spirit." While Fichte perfects Kant's transcendental philosophy, his systematic approach is still mired in "one-sidedness" with his principle of the "pure unity of the I." This I "presents itself immediately and from the very outset, as does the equally abstract thing-in-itself, the non-I…"[235]

In Fichte's positing of the I as something unconditioned, he follows the I with a second unconditioned and opposite principle of the non-I. But to have two unconditionals is to have no true unconditional principle at all. "These two unconditionals are self-identical abstractions of the same kind as abstract space and abstract time or the abstract "is" in Kant." Synthesis between those two is thus impossible, and Jacobi condemns the Fichtean ego as an abstraction. He is

[233] Hegel, Review, ibid, 17-18.
[234] Hegel, ibid, 18.
[235] Hegel, ibid, 18.

"here content [in the *Letter to Fichte*] to oppose his unwavering intuition of the absolute as concrete, i.e., the spiritual, to the abstraction of the ego which does not cease to be an abstraction even after its synthesis."

Jacobi rightly for Hegel criticizes Fichte's moral philosophy as "dreary, desolate, and void." But Jacobi, even if superior to Fichte in emphasizing something concrete as opposed to the abstract, refers to his own morality as stemming from "a popular term, calling it the "heart."" Here, Hegel finds Jacobi to be echoing the basics of Aristotle, who criticized Socrates for making virtues into knowledge. If all knowledge is bound up with reason, then that negates the a-logical side of the soul, consisting for Aristotle in "passion and character." Jacobi like Aristotle finds abstract knowledge insufficient to account for the reality of morals.[236]

But Aristotle meant something more than just the heart. "It has always been deemed the work of the wisest men not only to be familiar with the universal as such, i.e., the abstract laws, but also to have insight into the unconscious side, that is the passions, habits, and customs, and to discover ways to regulate this side." The ethical idea must become flesh in the life of a people to have real validity. "In this way the law is given both as the individual's own drive and in respect to as yet undetermined, undirected passions." But the morality of a more cultivated culture needs "an even more universal cognition." What *ought* to be for a people is not enough; what is also required is knowledge of the form of being of a particular people, and how that form "appears as *nature*, *world*, and *history*."[237]

So far, Jacobi might agree with most of this account, particularly when it comes to the superiority of forms of life compared with abstract moral imperatives. But Hegel says that Jacobi also falls short of what Aristotle really meant. Aristotle's criticisms of the abstract nature of Socratic contemplation do not exclude "attempts to grasp and formulate what is universal in

[236] Hegel, ibid, 19.
[237] Hegel, ibid, 20.

morals, i.e., the good." Jacobi differs, because unlike Aristotle, he does not consider contemplation of the good to be the highest pursuit; he "rejects this form of the good and any theory of duties, referring us instead to the heart." Hegel understands that the theoretical emphasis on the good at the expense of the practical can be a one-sided deficiency. But that deficiency is also theoretical in nature, and the good without spirit is itself an inadequate standpoint. Striving of the kind Fichte posits needs to be "complemented by a view of reality," though a rationally mediated view (contra Jacobi).

The absoluteness of self-consciousness against the moral law is expressed in one of Hegel's favorite passages of Jacobi's, worth quoting again below:

> Yea, I am the atheist and the Godless one, who, against the *will that wills nothing* [the Kantian and Fichtean wills—HF], will tell lies, just as Desdemona did when she lay dying; the one that will lie and defraud, just as Pylades did when he disguised himself for Orestes; will murder, as Timoleon did; or break law and oath, like Epaminondas, or John de Witt; commit suicide like Otho, perpetrate sacrilege like David—yea, I would pluck ears of wheat on the Sabbath just because I *have hunger, and the law is made for man, not the man for the law*…I know, with the most sacred certainty that I have in me, that the *privilegium aggratiandi* for such crimes against the pure letter of the absolutely universal law of reason is man's true *right of majesty*, the seal of his worth, of his divine nature.[238]

Hegel repeats what he said in *Faith and Knowledge*, how these words express "warmly" and "nobly" the rights of self-consciousness against abstractions. But these warm and noble thoughts are also asserted against reason. "What is divine is opposed merely to the law of reason, the letter of the law…to the laws with determinate content which raise that determinate content to the status of something absolute." Hegel agrees with Jacobi that determinate laws which absolutely prohibit lying, or even murder, are not really absolute, since they elevate what

[238] Hegel, ibid, 21. Jacobi, ibid, 515. Jacobi not only describes the beautiful soul here. He also describes the criminal will, and it's interesting to see in Marx not only Hegelian sentiments but Jacobian ones, as Lafargue recounts: "I often heard [Marx] repeat the words of Hegel, the philosophy master of his youth: "Even the criminal thought of a malefactor has more grandeur and nobility than the wonders of the heavens." See Paul Lafargue's "Reminiscences of Marx" (1890) in *Marx and Engels Through the Eyes of Their Contemporaries*, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972).

is particular into the absolute.

But Jacobi is also guilty of positing a will that in essence wills nothing. Against the law, he unhinges an indeterminate spirit, and raises self-sufficiency and freedom "in a sphere of absolute indeterminacy…" Jacobi advocates a form of willing that wills in an arbitrary and capricious manner, simply as will. But the law must also have its due, since "as important as it is for the will to be recognized as such omnipotent, purely universal negativity in relation to the determinate, it is equally important to recognize and acknowledge the will in its particularization, i.e., rights, duties, and laws."[239] Jacobi's dialectic certainly brings to awareness the limits of what is determinate. But it cannot leave the recognition of these determinate limits to "the heart," which is not an adequate principle to sanction just behavior or custom.

Jacobi shows that determinateness, the determinateness of particular laws and rights, subordinate themselves "to something higher." This is the positive side of Jacobi's dialectic, but it falls short: "For even if the dialectic manifests their [the determinations] limitations and hence their conditioned nature and finitude…we must nevertheless acknowledge the sphere in which they possess positive validity." It is not a matter of Jacobi's heart, but for philosophy to "demonstrate the necessity and validity of ethical determinations and uncover the higher ground." To make consciousness of such a higher power the "locus of science" is to combat pernicious romanticism, which "makes inroads into ethical life."[240]

If Jacobi does not take the moral law universally, if he insists on separating "man and law" as opposites, "then there is nothing left over for man except his bare particularity, sensuous purposes of desire, and these cannot be considered to be more than means in relation to the law."

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[239] Hegel, ibid, 22.

[240] Hegel, ibid, 23. Hegel strongly implies that Jacobi is responsible for this romanticism of ethical life. He argues that freedom is in a sorry state if it can only "prove its majesty" in romantic extremes, "in extraordinary cases of dreadful conflict and in extraordinary individuals." In contrast, freedom as the highest form of ethical life comes in the form of a "well-ordered state," as the ancients according to Hegel knew. Against Jacobi, Hegel affirms his commitment to the rational law: "Of such a [rational] life, it could well be said that there man was indeed made for the sake of the law and not the law for the sake of man." Hegel, ibid, 23.

If Jacobi once condemned rationalism for its nihilism in his *Letter to Fichte*, then Hegel strongly implies here that Jacobi cannot think the proper end of humanity, and thus falls equally into his own kind of subjectivist nihilism.

3.6. *The Much Maligned Shade*

Hegel accounts for Jacobi's attacks against Schelling's philosophy of nature, and recognizes the rational kernel in his criticisms against Schelling's formalism. Without "a determinate and secure method, the relation of nature to spirit will retain an aspect of immediacy exposing it to a well-founded dialectical attack." But that does not mean a philosophy of nature is a foolhardy project, and Hegel is thinking of his own when he writes "only a completed execution will be able to transfigure that relation into its truth, stripping away all the imperfect relations in which it appears before in completion."[241]

This sentence reveals that beneath the surface of his appreciation of Jacobi lies Hegel's real intent. While Jacobi may be an advance over Spinoza in terms of representing the Protestant principle of subjectivity, it is still Hegel's intention to "complete the execution" of the infinite into the finite Spinoza started. If Jacobi advances over Spinoza in terms of subjectivity, he regresses when we see his ideas as having "the value of mere assurances only: emotion, intimation, immediacy of consciousness, intellectual intuition, belief, the irresistible certainty of his ideas are offered as the basis of their truth." What saves these ideas from inanity is what Hegel calls "Jacobi's noble spirit, the deep soul and the broad cultivation of this admirable and loving individual." What makes up for Jacobi's inanities is then his "*esprit*," i.e., his passion and sincerity.

This compliment to Jacobi as a great soul may be effective as part of this new genteel

[241] Hegel, Review, ibid, 24.

environment Hegel seeks to maintain, but theoretically speaking, it is backhanded. *Esprit* is essentially, as Hegel describes, "a kind of surrogate for methodically cultivated thought and for the reason progressing in it." While it is superior to the understanding, and grasps antitheses, it cannot stomach dialectical "transitions in concepts." Indeed, "it has as its material only concrete representations and thoughts of the form of understanding." In other words, it doesn't actually go beyond the understanding at all, and Hegel seemingly contradicts his earlier statement regarding Jacobi's superiority.

There is a seeming element of what is higher in Jacobi because of his verve and dynamism, but this vitality belongs to the understanding and not to reason. The "seeming appearance of the higher in the element of understanding and in representations as has been forcibly effected by the mind in such a material is melded with the gentle charm that makes twilight so seductive to us."[242]

Jacobi dazzles us with splashes of insight, wit, and clever juxtapositions. We must not "let Jacobi's occasional exaggerations of his insights and their consequences spoil our enjoyment of them" at least Jacobi is striving for clarity with such concise aphorisms.[243] But when it comes to speculative matters the aphoristic style becomes antagonistic to reason. Even if Jacobi's real impetus in his writings is spirit--the real "inner, hidden, motivating force"--spirit can only reveal itself fully "in the form of the concept." Jacobi's prose forfeits the

[242] Hegel, ibid, 25. This reminds us as Hegel's earlier polemical remark from *Faith and Knowledge*, that Jacobi fights Spinoza intellectually asleep, since he has turned away from Reason in favor of personal whim and caprice. See Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, ibid, 101. But Jacobi says his knowledge belongs to the darkness. From *Allwill's Letters*: "There was a time when behind every error one expected a truth, and one strained only for the stolen light. But, it is said, that very faith in the truth was the most serious error. Another star--the star of a rapturous non-light--beckons to us; it beckons us, perhaps, to the barren jubilation of the golden wedding feast of Erebus with the Night, without the offspring of a new heaven and a new earth." Jacobi, ibid, 486.

[243] Hegel, ibid, 26. Compare Hegel's appreciation of Jacobi's aphoristic form with his tone in *Faith and Knowledge*. As we pointed out in the last chapter, Hegel in *Faith* considers Jacobi's aphoristic prose as "rais[ing] reflection above itself [as] the sole outlet for Reason to express itself, once finitude and subjectivity are made into something absolute." The aphorism is Jacobi's way of keeping his ideas of raising themselves to the absolute. See Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, ibid, 117.

merits of sweetness "when the light of reason itself shines forth, leaving only darkness to distinguish twilight from it."[244]

When it comes to speculative reason, Jacobi's aphorism is inappropriate. All the appeals to emotion and common sense, to exaggeration and sincerity, cannot substitute themselves for genuine thinking. Jacobi's interventions into philosophy and culture came from "chance occasions"; they were never occasioned by a genuine beginning, i.e., not from "methodical and doctrinal concerns." Jacobi "himself confirms their character as contingent outpourings," and the character of his (anti) philosophical thinking comes in the form of epistles but never a genuine treatise. This philosophical thinking against philosophy is a "polemical claim that speculative knowledge…is impossible." Worse than impossible, since "a God that could be known demonstratively would not be God" but a counterfeit. [245] For a human being to know God would be to degrade God to our own human level. Such a God wouldn't be of an infinite character, but an invention of human concepts.

Jacobi's dialectic of the human and the divine, the immediate and the mediate, inaugurated a new era in German philosophy for Hegel. Jacobi (and Kant) put an end to the old Leibniz-Wolff school of metaphysics, and even "established the necessity of a complete revision of logic."[246] But Jacobi could go no further than this destructive project, based on his opposition to any kind of "knowledge in and of itself." In other words, like Kant, Jacobi denied that pure concepts could have positive content. And like Kant, he could not make the transition from the understanding to reason, a transition that would not be limited by finite sensibility.

Jacobi's dialectic is completely warranted when it comes to the formalism of metaphysical or transcendental systems, whether Leibniz's or Kant's or Fichte's. But Jacobi also

[244] Hegel, Review, ibid, 26.
[245] Hegel, ibid, 26.
[246] Hegel, ibid, 26.

"dogmatically excludes the concept," and cannot dialectically redeem the positive conceptual content of these same systems.[247] It is unable to perform this effort of positive recuperation, since Jacobian reflection knows only an "immediate consciousness," and cannot know itself in what is other. This is the meaning behind Hegel's formulation here. Jacobi's intuition "inevitably fails to recognize itself and its own intuition either in form or content when they are enclosed in expressions and shapes different from its own, even when they contain the very same content and material results and differ only by having thinking and the concept as their soul." Jacobi is thus stuck in a (anti)-conceptual solipsism, unable to include what is other than his own self.[248]

Jacobi's dialectic (or lack of dialectic) cannot accommodate the positive content of Spinoza's system. While assimilating Jacobi's critique of Spinozist substance as a one-sided product of reflection, Hegel admits that there is a positive content to Spinoza's system after all. "It is not hard to discover something higher than mere rigid being and non-spiritual necessity even in Spinoza's first definitions, in the very notion of a *causa sui* and in its definition as that whose nature can only be conceived as existing, or in the definition of substance as that which exists in itself and can be conceived through itself, i.e., whose concept does not require the concept of any other thing."[249]

What we can take over from Spinoza is the idea of something self-caused. Even if

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[247] Hegel, ibid, 27. gives an example of the strengths and weaknesses of Jacobi's dialectic in terms of his criticisms of Kant, and Jacobi's inability to see what was living from what was barren in Kant's categories: "Jacobi's dialectical criticism is admittedly justified when directed against the barren abstractions that compete with the idea of the original-synthetic within Kant's system for that idea is the element in Kant's philosophy that is of a properly spiritual nature, despite being bound up with those abstractions in a thoroughly non-spiritual fashion. However, Jacobi might as easily have mobilized this very idea of the original-synthetic against these abstractions. Had he done so, he could have demonstrated the untruth of abstraction by insisting on the synthetic, or even better, he could have derived the truth of the latter from the untruth of the former, instead of showing how ill-founded the synthetic is by harping on the abstractions." Hegel, ibid, 27.

[248] One may even go further in saying that this dogmatic exclusion of the other from immediate consciousness finds its political parallel in Jacobi's own political chauvinism. Despite the claim Jacobi is a "liberal" from di Giovanni, his liberalism is not incompatible with racism and anti-Semitism. For why political liberalism and chauvinism are not mutually exclusive categories, see the work of Domenico Losurdo on *Liberalism: A Counter-History* (London: Verso, 2014). For the case of Jacobi's politics, see Jeffrey S. Librett's "Humanist Antiformalism as a Theopolitics of Race: F.H. Jacobi on Friend and Enemy," in *Eighteenth-Century Studies* Volume 32, Number 2, Winter 1998-99.

[249] Hegel, ibid, p. 27.

Spinoza cannot account for how substance is truly self-caused—or account for a self-differentiated substance that would be a proper subject—Spinoza has at least provided some of the foundations for a true conception of God. "For these [Spinoza's] definitions contain the pure concept of freedom, of thinking as it is in its being-in-itself, of spirit, just as much as the concept of the subject-object contains them." We must avoid Jacobi's conclusion that the idea of *causa sui* is merely an idea of abstract reflection ("originated in mechanical fashion"). It is not the case that "Spinoza superficially sheared off external causes and effects from God and made God himself into his own cause and his own effect merely in order to be able to subsume him under that principle." The *causa sui* for Hegel is not a "superficial dressing."[250]

In this dialectical recovery of Spinoza, Hegel can simultaneously accept Jacobi's critique of Spinoza while reconstituting what he considers the redeemable elements of Spinoza's system. Hegel treats Spinoza as a precursor, just as he treats Kant and Jacobi as precursors: here, he largely accepts what he once saw as a complete caricature of Spinoza in *Faith and Knowledge* while affirming the "rational kernel" in Spinozist pantheism. In a sense, Hegel can have his cake and eat it too: he can affirm a Jacobian spirit beneath the Spinozist abyss.

Beyond Jacobi's distortions though, the idea of *causa sui* is a "concept that is richer in spirit, since it expresses both the causal relation and the self-repelling within it, as well as the sublation of its finitude." Hegel argues for moving beyond Jacobi and Spinoza's shared immediacy, in order to trace a dialectical movement of being that sublates itself into a whole system. God can no longer be expressed in "mere propositions" of the understanding (or one might add aphoristically) as something ineffably "outside myself, over or above myself…" These expressions are "ill-suited" to define God, and Jacobi too contradicts himself (in his Letter

[250] Hegel, ibid, 27.

to Fichte) when he says God is outside himself. In tension with Jacobi's "either-or"[251] is his claim "throughout [his writings] that it is the *supernatural within man* which reveals God."[252]

Only the spirit can bear witness to the existence of God. This means that God cannot be outside of one, since "what could that divinity within me be if it were God-forsaken?" Jacobi's either-or belongs "to the traditional logic," and is unworthy of his notion of spirit. It is a "law of thought whose explicit rejection is one of Jacobi's main ideas and, as we've said, one of his main contributions."

Jacobi's intuitions, since they belong to spirit, are "remote" from the determinations of the understanding, and these determinations can only mean a distortion as to the nature of God that is "consonant with the depth of Jacobi's mind." This depth extends to Jacobi's "fine passage" on Spinoza, where he magnanimously states, "May you be blessed, O great, nay holy Benedictus! No matter how you philosophized on the nature of the supreme being and erred in words, his truth was in your soul and his love was your life." Hegel calls this statement a "deeply felt and sincere homage" to a "noble, much maligned shade."[253]

Hegel concludes his review as follows, emphasizing again Jacobi's magnanimous personality and spirit:

> Given Jacobi's manner of expressing his opinions about the highest ideas, it is not suppressing that he should slip from discussion of ideas to the person whose ideas they are. And thus I too, without further vain attempt to prevent misunderstanding, will conclude this review with the expression of a feeling that most readers of Jacobi's wirings will share, the feeling of having, through the study of these writings, conversed with a loving and noble spirit and to have been stimulated variously, deeply, instructively, and suggestively.[254]

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[251] From Jacobi's open letter to Fichte: "Either God exists, and is outside of me, a living being with enduring existence, or I am God. There is no third alternative." See Jacobi, *Jacobi to Fichte*, 1799 in the *Main Philosophical Writings*, ibid, 524.

[252] Hegel, ibid, 28.

[253] Hegel, ibid, 30.

[254] Hegel, ibid, 30.

3.7. *Spinozist and Protestant Cultures*

Hegel's personal and philosophical rapprochement with Jacobi is completed in this review. Here, he defines Jacobi as a philosopher of spirit and not a philosopher of merely an upgraded empiricism or superficial Lockeanism.[255] He even positively contrasts Jacobi's spirit with the one-sidedness of Spinozist substance. This is all diametrically opposed to the argument in the early Jena period, where Spinozist substance is not presented as one-sided, but dialectically integrates within itself the oppositions of the understanding. Even if Hegel tries to recover the rational kernel of Spinozism beneath the geometric exterior, he largely accepts Jacobi's criticisms of substance as an abyss.

Regardless of the positive content of Spinoza's system, which Hegel reduces to the idea of *causa sui* (abstracted from the rest of the system), this portrayal of Spinoza sets up Hegel's other characterizations of him as an essentially *Oriental* philosopher.[256] We will explore this further in the next chapter on Hegel's discussion of Spinoza in the *Science of Logic* (written around the same period as the Jacobi Heidelberg Review), but it is important to see how dependent Hegel is on this Jacobian critique of Spinoza to cast the latter as Oriental and not properly European and Protestant.

Jacobi had already condemned the Enlightenment as not properly Christian in his various anti-Spinoza campaigns (from Mendelssohn to Herder to Schelling). If Lessing was essentially a Spinozist, and the German Enlightenment was itself a half-way house between Spinoza and a mealy-mouthed piety, then Jacobi cast himself as a defender of European civilization against the

[255] From *Faith and Knowledge*: "The philosophy of Locke and the doctrine of happiness were the earlier philosophical manifestations of this realism to finite...Locke and the *eudaemonists* transformed philosophy into empirical psychology...The philosophies of Kant, Jacobi, and Fichte are the complete and idealization of this [Lockean] empirical psychology; they consist in coming to understand that the infinite concept is strictly opposed to the empirical. Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, ibid, 63.

[256] For how Hegel ties Spinoza and Judaism together as part of the Orient, see Jeffrey Bernstein's "Spinoza, Hegel, and Adorno on Judaism and History," in *Between Hegel and Spinoza: A Volume of Critical Essays* (London: Continuum, 2012). Spinoza, like Judaism, is a transitional figure for Hegel from the East to the West. Chapter 4 will explore this in more detail as we work through Spinoza's role in the *Science of Logic*.

barbarian hordes of reason. Not only was Spinozism atheism; it was a "philosophy of the cabbala."[257] But the explicit link to the orient as Spinozist may be found in Jacobi's polemic with Spinozist (or semi-Spinozist) rationalists. In the 1815 edition of his *David Hume*, Jacobi remarks on the rationalists who mistake their imaginations for "the absolute laws of nature and reason." According to Jacobi, their Golden Age for mankind can only "usher in new forms of association—as perfected, unalterable, and firm, as those of…ants and bees! We have already a certain prefiguration of this condition of things in China, and European philosophers have already several times advertised it as such."[258]

Anticipating Hegel's later association of Spinozist pantheism and Indian religion, one can also suggest Friedrich Schlegel's *Die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* from 1808. This text took over Jacobi's arguments from the *Pantheismusstreit*, but Schlegel connects the Enlightenment to Indian pantheism as two geographical sides of the same conceptual coin. While there are hints of this connection between the Enlightenment and the Orient in Jacobi, Schlegel was the first to systematize this alleged conceptual-historical connection.[259]

By 1808 Schlegel was on the cusp of renouncing his original Romanticism in favor of Romantic Catholicism, so his conclusions are different from Jacobi's. Schlegel wants to charge Protestantism as part of the rationalistic decline of European culture, and sees the Enlightenment and (eventually) Protestantism as part of the same disease: "Pantheism is the system of pure

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[257] Jacobi, *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza*, 1785, in *The Main Philosophical Writings*, ibid, 233.

[258] Jacobi, *David Hume on Faith*, 1815 edition, in *The Main Philosophical Writings*, ibid, 326. Jacobi here may have Schlegel in mind as one of those "European philosophers" advertising the change of Europe into the Orient through Enlightenment philosophy. Jacobi's lament anticipates Nietzsche's. In "Europe too the socialists and state idolaters, with their measures for making life better and safer, might easily establish Chinese conditions and a Chinese "happiness", provided they are first able to extirpate that sicklier, more tender, more feminine discontent and romanticism that is for the moment still superabundant here." See *Political Writings of Friedrich Nietzsche*, edited by Frank Cameron and Don Dombowsky, (New York: Palgrave, 2008), 116. Nietzsche's hatred of peace echoes Jacobi's own war-like Spartan sentiments; his scorn for feminine romanticism also shares affinities with Jacobi's criticisms of Herder for submerging the personality in "Spinozistic froth."

[259] Vishwa Adluri, Joydeep Bagchee, *The Nay Science: A History of German Indology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 214.

reason; thus it already marks the transition from Oriental philosophy to European Pantheism as the system of pure reason...It flatters man's conceit as much as his indolence."[260]

But even if Schlegel does not agree with Jacobi's assessment of Protestantism, he still takes from Jacobi the latter's criticisms of pantheism and rationalism. Jacobi supplied the premises that enabled Schlegel to make such connections between Indian pantheism, Spinozism and the Enlightenment project. From Jacobi and Schlegel, we also see Hegel himself adopting the same points in the *Science of Logic* and the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*:

> All that subsists in this change, and the latter thought of as unity is the substantive. This is the Oriental or Spinozist substance...Everything enters into substance, but nothing comes back out of it, i.e., nothing determinate, only a revel of confused images (as in the case of the Hindus). This system is usually called pantheism…Pantheism is to be found in the loftiest form among Oriental poets, especially the Persian Muslim poets, e.g., Jalal-ud-din Rumi by Rückert.[261]

Hegel associates Spinozist substance not just with Indian pantheism and Muslim poetry, but with Chinese philosophy too, specifically Buddhism.[262] Thus, the Oriental Studies of German Romanticism, whether practiced by Hegel or Schlegel, comes with a certain Jacobian origin.[263]

After the break with Schelling, there is the slow acceptance from Hegel of how Jacobi, Schlegel and others described pantheism as not an appropriate form of European spirit. Originally, as we argued in chapter 2, Hegel saw Spinoza's philosophy as not just

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[260] Adluri, Bagchee, ibid, 189.

[261] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion: Determinate Religion*, Volume 2. Translated by Brown and Hodgson. (California: California University Press, 1987), 728.

[262] See Ignatius Vjyagappa, *G.W.F. Hegel's Concept of Indian Philosophy*. (Universita Gregoriana Editrice: Rome, 1980). p. 231. For more discussion of Hegel's formulation of a "Hindu Spinozism" as it appears in the *Science of Logic*, see chapter 4.

[263] There are significant differences between Hegel and Schlegel, especially in regard to the decline of European culture. But in terms of portraying the European pantheism of Spinoza as essentially Oriental, this is related to the Oriental Studies of German Romantics. No doubt Hegel was polemical against Schlegel, and competed with his authority on Eastern culture, but instead of seeing Spinozism as simply a sickness, Hegel saw it as part of the Oriental childhood of European speculative philosophy. But it also could turn into an infantile sickness if people remain stuck in pantheistic conceptions. See Nicholas A. Germana, *The Orient of Europe: The Mythical Image of India and Competing Images of German National Identity.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 124.

philosophically, but culturally ahead of the Protestantism of Kant, Fichte, and Jacobi. In the early Jena period as recounted by Rosenkranz, Hegel foresaw how a new speculative religion would replace the old Lutheranism of Germany in a second Reformation. But this attitude changed not only after Hegel asserted himself more strongly as a Lutheran,[264] but when he joined the so-called party of Jacobi, a membership he started to enjoy after his departure from Jena.

One cannot reduce Hegel's overall critique of Spinoza to the Oriental critique he shares with Jacobi and Schlegel; there are serious conceptual challenges that must be dealt with in the subsequent chapter, and the *Science of Logic* contains the most essential (and mature) criticisms of Spinoza's philosophy. But one must see how much Jacobi and others contributed to this reinterpretation of Spinoza as not only a thinker of the abyss—of blank and empty substance—but also the reinterpretation of Spinoza as essentially Oriental. This helped to suppress the influence Spinoza had on Hegel, and gave Hegel necessary cover from the charge of pantheism he suffered later in Berlin.

Hegel also consistently ignores how Jacobi's project against Spinoza was highly

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[264] From Robert Solomon: "Hegel's philosophy wasn't an orthodox Lutheranism, being far closer to Spinoza's pantheism than to the Christianity of the Church and the New Testament." The British Hegelian McTaggart is quoted as saying how Hegel's philosophy ""reveals itself as an antagonist [to Christianity]--an antagonist all the more deadly because it works not by denial but by completion."" See Robert Solomon, *In the Spirit of Hegel: A Study of G.W.F. Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 631. Of course, the orthodox Lutherans couldn't accept Hegel as one of their flock, and Hegel "could not have gone down well with either the orthodox Lutherans or the neo-Pietists, both of whom encouraged innerdirected piety and embraced what Hegel called Luther's doctrine of "faith in feeling."" See Lawrence Dickey and H. B. Nisbet's editor's introduction to Hegel's *Political Writings*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), xxiv. In this sense, Jacobi was closer to Lutheranism than Hegel. But we see how Hegel donned a Lutheran costume as part of what might be called the costs of professionalization, i.e., the cost of membership in Jacobi's anti-Catholic party. Again though, Hegel could never be a true Lutheran: in the words of Luther, reason was "the devil's whore," while for Hegel, it was the fullest and most adequate expression of God. God was a deductive result of dialectical cognition ("cognition is deduction" as Hegel put it in his early Jena system), and not a spirit of grace or personal faith. There is nothing personal about God's revelation for Hegel and the revelation can be said to be completely exoteric and potentially accessible to all and sundry. On Luther as an anti-philosopher, see Jennifer Hockenbery Dragseth, *The Devil's Whore: Reason and Philosophy in the Lutheran Tradition*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011).

Judeophobic. Even in *Faith and Knowledge*, Hegel does not attack that aspect of Jacobi's characterizations: that Spinoza's philosophy is cabbalistic; that Jacobi is an uncircumcised heathen amongst the speculative Jews of crypto-Spinozist idealism (i.e., those "Jews" Kant and Fichte). In accepting Jacobi's presentation of Spinoza's as a philosopher of Eleatic substance, Hegel can more easily see it as not only Eleatic, but also Oriental. The speculative distortion reinforces the cultural one.

Hegel thus contributes to what Timothy Brennan calls "borrowed light": the suppression and borrowing of the philosophical light of so-called non-Western or subversive traditions for the sake of a different (and more hegemonic) cultural project.[265] In Hegel's case, it is the borrowing of Spinozism to fit into a Lutheran costume. Jacobi too can be seen as contributing to borrowed light, but in another direction. While the esoteric core of Hegel is arguably Spinozist, (or a Spinozism liberated from its *more geometrico* and so-called Orientalism), we can use Jacobi's critique of Spinoza as a form of outright "counterrevolutionary mimicry"[266]: Jacobi's project steals from Spinoza's speculative vocabulary of intellectual intuition, and turns it inside out. This mimicry on Jacobi's part (a mimicry that Moses Mendelssohn mistook for what he thought of as Jacobi's own Spinozism) allowed an entire generation of German romantics to use a Spinoza made safe against reason. The German Romantic Spinoza is Jacobi's Spinoza. The difference--as Hegel pointed out in *Faith and Knowledge*—is that instead of evaluating Jacobi's caricature negatively, they positively affirm it. Herder and Schleiermacher are in key respects repeating Jacobi's image of Spinoza in the *Letters* to Mendelssohn.

3.8. *Hegel's Esoteric Spinozism*

In rethinking the German Spinoza, we can see Jacobi's Spinoza-exegesis as part of a logic of counterrevolutionary mimicry, false appropriation, and distortion. To the extent that

[265] Timothy Brennan, *Borrowed Light: Vico, Hegel, and the Colonies* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014).
[266] On "counterrevolutionary mimicry" in the context of Left and anti-Hegelianism, see Timothy Brennan, ibid, 208.

Hegel agrees with Jacobi's exegesis after his Jena period, he is--unfortunately--part of this process of "borrowed light." But we should be clear that he is not part of it in the same way as Jacobi,[267] as signaled by the fact that Jacobi sees Hegel himself as a crypto-Spinozist. This is revealed in Jacobi's reaction to Hegel's Heidelberg Review, preserved in his correspondence with fellow members of his "party."

We find Jacobi's late assessment of Hegel in two letters: one to Jean Paul (May 11, 1817), and one to Johann Neeb (May 30, 1817). To Jean Paul, Jacobi expresses his overall enthusiasm for Hegel:

> You will have seen Hegel's review of my third volume in the *Heidelberger Jahrbucher*. Although he does me bitter injustice on at least three points, on the whole his work made me very happy, and I only wish I could understand everything he says. But I am not able to see anything through to the end because my eyes and memory are failing.[268]

We do not know what the three points of bitter injustice are. We also do not know if Jacobi made it all the way to the end, where Hegel partially defends Spinoza's *causa sui*. But Jacobi is happy about this reconciliation; not just on a personal level, but on a political-professional one, Hegel has become part of his circle. Even Jean Paul tells Jacobi how "Hegel has come much closer to you, except for just one point concerning the will."[269] But the second letter to Neeb goes into more detail, and it seems that Jacobi—his powers failing and close to death—still understood what the main difference between himself and Hegel was.

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[267] As we have hoped to show in these pages, one of the secrets of Hegel's critique of Spinoza is his relationship to Jacobi. This is something Deleuzeans, Althusserians, and others have not understood, either because they lack an appreciation of Jacobi's influence on Hegel, or perhaps because of how much their version of Spinoza resembles that of Jacobi's caricature. Althusserians and Deleuzeans, insofar as they reject Spinozistic substance in favor of a philosophy of forces or a new aleatory atomism, are the heirs of Herder's and Schleiermacher's Spinoza. In the case of Herder and Schleiermacher, it is an a-cosmic Spinoza made possible by Jacobi's exegesis, which cast the Spinozistic infinite in mystical or romantic terms; in the case of Althusser and Deleuze, it is an anti-Hegelian Spinoza made possible by Nietzsche's postcard about Spinoza to Overbeck, where Nietzsche declares Spinoza to be his ultimate precursor in rejecting God and morality. For Schleiermacher's relationship to Jacobi's Spinoza, see Julia A. Lamm, "Schleiermacher's Post-Kantian Spinozism: The Early Essays on Spinoza, 1793-94. The Journal of Religion" Vol. 74, No. 4 (Oct., 1994). On Nietzsche's Spinoza postcard, see Yovel's *Spinoza and Other Heretics: The Adventures of Immanence* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989).

[268] *Heidelberg Writings*. ibid. p. 138.

[269] *Heidelberg Writings*, ibid. p. 138.

First, as to what Jacobi deems interesting about Hegel's review or compatible with his own thought, he tells Neeb how "Hegel praises my leap, saying: "In his innermost, Jacobi had made just this transition from absolute substance to absolute Spirit…"" With "an irresistible feeling of certainty, [Jacobi asserts that] "God is Spirit, the Absolute is free and has the nature of a person."" He mentions that Hegel defines the significance of his own thinking as bringing "out the moment of immediacy in our knowledge of God so distinctly and emphatically"" and that Hegel's "only criticism" is the following. In Jacobi "the transition from mediation to immediacy has more the character of an external rejection and dismissal of mediation, for that immediacy is a living, spiritual immediacy that only arises within a self-sublating process of mediation.""[270]

The point of criticism seems obscure, since Jacobi is collapsing two sentences in the review without an ellipsis. Hegel is claiming that while Jacobi admits the life of spirit sublates immediacy, (otherwise it would be "inert"), Jacobi nevertheless drives a wedge between reflective consciousness and "the intuition of reason," isolating "the mediating movement of cognition from intuition."[271] Reason in Jacobi is thus an obstacle to knowledge of spirit, and not a constitutive of spirit.

After sketching the main points in Hegel's piece, Jacobi gets to "the difference between Hegel and myself":

> Although he [Hegel], too, holds Spinozism to be the final, true result of thinking which every consistent philosophy must lead...he seeks to pass through it into a system of freedom without a leap by traversing a still higher pathway of thought, which however is the same as (and thus not really higher than) the usual pathway; whereas I only get there by way of a premature leap from the springboard of a merely substantial knowledge which he, too, accepts and presupposes, but which he thinks we need to treat differently than I do. He thinks my method is like the one we follow as living beings when we

[270] Jacobi's rendering. See *Heidelberg Writings*, ibid, 139.
[271] Hegel, Review, ibid, 10.

> transform food into juices and blood by way of unconscious digestion, unaided by the science of physiology.[272]

Jacobi states how he agrees with Hegel that every consistent philosophy ends in Spinozism. But Hegel wants to pass through Spinozism to achieve a more complete system of thought, which for Jacobi is just another form of Spinozism. Instead of taking Jacobi's position of a leap of faith into a personal God, Hegel wants to perfect the "usual pathway" of rationalist thinking, i.e., the pathway of Spinozism. Hegel may think his system is one of freedom and not merely of substance, but since it is still a system of reason, it is not truly "higher" than Spinozism. Jacobi thus resists Hegel's attempt to sublate his anti-philosophy into a so-called "higher" system of thinking, since it just leads one back to the same old rationalistic metaphysics his subjectivist philosophy attempted to break from. Hegel may charge that Jacobi's break with reason/cognition renders his method "unconscious," but Jacobi remains steadfast in his original project.

Jacobi ends the letter on a note of levity, admitting that Hegel "may well be right," and that he would "gladly join him in testing every means available to unaided reason" but that he is too old and weak to go through all the vicissitudes of the Hegelian dialectic. But against deducing reality from the concept, he would—quoting Kastner—"rather learn about the lynx from a hunter than listen to an adherent of method tell me that it is a cat with a shortened tail and ears that are busy at the tips.""[273] Hence, for Jacobi, living existence cannot be reduced to concepts or systems, even a system as sophisticated as Hegel's. But behind Hegel's sophistication lies Spinoza's system.

Jacobi thus concludes the letter with all the mistakes Hegel criticized him for in the early Jena period and the Heidelberg period: a crude empiricism. Jacobi repeats the philosophies of the

[272] *Heidelberg Writings*, ibid, 139.
[273] *Heidelberg Writings*, ibid, 139.

understanding that Hegel and Schelling polemicized against so well in the Critical Journal. Jacobi's point here is the same as Krug's, who asked Hegel and Schelling to deduce his pen from the absolute concept. Jacobi like Krug misses the other dimension of thinking, as even lynxes and hunters as particular things are dependent upon broader, universal concepts. Universal concepts and categories like Spinoza's *causa sui* are not superfluous for thinking, but help us to grasp the finite as dependent on something infinite. In other words, it helps us to grasp the finite as finite, and not to illicitly elevate the finite into something that stands alone.

Such confusion was made clear in *Faith and Knowledge*, particularly when it came to Jacobi's failure to grasp Spinoza's conception of the infinite. Jacobi thus inflates the significance of the particular or the finite position as something that stands alone, committing himself to absurdity, since what is particular or finite demand mediation from what is universal and infinite. Without such mediation, Jacobi treats the particular and the finite as something other than what they actually are.

Jacobi insists over and over again that he does not want to elaborate demonstrable reasons or concepts for his faith. He may use the weapons of reason to turn against reason, as he did with Spinoza, Herder, and Kant, but such stratagems are for the sake of reinforcing his unreason. He cares nothing for what Hegel describes as a process of mediation between the immediate and the mediate, or the infinite and the finite. He will not "tarry with the negative," or heed Spinoza's saying that all things that are excellent are as difficult as they are rare, since he has immediate access to God.[274]

According to the content of Jacobi's letter to Neeb, perhaps Hegel gives Jacobi more credit in the Heidelberg Review than is actually due to him. This is not a consequence of Jacobi's age--that he could not bring himself to understand Hegel--but due to Jacobi's

[274] This comparison between tarrying with the negative and Spinoza's aphoristic statement is made by Kipton E. Jensen in *Hegel: Hovering Over the Corpse of Faith and Reason*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

fundamental subjectivism and disdain for rational philosophy. Jacobi is not so much a philosopher of spirit in this correspondence as much as he comes off as a crude empiricist who reduces everything to immediate experience. Behind all the personal admiration and praise Hegel showered on Jacobi, he seems to remain what Hegel first characterized in the Jena period: an empiricizing Protestant. Hegel in the Heidelberg Review is right to emphasize how Jacobi's hyper-empiricism isn't a straightforward Lockean empiricism though. God is not revealed as part of sensations or impressions, but feelings. There is no external standpoint to perceive God with (either from external inputs or from concepts), except through individual experience. [275]

Jacobi's subjectivism does not stop him making an important point about Hegel's system, however. Hegel remains in many respects a Spinozist, since he still subscribes to the project of a speculative philosophy and its systematic imperatives. Hegel for Jacobi has not overcome Spinoza, but merely repeats him "by traversing a still higher pathway of thought, which however is the same as (and thus not really higher than) the usual pathway." Hegel is thus nothing more than what Schelling and Kierkegaard will later accuse him of being: a "sophisticated Spinozist." What remains Spinozistic for all these critics is the identity of the infinite and the finite, which Hegel in *Faith and Knowledge* claims Spinoza had already discovered. If Hegel is willing to admit, in the Jacobi review, that Spinoza's positive contribution lies in the *causa sui* (a true definition of freedom), this is a relatively stingy concession compared

[275]Isaiah Berlin is clear on how Jacobi inverts Hume's empiricism here: "Jacobi agrees that ordinary knowledge is founded on what he calls "comparisons," and since God is unique, no comparison with Him is possible. He is not an instance of a general concept...I know God, as I know myself, by an immediate sense of their existence...This knowledge is the basis of all other awareness: it is direct and transcendent; no wonder that Hume and Kant, who look for the self in ordinary sense experience or the shadow world of logical categories, cannot find it. This inversion of Hume's empiricism and scepticism in order to prop up faith is typical of the entire strategy of this group of dogmatic religious transcendentalists [here, Berlin includes Hamann—HF]; they call in Hume as a kind of outside specialist, expert at demolishing what they most deeply abhor--the theories of knowledge and reality of the rationalist metaphysicians. For Jacobi, reality is revealed by what he sometimes calls *Wesenheitsgefühl*--the immediate feeling of essential being--which he regards as a gift of God...From this, Hume's scepticism can save us. That, indeed, Jacobi tells us, is [Hume's] claim to immortal fame." Isaiah Berlin, *Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2013), 232.

to what Spinoza had provided Hegel in 1802.[276]

Jacobi sees the "borrowed light" of Spinoza in Hegel. He thinks that the spirit of Hegel amounts to the old substance of Spinoza. But Jacobi does not in this correspondence draw out all the philosophical and political consequences from this, as later German critics of Hegel will. If Jacobi pinpointed the essentially Spinozist character of Hegel's system, then other critics will say what Jacobi fails to say here: that Hegel is essentially a pantheistic and non-Christian thinker. This charge of pantheism was made by detractors and supporters of Hegel alike, and we can content ourselves here in recounting below the accusation of pantheism from Hegel's Berlin period.[277]

Disavowals of Spinozism and pantheism were part of official protocol for career advancement, and it was all the more troubling for Hegel to be called a pantheist by a certain Hermann von Keyserlingk, ("a young philosopher" in Pinkard's description). In Berlin, Hegel approved of von Keyserlingk's request to become a *Privatdozent*, only for the latter to make academic trouble for him later. In Pinkard's words:

> Von Keyserlingk had little success as a teacher, attracting only a handful of students, but nonetheless in December 1824 he requested that he be made an extraordinary professor, and submitted a work accusing Hegelianism of really being pantheism--which in the context of the times was equivalent to accusing Hegel of atheism, which was equivalent to calling for his dismissal from the university.[278]

Luckily for Hegel, the faculty denied his request to be made extraordinary professor; the majority of the faculty, including Hegel, thought von Keyserlingk's work "substandard." But none of the faculty's efforts stopped von Keyserlingk from trying. "The faculty refused even to

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[276] See chapter 2.

[277] Pinkard describes how in Hegel's own day he was charged with pantheism and paganism. "First, there was the serious charge that Hegel's doctrine was only pantheism by another name and, in the equation often made at the time, would therefore be equivalent to atheism. Second, there was the charge that whatever else it was, the view was simply not Christian...In one sense, Hegel simply finessed the pantheism charge by dismissing it." See Pinkard, ibid, 580.

[278] Pinkard, ibid, 528.

respond to his request [for extraordinary professor], so [von Keyserlingk] resubmitted it [his essay] it in January 1825. The ministry and the faculty both agreed that von Keyserlingk did not have the qualifications, and his request was denied."[279]

Even after all the rejections and denials, the danger posed for Hegel by this upstart was not averted. "Undaunted, von Keyserlingk passed around a circular in May 1826 announcing a public discussion he was going to host on 'Hegelian pantheism.' That was the last straw. The faculty was outraged, Hegel filed an official protest, and the faculty backed him up." This was no storm in a teapot, according to Pinkard. Indeed, von Keyserlingk's efforts could pose a "potential nightmare" for Hegel's entire career.[280] Hegel must have remembered what happened to Fichte during the Atheism Controversy at the university of Jena: namely that an accusation of atheism completely derailed his professorship. Fortunately for Hegel, he was protected by the faculty, and perhaps protected by the contacts he made as a fellow-traveler of the Jacobian party.

We may remember, however, that Jacobi aided in the demise of Fichte's Jena professorship. Fichte had asked for Jacobi's help in this delicate matter, and Jacobi only responded by accusing Fichte of being a Spinozist, even if of the Kantian-idealist sort. Not only did Jacobi accuse Fichte of being objectively atheist, but he also impugned Fichte's philosophical character as a *nihilist*.[281] Fichte looked upon Jacobi as a friend—he even looked upon him as a mentor—but that did not stop Jacobi from ruining him professionally.

Hegel avoided this fate by integrating himself into the Jacobi party. But Jacobi, even in his dotage, saw through the Protestant camouflage. Hegel's Spinozist inheritance was too strong and obvious to ignore, particularly from Jacobi's own self-understanding of what constituted the

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[279] Pinkard, ibid, 528.

[280] Pinkard, ibid, 528.

[281] The open letter to Fichte is one of the first places where the word nihilism appears. The only place I can find it appearing before Jacobi's letter is in a speech from the French revolutionary Anacharsis Cloots, made on Dec 27, 1793 "The Republic of the rights of man is properly speaking neither theist nor atheist but nihilist." One can speculate as to whether Jacobi read this speech; as we know, Jacobi was a staunch critic of the French Revolution. See Domenico Losurdo's *Autocensure et compromis dans la pensée politique de Kant*. (Paris: De Lille, 1994).

Spinozist legacy. If Jacobi did not fully draw out all the implications in his correspondence regarding the character of Hegel's philosophy, von Keyserlingk's thesis was the first to do so.[282] If the good Christian members of the Berlin faculty had drawn out the implications of Jacobi's letter, there would have been only one thing left to do: dismiss Hegel from his university post.

[282] The second to do so in systematic form was the Pietist professor Friedrich August Gottreu Tholuck. In Tholuck's *Die Lehre von der Sunde und vom Versohner; oder, Die wahre Weihe des Zweiflers*, he links Hegel's name with Spinoza, Fichte, and the Eleatics as pantheists "of the concept" (as opposed to pantheists of feeling, like Schelling). Hegel explicitly defends philosophy against Tholuck's atheism charge. In the 1827 preface to the *Encyclopedia*--and we will return to this in the next chapter--Hegel partially defends Spinoza against Tholuck. See also Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion: Determinate Religion*, Volume 2. Ibid, 574.

Chapter Four: Spinoza's Spirit

What Spinoza published was an ethics, a philosophy of spirit.

--Hegel, *History of Philosophy* (Vol. 3)

The *Pantheismusstreit* did not end when Jacobi died. It followed and haunted Hegel until his death, as he struggled to extricate himself from the charge of Spinozism. The next round of accusation, after that of von Keyserlingk, fell to the neo-Pietist August Tholuck, who re-activated Jacobian themes to criticize Hegel anew as a crypto-pantheist "of the concept."[283] Theoretical and cultural themes mingled in Tholuck's work, with the implication that Hegel was insufficiently Christian. This prompted Hegel partially to defend Spinoza against Tholuck, but on terms already established by Jacobi and, ironically, by Tholuck as well.

While this chapter begins with Tholuck and ends with Schelling's repudiation of Hegel's rationalism, Hegel could not escape the Jacobian suspicions--repeated in Tholuck, Schelling, and then in a host of other critics and even admirers--that despite Hegel's best efforts, disavowals, and refutations of the "much maligned shade," he remained fundamentally a *Spinozist*.

After explicating Tholuck's criticism, we will in turn explicate Hegel's understanding of Spinoza in his mature speculative logic. Then we will evaluate Hegel's portrayal of Spinoza in these later writings, both in context with his earlier presentations of Spinoza from the early Jena period and by comparing them with Spinoza's own arguments. Finally, we will describe how Jacobi's political victory over Spinoza was established posthumously through Schelling's

[283] Tholuck distinguished between three kinds of pantheism: the pantheism of the concept, which included the rationalist systems of Spinoza and Hegel; pantheism of the imagination, which included Schelling's philosophy of mythology, and finally the pantheism of feeling of the Romantics. See Andrew Shanks, *Faith in Honesty: The Essential Nature of Theology*. (London: Routledge, 2005), 173.

appointment to Berlin by Friedrich Wilhelm IV, with the collapse of Hegel's system as the official Prussian court philosophy, and the official recognition by the Prussian crown that Hegel was in fact a pantheist after all. If Hegel had lived any longer past 1831, he may have been forced into early retirement (or worse).

4.1. *Friedrich Tholuck*

I have been young, but now am old. I have spent a whole life-time in battling against infidelity with the weapons of apologetic science; but I have become ever more and more convinced that the way to the heart does not lie through the head; and that the only way to the conversion of the head lies through a converted heart which already tastes the living fruits of the gospel.
--Friedrich Tholuck

After Hegel recovered from the first salvo of pantheist charges of von Keyserlingk, a new form of attack came his way from Friedrich August Tholuck of the University of Halle. He charged Hegel with pantheism as well, and added that all idealists were guilty of conflating God and the world as one:

> All the various pantheistic schools reject this appellation, though Schelling himself admits it; but in certain respects all true philosophy must be pantheism. In any case, one will concede that the French materialists ought to be called such. One does not understand why the idealists should not also be called pantheists since they do not recognize a God who is separate from the world. It is on this very point that the materialist is no different from the idealist.[284]

Rather idiosyncratically, Tholuck also criticized Hegel's views on the Trinity as essentially pantheistic, since, according to him, the Trinity had nothing to do with genuine Christianity. Tholuck argued that "the dogma of the Trinity…had been falsely read into

[284] From Tholuck's *Die Lehre von der Sünde*, 1825, quoted *in* Peter K. J. Park*, Africa, Asia, and the History of Philosophy: Racism in the Formation of the Philosophical Canon, 1780-1830*, (New York: SUNY Press, 2013), 140. Notice the Jacobian style of this argument, on linking idealism and materialism as two sides of one atheistic coin. From Jacobi's *Letter to Fichte*: "Thus the two main avenues, materialism and idealism, or the attempt to explain everything from a self-determining matter alone or from a self-determining intelligence, have the same aim. Their opposing courses do not take them apart at all, but rather bring them gradually nearer to each other until they finally touch. Speculative materialism, or the materialism that develops a metaphysics, must ultimately transfigure itself into idealism of its own accord; since apart from dualism there is only egoism, as beginning or end, for *a power of thought* that *will think to the end*." See Jacobi, *Jacobi to Fichte*, 1799, in *The Main Philosophical Writings*, ibid, 502.

practically motivated biblical texts by later theologians influenced by Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism." The Trinity was thus an anti-Christian pagan import—and a Greek one at that.[285]

Hegel assessed Tholuck's dismissal of the Trinity as a form of vulgar historicism that did not rise to the level of philosophical argument, since Tholuck insisted on relating the Trinity more to immediate historical sources than to see its true conceptual (and Christian) structure. Hegel criticized Tholuck directly in a personal letter written to him in July 1826:

> Does not the sublime Christian knowledge of God as Triune merit respect of a wholly different order than comes from ascribing it merely to such an externally historical course? In your entire publication [*Die spekulative Trinitätslehre des späteren Orients*] I have not been able to feel or find any traces of a native understanding of this doctrine. I am a Lutheran, and through philosophy have been at once confirmed in Lutheranism. I do not allow myself to be put off such a basic doctrine by externally historical modes of explanation. There is a higher spirit than merely that of such human tradition. I detest seeing such things explained in the same manner as perhaps the descent and dissemination of silk culture, cherries, smallpox, and the like.[286]

Tholuck opposed Hegel's speculative approach with Jacobian subjectivism. It was passionate "inwardness" and self-certainty that grounded his faith, and faith in the truth was not a matter of conceptual deduction. Speculation is a distraction from our primal commitment to God, and Hegel could not be forgiven for obstructing that path with concepts. Hegel countered that Tholuck's anti-Trinitarian approach rejected an essential doctrine of Christianity; he never defended the Resurrection, and his conception of divinity downgraded the Christ figure in favor

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[285] Indeed, Tholuck thought Hegel had come too close even to Islam in what Kevin Thompson calls a rather dubious connection: "In a work entitled *Die spekulative Trinitätslehre des späteren Orients* (1826), Tholuck explored the historical development of the doctrine of the Trinity, arguing that the true origin of this dogma lay not in what he claimed was authentic early Christianity. Instead, the idea of a triune godhead had been, Tholuck asserted, incorporated into the Christian theological tradition from Neoplatonism and, in particular, from its development in the East. Most importantly...Tholuck proposed that the true roots of the doctrine lie in what was even then considered an improbable source: Islam...Of course, Tholuck's claim is clearly, at best, highly dubious, especially given the long and consistent history of Islamic critique of Christianity over its failure to adhere to a genuine monotheism precisely because of the doctrine of the Trinity..." See Kevin Thompson, "Hegel, The Political, and the Theological," in *Hegel on Religion and Politics*, edited by Angelica Nuzzo, (New York: SUNY Press, 2013), 103.

[286] See *Hegel's Letters*, edited by Clark Butler, (Indiana: Indiana University, 1984), 520. See also Philip M. Merklinger, *Philosophy, Theology, and Hegel's Berlin Philosophy of Religion* (1821-1827). (New York: SUNY Press, 1993), 144.

of the feeling of God.

4.2. *The Dead Dog Spinoza*

Tholuck's Jacobian attacks provided Hegel the occasion to define his relationship to Spinoza again in the 1827 edition of the *Encyclopedia Logic*. Since Tholuck accused philosophy of pantheistic nihilism—i.e., the destruction of Christian morality in favor of abstract concepts—Hegel had to defend philosophy based on Spinozist presuppositions as a beginning while sublating Spinoza's system into a "higher" one. Hegel thus defends the "dead-dog" Spinoza in order to preempt any charges of atheism, materialism, or pantheism on Tholuck's part.

Hegel addresses the "absurd" remarks of Tholuck regarding the inherent nihilism of any rational system, Spinoza's or otherwise. He quotes Tholuck as follows. In "their presentation the philosophers do not always develop the ruinous consequences [for morality] that are bound up with their thesis (and perhaps they do not do it because these conclusions are not germane to it)."[287] Philosophers thus are afraid to follow through on their speculative theses, which would bring them to deny God and hence deny Christian morality. This is vintage Jacobi: Spinozism represents the purity of a naturalistic nihilism, while Enlightenment, idealist, and other philosophers avoid the ultimate consequences of what they argue.

Hegel uses this opportunity to talk indirectly about Jacobi's criticisms of Spinoza and the negative impact that criticism had on the reception of Spinoza in German philosophy. For so long, Spinozism was considered a position tantamount to atheism, or even Satanism; according to the hue and cry of conservative Europe, Spinoza had eradicated the distinction between good

[287] Hegel is quoting from Tholuck's *Florilegium of Eastern Mysticism*. See Hegel's *Encyclopedia Logic*, edited and translated by Theodore F. Geraets, Wallis Arthur Suchting, and Henry Silton Harris (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991). p. 8. Citations from the *Encyclopedia Logic* in the text will appear as EL.

and evil by affirming profane nature as the only reality. Hegel concedes that Spinoza only determines God as nature and substance, and not as spirit (thus conceding Jacobi's main argument). However, this does not amount to atheism, or a sophistic destabilization of the boundaries of good and evil (as it is in Tholuck), since for Spinoza the only reality is God, where "no one will want evil to be located." Such a split between good and evil can only be found in the perceptions of human beings, when we find ourselves "diverse from God." (EL, 9)

Hegel accuses Spinoza of rigidly positing the difference of God and man, (where human spirit is downgraded as a "mode"), but he manages to argue that for Spinoza it is still in humanity that the determinations of good and evil are found. From the perspective of substance, evil has no reality at all. Further, if we read Spinoza's system not only from the standpoint of absolute substance, but from the standpoint of human beings confronting substance, we can see moral content in Spinoza's system. There, in those parts of the *Ethics* dealing with the human passions, emotional bondage, etc., we can see the "nobility" of Spinoza's project, and thus that calumny against his name is unwarranted. In a true comprehension of Spinoza's system, one witnesses "the high purity of his moral theory whose principle is the unalloyed love of God." (EL, 10)

In rescuing Spinoza from the charges of atheism and immorality, Hegel can reassert the very mission and purpose of speculative philosophy itself. Thus, instead of leading us towards the abyss of nihilism, speculative philosophy grants one the rational and philosophical basis to know God and ourselves. Hegel ends his defense by acknowledging that we idealists are the heirs of Spinoza's project, and remarks how Spinoza no longer deserves to be treated as a "dead dog" as he was in the time of Lessing:

> Lessing said in his time that people dealt with Spinoza like a dead dog; and we cannot say that Spinozism, or indeed speculative philosophy generally, has been any better treated in more recent times. For it is clear that those who discuss it and make judgments

> about it, do not ever make any effort to grasp the facts rightly, or to report and relate them correctly. This is the least that justice requires, and philosophy can demand this much in any case (EL, 10).

The problem with Hegel's defense of Spinoza against Tholuck is that he undercuts this very defense in the rest of his system. The "purity" of substance Hegel finds in Spinoza, or the thesis that all determinations of good and evil are found only in a degraded mode of substance (i.e., human beings), does in fact lead to a form of nihilism that Hegel is keen on explaining elsewhere. One instance is Hegel's comparison of Spinoza and Novalis in his Heidelberg *Philosophy of Right* (1817-1818) Novalis's radical subjectivism and Spinoza's radical substantiality may appear different, but they have the same consequences. The passage is worth quoting in full:

> Beautiful souls, who have within themselves this infinite self-consciousness, this clarity, have held fast to this standpoint. If, however, they go over to action, they enter the sphere of limitedness. They foresee this and therefore fear every contact, remain enclosed within themselves, and revere their inner infinitude, all of which led to make themselves, their ego, God; they are only inwardly subjective, inwardly intuitive. They regard the good only as what ought to be, not as actual. In this way they border on hypocrisy; their essence is inner vanity. In their relation to others they acknowledge only their subjective concepts but not duty toward others. This is true for instance of Novalis and Spinoza, who died of consumption because they regarded pure objectivity only as something vanishing or consuming away, as an "ought," not as something actual. They lack the confidence to posit themselves objectively, to let themselves go, i.e., in such a way as to remain completely sure of themselves. With them the concept is not differentiated; it remains pure intuition. The concept must break in two and posit itself as universality, in which all differences cease, because its elements form an inseparable totality.[288]

What we see here is Hegel refuting his own premises that a-cosmism leads to nihilism. If Spinozist substance does annihilate the finite, then it cannot but amount to a kind of romantic solipsism in treating the rest of the world as illusory. While Spinoza did not really die of consumption, there is in this passage a logic to how a consistent a-cosmist would orient their behavior towards the world, namely, fatalistically and nihilistically.

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[288] *Hegel: Lectures on Natural Right and Political Science: The First Philosophy*, edited by Peter C. Hodgson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 127.

Before assessing the Spinoza interpretation in the *Science of Logic*, we may want to make a detour in Hegel's lectures on logic from Berlin (1831). Here we also find a compact assessment of Spinoza's "greatness" and limitations in a discussion of the different meanings of the terms necessity and substance. We are told that in the Spinozistic system, "the absolute is determined as the absolute substance, as the One from which the world falls away." The world for Spinoza is only taken up in its externality vis-à-vis the one substance, or only in its immediacy. Since the world suffers from this unmediated state, counterposed to the sublimity of the One, what is finite or particular is only temporary, or—we can say--unreal. The one substance is affirmed on its own as equal to itself—as absolute to itself--but everything else other than substance turns into mere "determinations, negations, [and] vanishing [entities]. Thought is swept clean of all ends." Hence, substance cannot relate itself to what is other than itself, or fails to make the transition from its infinite nature to finite determinations.[289]

However, and in terms that parallel Hegel's defense of Spinoza against Tholuck, Hegel also praises Spinoza's greatness regarding the oneness of substance, or his uncompromising monism. It is "the oneness of his [Spinoza's] substance [that] is the fire in which the soul cleanses itself of all particularity." But this fire can turn fanatical, in a manner reminiscent of Kant's comment to Mendelssohn regarding Spinozist fanaticism.[290] According to Hegel, even though there is a real element of freedom in this purification process, this is only a

[289] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on Logic: Berlin* (1831), edited Clark Butler, (Indianapolis, Indiana University, 2001), 165.

[290] From Kant: " ...Spinozism alleges that it has insight into the impossibility of a being, the idea of which consists solely of pure concepts of the understanding, which has been separated from all the conditions of sensibility, and in which a contradiction can never be met with; and yet it has nothing at all by means of which to support this presumption, which transgresses all boundaries. It is just for this reason that Spinozism leads directly to enthusiasm.[*Schwärmerei*]." Enthusiasm for Kant is an ideological or religious disease, synonymous with mania and fanaticism. See Kant's "What does it mean to orient oneself in thinking?" in *Religion and Rational Theology*, edited by Allen W. Wood and George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 15. For Kant's position on fanaticism and Spinoza, see Knox Peden's discussion in *Spinoza Contra Phenomenology,* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014).

"formal" kind of freedom. And like the Romantics and Indian pantheists, Spinoza does not understand the status of the particular or the finite as something necessitated by the movement of substance itself as spirit. Indeed, what remains so profoundly revolting in Spinoza is how human beings "are considered only as accidents, [or] as beings in which there lies no absolute end upon and for itself."[291] Hegel, while conceding the greatness of Spinoza, makes the case that Spinozism is nihilistic.[292]

4.3. *Spinoza in the* Science of Logic

4.3.1 *Benedictus from Elea, or Spinoza as Parmenides*

Spinoza's philosophy acquires the form of Eleaticism in the body of Hegel's *Science of Logic*. From the Doctrine of Being onwards to the Doctrine of Essence, Hegel casts Spinoza as a philosopher of absolute being, one who demotes any notion of finitude as illusory. He tries to demonstrate Spinoza's affinities not only with Parmenides and Schelling, but also with Eastern religions. This rearticulation of Spinoza continues the Jacobian program of Spinoza as an Oriental philosopher of lifeless existence.

In the Doctrine of Being, Hegel asserts the identity between Spinoza and the Pre-Socratic philosophy of Parmenides. Spinoza, along with Parmenides, remains adamant in asserting dogmatically the proposition "*nothing comes from nothing, nothing is just nothing*."[293] But, Hegel explains, if nothing is posited as absolutely separate from being, in Spinoza's case, the substance fails to achieve unification with itself. Such a failure attests to how Spinoza's

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[291] *Lectures on Logic*, ibid. p. 166.

[292] Hegel, Jacobi, and Tholuck all agree that Spinoza denies reality in favor of logical principles. But their descriptions of the fanaticism and nihilism inherent in Spinozism are different: Tholuck and Jacobi seem to fear Spinoza as an active threat to Christianity, whereas Hegel emphasizes Spinoza's passivity, fearing contact with the world in an almost agoraphobic manner. But whether this is an active or passive subversion of morality and the world seems more like a matter of emphasis and tone than of a substantial difference between Hegel and the theists. Hegel diffuses the threat by sublation into a higher Protestant synthesis, while Tholuck and Jacobi expel it from Christianity wholesale.

[293] Notice too this is a cornerstone of Jacobi's arguments against Spinoza in the *Letters* to Mendelssohn.

conception of being does not live up to a conception of true infinity, since there is something beyond it, external to Spinozist substance (SL, 61).[294]

Hegel advances his more robust conception of the absolute against the pantheism of Spinoza and the Eleatics. Pantheism only acknowledges the existence of God in all things, but pantheism cannot treat the finite seriously as something actual, if all that is is God. Again, against Spinoza's enemies, it is not the case that Spinoza denies the existence of God. That is not the problem: the problem is that in Spinoza, God does "too much".[295] In Spinoza, as in the Eleatics, one cannot "advance from being or from absolute substance to the negative, the finite [*...dem Sein oder der absoluten Substanz nicht fortgegangen werden zu dem Negativen, Endlichen*]." (SL, 71).[296]

In this Parmenidean interpretation, Spinoza cannot conceive anymore a notion of substance than that of being, since any advance beyond being leads one to non-being, which is formally absurd. If one strays from the absolute starting point of being, one is ensnared in the mire of semblance and opinion. This is why—in the interpretation of Spinoza as a neo-Eleatic—Hegel is skeptical of Spinoza's attempt to posit "attributes, modes, extension, movement, understanding, will, and so forth" as expressions of God, if God absolutely excludes from himself all determination. Accordingly, Spinoza's inclusion of attributes and modes into his notion of God must be "synthetic" and not dialectical: "The synthesis contains as well as exposes the untruth of those abstractions; in it they are in unity with their other, are not therefore as self-subsistent, not as absolute but strictly as relative" . Since substance cannot relate properly to its

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[294] In order to circumvent this Parmenidean crisis, Hegel offers his own version of *creation ex nihilo*, of a deduction of being from pure nothing as becoming. See G.W.F. Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, Edited and translated by George di Giovanni. Referred to in the text as "SL."

[295] See Hegel's critique of Spinoza in *History of Philosophy* Vol. 3. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Volume 3 (London, 1896). 282. Also, for another exposition of Hegel's critique, see Judith Butler's condensed account in *Subjects of Desire*: *Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth Century France.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999). p. 12.

[296] Hegel is referring to Spinozistic substance as *Sein* here (not *Dasein*). For the German, see Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Werke* 5, *Wissenschaft der Logik* I *Erster Teil Die objektive Logik*. (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 1969). p. 98.

other determinations (attributes and modes), the "synthesis" of these terms is a false one. This synthesis does not achieve an "absolute" (or correct) relation between substance and its effects, but only a "relative" one, i.e., an abstract relation. Indeed, Hegel cites Jacobi approvingly here when the latter argues how these determinate features of substance are a result of "abstraction." (SL, 74).[297]

4.3.2 *Determinate and Absolute Negation*

There is an advantage Spinoza has over the Eleatics however, since the proposition *omnis determinatio est negatio* (all determination is negation) is of "infinite importance" for Hegel—even if he maintains Spinoza himself did not quite understand his own proposition fully.[298] According to Hegel, Spinoza's deficiency lies in understanding negation as mere or absolute negation, which makes the category a "formless abstraction". But speculative philosophy "must not be accused of taking negation or nothing as something ultimate [*ein Letztes sei*]: negation is as little an ultimate for it as reality is for the truth" (SL, 87).[299] Thus, in his understanding of negation, Spinoza could not appreciate the concept of negation relative to something positive, and could only understand it as nothing. Or, in other words, Spinoza failed to recognize the negation of the negation.[300]

For Hegel, it is an inevitable consequence of Spinoza's own understanding of his proposition that there can be only one substance which excludes all negativity from itself. Although, thought and extension are posited as attributes of God, they cannot have independent

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[297] "They are [the determinate content of substance—HF], as Jacobi correctly describes them, results of abstraction; they are expressly determined as indeterminate – and this, to go back to their simplest form, is being." Hegel, *Science of Logic*, ibid, 74.

[298] Remember from chapter 3 that it is Jacobi, and not Spinoza, who formulates that proposition.

[299] The way di Giovanni translates "*ein Letztes sei*" may seem unclear. But the meaning is negation should not be seen as something final or as denoting a mere nothing. Hence the need for Hegel to see what is positive in the negative. Hegel, *Werke* 5, ibid, 121.

[300] Hegel makes the same point in his Jacobi review: "Substance, namely, is supposed to be the sublation of the finite, and that is just to say that it is the negation of negation." This is what Spinoza should have achieved, but allegedly did not. Hegel, Review, in *Heidelberg Writings*, ibid, 9.

or real existence. Since "substance is the total void of internal determinateness, they [cannot be] moments; the attributes, like the modes, are distinctions made by an external understanding" (SL, 87). In Spinoza, negation is made to stand over against reality, and substance--because it is free of all determinations—becomes a total void.

Spinoza according to Hegel defines the infinite,

> ...as the absolute affirmation of the concrete existence of any one nature, and the finite on the contrary as determinateness, or negation. That is to say, the absolute affirmation of a concrete existence is to be taken as its referring to itself, its not being dependent on another; the finite is negation instead, a cessation in the form of a reference to an other which begins outside it. (SL, 212).

But the true conception of the infinite for Hegel includes the other or the finite as posited within the infinite's own movement. The infinite cannot stop at referring to itself, and instead, the affirmation of concrete existence cannot "exhaust" the idea of the infinite as something that only has a relationship to itself, (or something that can only self-subsist in an abstract way). Hegel restores the infinite "through the reflection of the other into itself, or as the negation of the negative." According to Hegel, Spinoza cannot achieve this negation of the negation, since substance is interpreted as essentially "an unmoved unity, that is, a unity which is not self-meditated, a rigidity in which there is no place yet for the concept of the negative unity of the self, of subjectivity"(SL, 212). In the transition from substance to subject, the infinite becomes a concept of movement, i.e., something self-determining and free. Without such a transition for Hegel, substance remains trapped as mere abstract necessity. Hence, it is not enough for substance to remain self-relating to itself, but it must relate to its own finite determinations as moments of itself to be truly self-caused.

4.3.3 *Spinoza sive Shiva*

Because of the rigidity of substance as a purely affirmative notion devoid of differentiation, Spinoza cannot adequately define the "affections" of substance, or its modes.

This is impossible within any system of"pantheism." If "Being, the one, substance, the infinite, essence" is understood as rigidly contrasted with what is finite, then the infinite must in some way do violence to the reality of the finite, by treating it as illusory. For Hegel, Spinozist substance resembles the Gods of older Indian pantheism, which tried to achieve similar synthetic (but undialectical) refinements in differentiating between various avatars of the infinite:

> Taken abstractly, [Indian pantheism] has attained in its monstrous fantasies this refinement which runs like a moderating thread across its excesses as its one point of interest—namely that Brahma, the one abstract thought, progresses through the shape of Vishnu, particularly in the form of Krishna, to the third, Shiva. The determination of this third is that of a mode, alternation, coming-to-be and passing away; it is the field of externality in general (SL, 283).

Spinoza's modes, understood as abstract negations, "…resemble the Goddess Shiva," where all finite modes are destroyed in the night of the absolute. "It is a matter of indifference what anything might have looked like in existence before being swallowed up in this abyss of abstraction if one stops short of it" (SL, 333). Any differentiation that takes place within Spinozist substance can only occur through intellectual abstractions, and that includes its differentiation into attributes and modes. It is abstract since it is the intellect, and not God's self-movement, which distinguishes the sundry attributes and modes contained in God.

Further, the intellect in Spinoza can only distinguish God's moments as quantitative differences that never amount to qualitative distinctions. In other words, distinctions within substance never rise to a real dialectical scale of God's aspects. A dialectical view would explicate all categories and determinations from the movement of the infinite itself, instead of assuming distinctions within God through the finite understanding. In Spinoza, one is limited to predicating only quantitative distinctions of God, since differences as mere abstractions express "*no more*" (or no less) than the whole of substance. This means that God remains totally indifferent from any attempt to deduce real and qualitative conceptual determinations from him. Thus "difference is…not conceptually grasped qualitatively, and the substance is not determined

as self-differentiating, as subject" (SL, 333). Without difference grasped qualitatively within substance, substance cannot self-differentiate properly into subject, or as a whole with real determinate content.

4.3.4 *On Method*

Another feature of Spinoza's philosophy, and one more indebted to the positions of the understanding for Hegel, is the use of *more geometrico*.[301] Definitions and axioms about God, attributes, and modes are assumed from the start in Spinoza's *Ethics*, and like "mathematics and other subordinate sciences", Spinoza presupposes speculative truths instead of letting them develop as results from speculative thinking. Spinoza's definitions are akin to the manner "*in which the understanding conceives the essence of the absolute*" (SL, 473. Emphasis Hegel's), since those definitions depend upon the positing operations of the finite intellect and not upon the movement of the absolute itself.[302]

Spinoza makes the "sublime demand" on thought to think everything from the perspective of eternity, or *sub specie aeterni*. But, as Hegel argued above, Spinoza cannot conceive of the absolute as dynamic, but only as unmoved, and its attributes and modes "only as *disappearing*," i.e., as unreal distinctions compared to infinite. Since they are not legitimate distinctions, but only tacked on by the positing operations of the finite intellect, there cannot be any true sense of determination at all. The exposition of categories; of substance, attribute, and mode, are made explicit through a Euclidean enumeration, but "without the inner chain of development." What is lacking is precisely a chain of necessity or progression that goes from the infinite to the finite and then back again towards unity with the infinite. (SL, 474).

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[301] The full title of Spinoza's *Ethics* in Latin is "Ethica more geometrico demonstrata".

[302] The problem with positing for Hegel is skepticism: what can be assumed without proof and can dismissed without proof. And since Spinoza's categories (attributes and modes) are allegedly only perceived by the intellect and do not follow from substance itself, Hegel argues how these categories are only "posited" in Spinoza from a finite intellect, but never proved speculatively. For the various meanings of the word positing (*setzen*) in Hegel, see Michael Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary*. (New Jersey: Blackwell, 1999), 224-226.

Spinoza's substance thus lacks "immanent reflection" or a self-developing "light" that can illuminate all aspects of substance as a concrete universality. Instead, Spinoza follows the "oriental representation of emanation", where substance's properties are treated as "distancings" from its pure light, and not as its real and concrete expressions. "Whatever is generated after is less perfect than that which precedes it and from which it arises." Becoming is thus not a positive feature of substance, but a "positive loss". Substance is "the night, the negative, which is the final term in the progression, [an] does not revert back to the original light" (SL, 474).

4.4. *Subject as Substance*

4.4.1 determinatio negatio est

Many scholars and commentators, both Hegelian and non-Hegelian, agree that the account of Spinoza above is far from justified.[303] According to these commentators, Hegel--in presupposing Jacobi's descriptions of Spinozist substance--misconstrues, caricatures, and even misquotes Spinoza. We will come back to Hegel's earlier defense of Spinoza in *Faith and Knowledge* below, but we can observe how much Hegel's critique is in many ways determined by historical context, in that the critique is influenced by Jacobi, and is also aimed against other trends in German philosophy, stemming from Schelling and from German Romanticism.[304]

The corrupting traces of Jacobi's polemical angle from the *Pantheismusstreit* can be found throughout Hegel's mature approach. With regards to Spinoza's alleged phrase, *determinatio negatio est*, for example, Hegel borrows this exact formulation from Jacobi--not from Spinoza. As we have shown, Spinoza formulated the phrase differently in a letter to

[303] See for instance Errol Harris's *The Substance of Spinoza* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1995) and Pierre Macherey's *Hegel or Spinoza*. Translated by Susan Ruddick (Minneapolis: Minnesota Press, 2011).
[304] See again passages on Spinoza and Novalis in the Heidelberg *Philosophy of Right*, but also Hegel's letters to Niethammer on Romantic "Spinozistic thistle-heads." See *Hegel's Letters,* edited by Clark Butler, ibid, 180.

describe how a shape can be a form of negation, and a partial form at that.[305] Furthermore, in the *Ethics*, the finite is treated only as partial negation, and not as an illusion. A finite body for instance is of course not another body, but that doesn't negate the fact it is extended and part of substance. What is finite is given its due in Spinoza conceptually, particularly if one pays close attention to how Spinoza defines *natura naturata*. It is defined as "whatever follows from the necessity of God's nature, or from any of God's attributes, i.e., all the 15 modes of God's attributes insofar as they are considered as things which are in God, and can neither be nor be conceived without God."[306]

In the following, I will discuss whether Spinoza's actual philosophical claims on substance match Hegel's criticisms from the *Logic*.

4.4.2 *E1p16*

Regarding the charge of a-cosmism, finite things in Spinoza are actually *necessary*, and not illusory. Indeed, they flow out of the nature of God as infinite. It is true that in the *Ethics* he argues that these finite things do not, (or, rather, cannot) exist on their own, but are determined to exist in a particular manner as part of an infinite series of transitive causes. It is true that what is finite "cannot be produced by the absolute nature of any attribute of God…," meaning that God cannot be the proximate or transient cause of things, but only acts as their immanent cause. However, the existence of modes is not something merely posited by the finite intellect, but stems from Spinoza's argument in proposition 16 of the *Ethics* Book One: "From the necessity of the divine nature there must follow infinitely many things in infinitely many modes (i.e., everything which can fall under an infinite intellect)."[307]

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[305] See G. H. R. Parkinson, "Hegel, Pantheism, and Spinoza", in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 38. (1977). Parkinson does not trace the phrase back to its original Jacobian context in the *Letters* to Mendelssohn. See footnote #72.

[306] Baruch Spinoza, *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, trans. and ed. Edwin Curley (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985), *Ethics*, Book I, P29 Schol, 434.

[307] *Ethics*, ibid. P16. Curley, ibid. 424.

Spinoza thus places the existence of the finite within the dynamic nature of the infinite itself. Since the infinite, as wholly infinite, includes within itself "more properties in proportion as the definition of the thing expresses more reality," what is infinite must include within itself an infinite number of things as its properties. In other words, for Spinoza, the modes of God are God's *propria*, i.e., God's properties or qualities. Hence, even though the modifications are diverse from God, (i.e., they lack an essence that entails existence), they necessarily flow from the nature of God's infinity. By including the finite as an essential moment of the infinite, Spinoza dialectically resolved the contradiction between the finite and the infinite. Instead of the finite as something posited by a finite intellect, (and thus lacking real determinacy), "infinite modifications" flow from the very nature of Spinozist substance.[308]

All of this follows if we have an adequate conception of God's essence. Since God is perfect, he must also be the active and dynamic principle of all reality (EIp14, P15). God's perfection for Spinoza is one with his power, and power is not something separate from God, but is defined as identical with his essence (EIp34). This power of God is expressed through infinite attributes. Attributes are the aspects of God's power that express the same eternal and infinite essence, but in different ways. In other words, even though they are infinite, attributes can be conceived independently of each other, as they are only infinite after their own kind (and not absolutely). Attributes represent a weaker sense of infinity in contrast to substance, but they are infinite insofar as they are independent of one another. Thus, extension and thought never "interact" but remain parallel together as essences of God.[309]

God necessarily expresses an infinite number of attributes, not for reasons of synthetic

[308] E1P16, demonstration. Curley, ibid, 425.

[309] In Spinoza's own *Hebrew Grammar* substance is treated as analogous to a noun, and the attributes to adjectives. See Warren Zev Harvey, "Spinoza's Metaphysical Hebraism or Hebraic Metaphysics," in *Jewish Themes in Spinoza's Philosophy*, ed. Heidi M. Ravven and Lenn E. Goodman (Albany: The SUNY Press, 2002).

unity as maintained by Hegel, but because the more perfect a thing is, the more attributes or perfections (after their own kind) must belong to it. Thus, if substance is absolutely infinite, it must contain within itself infinite attributes, or all other perfections.

Spinoza reiterates the necessity of infinite attributes flowing from one substance as follows. In a letter to Simon de Vries:

> … that nothing is more evident to us than that we conceive each being under some 20 attribute, and that the more reality or being a being has the more attributes must be attributed to it; so a being absolutely infinite must be defined...the more attributes I attribute to a being the more I am compelled to attribute existence to it; that is, the more I conceive it as true. It would be quite the contrary if I had feigned a Chimaera, or something like that. (Ep. 9)[310]

Further, from thinking about the particular nature of the attributes, we can deduce specific infinite modes that follow, (e.g., from the attribute of extension follows motion and rest). The idea of infinite modes is what allows Spinoza to bridge the gap between the infinite and the finite (EIp21, EIp22). Of course, particular finite things cannot be deduced from a concept of God in the abstract, (i.e., I cannot deduce the fact I am sitting in this chair right now). But if the absolutely infinite as adequately understood necessarily differentiates itself into infinite attributes and infinite modes, it must also suffer infinite changes and variability, not due to substance being in flux, but due to substance being perfect. If no change is conceivable in substance, then we would come back to a Parmenidean conception of static being that does not include what is finite, i.e., what is in relation to other antecedent causes that go back in time *ad infinitum*. Insofar as from infinite substance, infinite thing follow, substance allows for infinite change and variation, but as part of a rational and intelligible whole. Thus, with an adequate conception of substance, we can say that not only is change and variation possible, but that they are necessary effects of God's power.

[310] Spinoza to Simon de Vries, Letter 12. Curley, ibid, 195.

Now, as Errol Harris points out, what may be difficult in Spinoza is the transition from infinite modifications of God, (i.e., of things that necessarily flow from the very nature of God's attributes, like motion and rest from extension), to specific finite modifications. But Spinoza provides clues to how differentiation into finite modes takes place, particularly in the second book of the *Ethics*, in his discussion of bodies as the individual parts of substance. In the 7th Lemma to proposition 13, Spinoza argues that we "proceed...to infinity, we shall easily conceive that the whole of nature is one Individual, whose parts, i.e., all bodies, vary in infinite ways, without any change of the whole Individual."[311] This means that Spinoza does not view individuation as mere juxtaposition of individuals, but understands modes as arranged in a hierarchy of forms: from the simplest bodies to the face of the whole universe (i.e., stretching out towards infinity).[312]

For Spinoza, the laws of nature of one part "adapt themselves to the laws or nature of another part, so as to cause the least possible inconsistency." Different parts are modified or adapted to larger wholes as Spinoza explains in his correspondence with Oldenburg. As Spinoza argues:

> All natural bodies can and ought to be considered in the same way as we have here considered the blood [as part of a larger organism—HF], for all bodies are surrounded by others, and are mutually determined to exist and operate in a fixed and definite proportion, while the relations between motion and rest in the sum total of them, that is, in the whole universe, remain unchanged.[313]

Bodies can be affected in many different ways, and they are "distinguished from one another only by motion and-rest and speed of movement; that is, an individual thing composed of the simplest bodies." But if we conceive of an individual composed of other individuals of

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[311] E2p13L7, Curley, ibid, 425.
[312] Errol Harris, ibid, 208.
[313] Spinoza to Oldenburg, Letter XV. Elwes translation, in Benedict de Spinoza, *On the Improvement of the Understanding, The Ethics, Correspondence*. (New York: Dover, 1955), 291.

"different natures," we "shall find that this [individual] can be affected in many other ways while still preserving its nature." In other words, since the parts of a particular organism are themselves composed of several more bodies, each part can move in "varying degrees of speed" without changing the overall essence of the individual organism.[314] Since extension for Spinoza is not passive or inert, but implies infinite modifications, then, from the infinite nature of motion and rest, it follows that individuals are produced (i.e., distinguished from one another, by their different relative motions. (E2p13s).[315]

For Spinoza, singular things do exist, as defined in the seventh definition of Book Two of the *Ethics*. These "individual things...are finite and have a determinate existence." But Spinoza qualifies the singularity of these things by saying that "...if a number of Individuals so concur in one action that together they are all the cause of one effect, I consider them all, to that extent, as one singular thing."[316] As Yitzhak Melamed points out, such a criterion for differentiation in Spinoza may be relatively "weak," but it need not be necessarily an illusory one. Individuation (or what is considered as a part as opposed to a whole) is also relative to context, and Spinoza's example of the worm in the blood illustrates this relativity:

> Let us imagine, with your permission, a little worm, living in the blood, able to distinguish by sight the particles of blood, lymph, etc., and to reflect on the manner in which each particle, on meeting with another particle, either is repulsed, or communicates a portion of its own motion. This little worm would live in the blood, in the same way as we live in a part of the universe, and would consider each particle of blood, not as a part, but as a whole...But, as there exist, as a matter of fact, very many causes which modify, in a given manner, the nature of the blood, and are, in turn, modified thereby, it follows that other motions and other relations arise in the blood, springing not from the mutual relations of its parts only, but from the mutual relations between the blood as a whole and external causes. Thus the blood comes to be regarded as a part, not as a whole, So much for the whole and the part.[317]

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[314] E2p13L7, Curley, ibid, 425. Harris. ibid, 206, 208.
[315] See Harris, ibid, 206.
[316] E2D7, Curley, ibid, 447.
[317] Spinoza to Oldenburg, Letter XV. Elwes translation, in Benedict de Spinoza, ibid, 291.

But what is relative is not what is unreal or illusory. If one can mark out the "degrees to which things are truly parts of a certain singular thing," then the distinctions we use to tease out the different aspects of the whole cannot be worthless or cognitively null.[318] And, as discussed above, individuals can be marked out according to the varying degrees of motion and rest relative to other bodies in nature.

The problem remains though for Hegelian critics of Spinoza: are these distinctions within reality just heuristic attempts to reflect difference within a truly monistic whole? Or, to reformulate the question differently, are these modifications so many appearances in the human mind? The answer for Spinoza is negative, insofar as the particular modes are not products of the individual mind, but distinctions that emanate from substance itself. True, the intellect is what perceives the attributes of substance, as well as its modes. But when Spinoza mentions the intellect in proposition 16 of Book One, he means the divine intellect that perceives the infinite things that flow from its nature. Since human beings are equipped with an intellect as well, our perceptions of the attributes—if they are adequate—coincide with the perceptions of the divine intellect.[319]

Spinoza calls the infinite modes that flow from their appropriate attribute "fixed and eternal things," which make possible the existence of particular things. As he explains in the *Emendations*: "though they are themselves particular…owing to their presence and power everywhere [they will] be to us as universals, or genera of definitions of particular mutable things, and as the proximate causes of all things."[320] According to Harris, this is what Hegel

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[318] See Yitzhak Y. Melamed, "A-Cosmism or Weak Individuals? Hegel, Spinoza, and the Reality of the Finite." In *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, vol 48.

[319] As a side-note that should be developed further, the charge of a-cosmism contradicts Spinoza's conception of the third kind of knowledge human beings are capable of (E2P40). We "shall call intuitive knowledge. And this kind of knowing proceeds from an adequate idea of the formal essence of certain attributes of God to the adequate knowledge of the [formal] essence of things." For Spinoza, this knowledge not only pertains to God, but to finite modes. If these finite modes were illusory, then they cannot be considered as an adequate kind of knowledge. See Curley translation, ibid, 478.

[320] TIE, Elwes translation, ibid, 37.

would conceive of as "concrete universals," or "self-specifying Principles." It is in these self-specifying principles of infinite modes that we can find the dynamic activity of God's *Natura Naturans* producing the effects of *Natura Naturata*.[321] As we put it above, the infinite modes are what bridge the infinite and the finite, incorporating in their concept the concrete activity of God as mind and extension (in the power of thinking and motion and rest respectively). They are what makes possible the transition from the infinite to the finite.

Thus, we can say that the distance between Spinoza and Hegel significantly narrows, once we see the reality of finite things in Spinoza. If every cause must have an effect, then God as an infinite cause must have an infinity of effects. Melamed outlines other possible incongruences between Hegel and Spinoza though, as involving for example, "the possibility of self-negation, the importance of self-consciousness, and the value of humankind.[322]

For now though, we can start to solve some of these tensions by following the logic of Spinozist substance as producing finitude within itself. With regards to negation, we can say with Spinoza that a thing can only be possibly negated if its essence does not necessarily entail its existence. Thus, finite things in this sense do express a relative kind of "negativity." But for Spinoza as for Hegel, God must be able to posit within himself what he is not, i.e., the existence of finite effects. Spinoza's God is thus "dialectical," in that he exists as the substantial

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[321] See TIE, Elwes, ibid, 36. Harris, ibid, 207.

[322] See Melamed, ibid. Further, concerning Spinoza's alleged "anti-humanism," or reduction of the human being to a mere mode, while human beings do not add anything to the nature of God (we are only finite modes, after all), God does come to "love himself" through human beings love for him. Thus, while human beings are not gods themselves, they do add to God a unique reconfirmation of what he already is. We are one of the ways that God knows himself, and that knowledge can help human beings achieve what Spinoza calls "glory." Humans are still unique enough for Spinoza to know God, and thus to be higher than other beings in the universe, in that our minds exhibit more reality than any other being. Indeed, the human mind is divine insofar as our ability to know God implies our own infinite capacities, since how can something entirely finite and limited know something infinite? That part of the human mind which can know God also is immortal for Spinoza and this is similar to how Hegel treats the infinite nature of human cognition. See EVp36 and Harris, ibid, 214.
The other significant challenge that Melamed doesn't address is the problem of how Spinoza and Hegel begin their respective philosophical inquiries. This is a huge topic, but one that can be resolved when it comes to reconnecting Spinoza's *Emendations* to his *Ethics*, as we connect Hegel's *Phenomenology* to his *Logic*. David Landon Frim has addressed the question of the problem of beginning in Spinoza, and Frim and the writer intend to undertake a detailed investigation of the connection between Spinoza and Hegel on the question of how to begin philosophizing.

unity of the infinite and the finite.[323]

4.4.3 Faith and Knowledge *Revisited*

The irony in this defense of Spinozist metaphysics against Hegel's "mature" criticism is how much Hegel's earlier understanding of Spinoza from Jena anticipated much of the defense of Spinoza we just made! What is barely emphasized in the contemporary literature on Spinoza and Hegel are the latter's earlier assessments of the former, i.e., the significance Spinoza had for the young Hegel we detailed in the second chapter. The young Hegel not only argued that Spinoza was not an atheist but that he affirmed a true concept of infinity in his idea of substance. Spinoza's infinite was not a Parmenidean void or a destructive Hindu deity, but an actual infinity, of the kind denied by Kant and by Jacobi.

Most important in *Faith and Knowledge*, when compared to Hegel's reading discussed above, is that in that early work Hegel explicates Spinoza's idea of the *infinitum actu* (actual infinite), as something that affirms absolutely "the existence of any nature." In this actual infinite, the finite is only a partial negation of what is truly infinite. Spinoza's conception of the infinite, while it cannot be further negated or determined, does contain within itself "the particular or finite in itself at the same time," as it remains "unique and indivisible". For the young Hegel, it is Jacobi's dogmatic insistence on the separation between the infinite and the finite that blinds him from grasping how Spinozist substance, as something infinite, can also posit within itself something finite.[324]

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[323] While we cannot go into too much further detail here, it is certainly questionable whether Spinoza's arguments about substance are reducible to their mathematical form as Hegel hints. They are not strictly speaking Euclidean arguments. For Spinoza, geometrical demonstration was important to illustrate the nature and rigor of his metaphysical deductions, but geometrical form is not constitutive of the concepts themselves. For instance, Spinoza manages to deduce the truths about God and human existence without recourse to mathematical form, (i.e., in the *Short Treatise on God, Man, and his Well-Being*). What is important is the strictly deductive nature of Spinoza's arguments, (which can take mathematical raiment), and how contents can be deduced from the nature of specific concepts. Treating the ideas in Spinoza as mere positing operations misses the speculative (and not Euclidean) nature of his arguments.

[324] Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*. Translated by H. S. Harris, (New York: SUNY Press, 1977), 107.

As we know though, Jacobi's caricature of Spinozist substance is taken up by Hegel as his in subsequent works; this obscures for the reader Hegel's earlier defense of the actual infinite nature of Spinozist substance and how it includes the finite. For instance, Hegel quotes Spinoza directly in *Faith and Knowledge* as arguing that through the "infinite of imagination," "we can at will determine and divide the existence and duration of modes if we consider, not the order of nature itself, but the particular essence [of the modes] insofar as their concept is not the concept of substance itself." Hegel understands what Spinoza means by imagination here not as a faculty that produces mere illusions, but as commensurate with the standpoint of "reflection." Reflection is what "posits and partially negates the finite; and this partially negated thing, which, when posited for itself and opposed to what is in itself not negated, to what is strictly affirmative, turns this infinite itself into something partially negated."[325] But reflection is subordinate to reason, just as the imagination is subordinate to reason in Spinoza's system.

If the standpoint of reflection is not sublated further, the infinite is put in antithesis to what is finite, and thus it becomes an abstraction. However, in a proper understanding of what is infinite, what is eternal contains both the infinite and the finite: it is "the absolute identity of both." Duration, succession, simply as posited by imagination/reflection, without recourse to the eternal, becomes what Hegel calls a "empirical infinity," or an unresolved contradiction, since an empirical infinity is an oxymoron, and tantamount to saying the finite is infinite.[326]

According to the young Hegel "in this [Spinoza's] Idea there lies just what is most crucial: the cognition of the point of union of the attributes." If one lacks an adequate conception of this Idea, then one can only expound Spinoza's concepts "in a formal" manner. Yet attributes and modes particular to substance are not qualities, in the ordinary reflective sense, i.e., in the sense of conditions of intelligibility for human cognition. They instead flow from the nature of

[325] Hegel, ibid, 108.
[326] Hegel, ibid, 113.

substance itself, as something dynamic and self-differentiating.[327]

We see how much *Faith and Knowledge* provides us some of the critical elements for a defense of Spinoza, especially from the charges of a-cosmism leveled by Jacobi and later by Hegel himself. Whatever other issues need to be resolved regarding the relationship between Hegel and Spinoza, we see in *Faith and Knowledge* an adequate defense of Spinoza that flies in direct contradiction to the Spinoza of the *Science of Logic*. The former book refutes systematically Jacobi's distortions; the latter adopts them.

In Hegel's recapitulation of Spinoza from *Faith and Knowledge*, we see the essential bases of Absolute Idealism laid out, and why Hegel thought in the initial period that a return to speculative metaphysics meant a return to Spinoza's own advances. Hegel's "mature" writings on Spinoza represent a regression in terms of Hegel's more adequate understanding of Spinoza in the Jena period. While Hegel stood up for Spinoza against those who sought to condemn him as an atheist and immoralist, Hegel's critique of Spinozist a-cosmism is so strident that it is hard to see how the consequences of Spinoza's system would be anything else than a metaphysical abyss, or would lead to a Romantic (and hence for Hegel, irresponsible) conception of ethical life.

4.5. *Enter Feuerbach*

As discussed in chapter 3, Hegel's work signified a mixture of subversive ideas for his conservative critics, no matter how ensconced he became in the "spiritual animal kingdom" of German academia.[328] From the *Phenomenology* panned as a farrago of Jacobin rage to the dark indictments of pantheism, Hegel was not simply a philosophical target, but a political one. Hence, it would be inconceivable that Hegel could give Feuerbach's letter of 1828 a straightforward answer that would not incur further controversy and scandal. The impertinence

[327] Hegel, ibid, 113.

[328] See Hegel's remarks on the "spiritual animal kingdom" of academia in his letter to Hinrichs. *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 501.

of this youth in asking the old master to give up the ghost of Christianity to better promote the pantheistic rationalism beneath the Lutheran frock, was too much. Spinoza and Hegel knew the restraints academia imposed on thinkers, with Spinoza refusing to be co-opted and Hegel accepting a career of official respectability. What Feuerbach asked of Hegel was thus nothing short of brazen in a hostile climate. But while it may have been impertinent, the implications Feuerbach drew from Hegel's philosophy were not wrong.

Feuerbach sent Hegel his dissertation attached to this letter, which was written in a tone of high esteem and veneration, declaring himself Hegel's "immediate disciple." The letter is not so much about the contents of Feuerbach's dissertation, but the contents of Hegel's own system. Feuerbach describes his dissertation as an example or illustration of "assimilation" of the content of the system, specifically an "assimilation fastening onto and taking up the soul, the singular and productive and autonomous power of this content [of the system]—a free assimilation, which is thus in no sense arbitrary, selective, or nibbling."[329]

As a disciple, Feuerbach sees himself as taking the concepts of Hegel from "the heaven of their colorless purity, immaculate clarity, beatitude, and unity with themselves" towards an actualization and secularization of them. Feuerbach is concerned with how to incarnate Hegelian *Logos*, or the idea's *ensarkosis*. Feuerbach insists that there are defects in his own work as compared with the sublimity of Hegel's ideas, but he suggests that this process of incarnation, of "mastering appearance within appearance," has not completed itself—even in Hegel's work.[330]

The philosophy which bears Hegel's name is "not the affair of a school, but of

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[329] For commentary on Feuerbach's Latin dissertation, *De ratione, una, universali, infinita*, see Marx W. Wartofsky *Feuerbach* (Cambridge, 1977). As Feuerbach puts it in the letter, "I am aware that the ideas engendered or awakened in me by you and expressed in your philosophy do not obtain on high in the universal sphere, beyond the sensuous and the apparent, but continue to act on me creatively." See Feuerbach's letter in *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 547.

[330] *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 548.

humanity." It cannot remain within the bounds of a single school, or the single ideas of one man, but threatens to become "a general world-historical and public intuition." Feuerbach here is echoing the sentiments of the young Hegel for a second Reformation to happen.[331] Residing within the germ of the Hegelian philosophy is a "universal spirit expressing itself in actuality, the spirit, as it were, of a new period in world history."[332]

Hegel's kingdom of the Idea has yet to be brought down to earth, i.e., it has yet to be actualized in time and space. Certainly it has yet to be actualized in Prussia in 1828. The kingdom has yet to be founded, and its founder will not have an individual name or school, but will be the "World Spirit" itself. The foundation of this kingdom is thus a future event, and the current Prussian state is not the incarnation of this kingdom. Neither is Christianity for Feuerbach, since the Idea—contra Hegel's explicit intentions—seeks to overthrow "from its throne the ego, the self in general, which, especially since the beginning of Christianity, has dominated the world, which has conceived itself as the only spirit to exist."[333]

Feuerbach may not be totally aware of what he is repeating; he may not be aware that Hegel himself echoed such sentiments in his youth. Feuerbach may also be unaware that Hegel conceived of a new religion to replace the Protestant one which had exhausted itself in the philosophical conscience of Kant, Jacobi, and Fichte. The entire letter functions as a return of the repressed for Hegel; in a dialectical reversal worthy of psychoanalysis, the spiritual son returns to the father with the ideas of the father's youth he failed to hide and suppress. Or, as Feuerbach puts it, orthodox Christianity can only be treated as a valid conception of absolute spirit "by repressing the true absolute and objective spirit."[334]

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[331] See chapter 2, specifically on Rosenkranz's remarks as quoted by Harris in the editor's introduction to *Faith and Knowledge*. Also see Hegel's call for the speculative "Good Friday" to replace the historic one.
[332] *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 548.
[333] *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 548.
[334] *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 548.

Feuerbach has no interest to continue this suppression of the pantheistic elements in Hegel. This letter heralds what is to come and what Hegel himself could not stop: the growth of Left-Hegelianism. Feuerbach goes on to hurl his speculative thunderbolts against the "ego spirit," to be driven from its "tyrannical throne" so that the actual Idea of Hegelian philosophy may reign. It will be driven in such a way that the Idea "may shine through all things as one light, and that the old empire of Ormuzd and Ahriman and dualism in general may be vanquished."[335] Feuerbach's understanding of the Idea is thus radically monistic and anti-theist, i.e., pantheistic.

Feuerbach tells Hegel that this second Reformation will not be actualized by a church set apart from the world, or by some idea of an abstract substance foreign to worldly things. Instead, "it is to be done in the knowledge of reason conscious of itself as all reality, of reason single and universal, existing and knowing, actual, omnipresent, of reason unseparated from itself and uninterrupted by any difference." What Feuerbach is proposing here is a Spinozistic program of cultural revolution.[336]

Feuerbach prophesies that "the solitary reign of reason will and must finally come," that a new millennium is upon us. Philosophy has groped for thousands of years to realize itself, but it has done so "always within a particular determination, a determinate concept, [that] has by this fact always and necessarily left something out." But Hegel's philosophy can finally achieve the breakthrough of grasping the whole "itself as a whole" and end the reign of determinate, i.e., partial, modes of understanding in religion and culture. Philosophy

> must now also have the consequence that nothing subsist any longer as a second or other, perhaps with the appearance or right and claim to be a second truth, such as a religious

[335] *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 548.

[336] *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 548. Later, Feuerbach will reveal that he understood Spinoza and Hegel as sharing the same metaphysics. We will return to this later.

> truth, etc. Millennial forms and modes of intuition, which from the first natural creation extended themselves across history as fundamental principles, must disappear.[337]

It is unfortunate for posterity that Hegel never responded to what--from his Protestant standpoint--must have seemed a violent vision of cultural destruction. Could it be that old Jacobi was right, and speculative metaphysics must end in a nihilistic night in which no Christian state stands? Or could it be that the dreams of the young Hegel have actualized themselves in the young Feuerbach, and the old man could now rejoice—even in secret? The monistic program Feuerbach proposes to Hegel is uncompromising: "Everything will become Idea and reason. What counts now is a new foundation of things, a new history, a second creation in which it is no longer time and outside of time-thought, but is rather reason that becomes the general form of the intuition of things."[338]

The overthrow of the ego, of the Protestant principle, is also the overthrow of the "self" for Feuerbach, or the determinate and partial expression of personality that excludes the actual idea. If "the ego, the self—as well as the innumerable things dependent upon it—is overcome in knowledge as something absolutely fixed…the ego even disappears outside intuition." This distorted notion of the self will thus "expire," "ceases to be what it formerly was" and "perishes."[339]

Feuerbach in this letter is attempting to purge the Jacobian emphasis on personality and subjectivity out of Hegel. The Idea cannot be merely expressed in such antiquated terms, and it must abolish "world-historical modes of intuition up to the present." Various "modes of intuiting time, death, the this-worldly, the other-worldly, the ego, the individual, the person," and perhaps most importantly "that person considered as something absolute outside the finite, namely God"

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[337] *Hegel's Letters*. ibid, 549.
[338] *Hegel's Letters*. ibid, 549.
[339] *Hegel's Letters*. ibid, 549.

have no genuine place in the infinite idea.[340] The system of Christian representations needs to be razed to the ground.

While Hegel arrests the dialectical development of spirit at Christianity, Feuerbach will push beyond. "Christianity cannot…be conceived as the perfect and absolute religion. This can only be the Kingdom of actuality, of the Idea, of existing reason." Christianity is a religion of the "pure self," a religion for a "solitary spirit." Nature has no meaning in this religion, as Christianity formed as an antithesis to the naturalistic paganism of the ancient world. But because of its otherworldliness and antithesis to nature, it cannot be the genuine religion of spirit. "Indeed, nature lies there uncomprehended, mysterious, and taken up into the unity of the divine essence so that only the person—not nature, nor the world, not spirit—celebrates its salvation." But real salvation is found in knowledge, and "reason is not yet redeemed in Christianity."[341]

We have reached a point in human history when spirit can hold forth as "nothing other than itself." Every religion up to now according to Feuerbach has "been nothing other than the immediate present, show and appearance of the universal spirit of some philosophy," or "fixed form" of finitude. Now is the time to cast off every parochial hindrance to let reason shine through in all its majestic glory.

Obviously though, Hegel did not think it was the time. But some of his students did, Feuerbach included. The time had come to give up the orthodox façade in favor of a pantheistic program, celebrated by the early Feuerbach, Heinrich Heine, and Moses Hess.[342] But what of Spinoza explicitly? Feuerbach does not mention his name in the context of the letter, but we know that his understanding of Hegel was largely Spinozistic. After Feuerbach broke from Hegel

[340] *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 549.
[341] *Hegel's Letters*, ibid, 549.
[342] See chapter 3 of Yirmiyahu Yovel's discussion of the young Hegelian turn to Spinoza. Yirmiyahu Yovel, *Spinoza and Other Heretics: The Adventures of Immanence* (New Jersey: Princeton University, 1989).

along more empiricist and humanist lines, he characterized the former Hegelian position as follows:

> Pantheism is theological atheism, theological materialism, the negation of theology…for it makes matter, the negation of God a predicate or attribute of the divine being…Identity philosophy [and here Feuerbach includes Hegel and Schelling—HF] only differs from Spinozistic philosophy in that it animates the dead, phlegmatic thing of substantiality with the *spiritus* of idealism. Hegel in particular made autonomous activity, the autonomous power of discrimination and self-consciousness an attribute of substantiality. Hegel's paradoxical statement that "consciousness of God is God's self-consciousness" rests on the same foundation as Spinoza's paradoxical statement "expansion or matter is an attribute of substantiality" and means nothing else than "self-consciousness is an attribute of substantiality or God, God is I."[343]

Let us unpack these claims. As we will see below, Feuerbach's characterizations of Hegel parallel the late Schelling's, in asserting that Hegel is a development of Spinozist philosophy, and not its refutation. For Feuerbach, Hegel's position combines within itself theism and atheism in an unstable synthesis, since it makes matter an attribute of divinity. More, the statement that consciousness of God is God's self-consciousness amounts to the position that thought is an attribute of God, and the activity of human thinking is one of the ways God knows himself.

Feuerbach's characterization also parallels Jacobi's criticisms of idealism as a masked form of materialism. But instead of Feuerbach's condemnation of the Hegelian synthesis of the ideal and the real as a compromised position that shamefacedly masks its atheistic core, Jacobi sees idealism and materialism as simply two sides of the speculative coin. Whatever the case, for Jacobi and Feuerbach, idealism and materialism are also two sides of the *Spinozistic* coin. What they share is the *causa sui*, the principle which generates reality out of one idea, leaving no room for the intelligent and creative will of God.[344]

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[343] Ludwig Feuerbach, "Preliminary Theses on the Reform of Philosophy" (1842), in *The Fiery Brook: Selected Writings* (London: Verso, 2012). See also György Lukács, *The Destruction of Reason*. (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1981), 123.

[344] This leads us back to our previous discussions, since what Jacobi cannot stand is not so much materialism or idealism, but their shared monism. Contrast this with the young Hegel's appreciation of the monism of Holbach's *System of Nature* and Lenin's statement that the absolute Idea of Hegel is the most materialistic thing in his whole system. "A paradox, but a fact!" See G.W.F. Hegel, *Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of*

Feuerbach's claims about the Spinozism of Hegel's absolute also find confirmation in the writings of other Hegelian figures such as Heinrich Heine, Moses Hess, and Bruno Bauer. While Hess declared Spinoza as the actual godfather of German Idealism and Bauer eventually rejected Hegel as too Spinozistic in his later writings, Heine summed up the indelible link between Spinoza and German Idealism as follows:

> I shall designate by the name Pantheism not so much Spinoza's system as his way of viewing things. Pantheism, like Deism, assumes the unity of God. But the god of the pantheist is in the world itself, not by permeating it with his divinity in the manner which St. Augustine tried to illustrate by comparing God to a large lake and the world to a large sponge lying in the middle of it and absorbing the Deity—no, the world is not merely God□imbued, God□impregnated; it is identical with God. "God," called by Spinoza the one and only substance, and by German philosophers the absolute, "is everything that exists"; He is matter as well as spirit, both are equally divine, and whoever insults the sanctity of matter is just as sinful as he who sins against the Holy Ghost.[345]

The substance of Spinoza and the absolute of Hegel are thus one and the same thing. But such an identity between Spinoza and Hegel was not so much demonstrated as asserted in these young Hegelian writings, even if these assertions are correct. While the remarks of Feuerbach, Heine, and Hess are insightful, some of them require further demonstration and proof. But if Hegel's students failed to provide such an adequate proof, perhaps his adversaries could, and it was Hegel's erstwhile philosophical comrade-in-arms, Schelling, that did more than any of their

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Philosophy (New York: SUNY Press, 1977), 114. For Lenin on Hegel's absolute, see Kevin Anderson, *Lenin, Hegel, and Western Marxism: A Critical Study* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 96.

[345] Heinrich Heine, *The Romantic School and Other Essays*. Edited by Jost Hermand and Robert C. Holub. (New York: Continuum, 2002). p. 176. For Hess' remark that Spinoza is the godfather of German Idealism, see Moses Hess, *The Holy History of Mankind and Other Writings*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 101. On Bruno Bauer's abandonment of Hegelianism as too Spinozistic in later writings, see Moggach's summary: "Bauer's late critique assimilated Hegel with Spinoza and the metaphysics of substance, understood as the negation of form and subjectivity. Unlike his *Vormärz* position, he asserted in texts of 1852 and 1853 that Hegel had yielded to the influence of Spinoza, effacing individuality, and submerging concrete particulars under illusory, abstract logical categories. Bauer now described the Hegelian idea as being itself a transcendent illusion. Its inability to admit concrete particulars derived from the substantiality of the system itself. The result was that Hegel had discounted individuality in favour of conformity." Douglas Moggach, "Bruno Bauer," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2013). http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/bauer/

contemporaries to demonstrate Hegel's "sophisticated Spinozism."[346]

Indeed, scholars have come to grips with how much Schelling's critique of Hegel has been not only influential for post-structuralism, but even for the young Hegelians Schelling decried as subversives.[347] In Feuerbach's case, much of his critique of Spinoza and Hegel seems adapted from Schelling's critique of speculative rationalism. Even if Feuerbach's positive project wasn't a return to the Christian God, but to concrete human reality, the criticisms of Spinoza and Hegel's alleged panlogicism remains very similar, and it is ironic that Feuerbach's "materialist" criticisms of speculation came from such anti-materialist sources.[348] However, more important for our immediate purpose is seeing how the later Schelling continued Jacobi's critique of Spinoza, redeploying it against Hegelian dialectics. It is a re-activation of Jacobi which is at the heart of Schelling's critique of Hegel, and at the heart of what became known as existentialism.[349]

4.6. *Enter Schelling*

4.6.1 *Schelling's Jacobian Critique of Spinoza*

[346] The phrase "sophisticated Spinozism" is one Kierkegaard uses to summarize how Schelling understood Hegel's philosophy. The expression comes in Kierkegaard's letter to Boesen, dated December 14, 1841. See Niels Thulstrup, *Kierkegaard's Relation to Hegel*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980)., 271.

[347] Warren Breckman, *Marx, the Young Hegelians, and the Origins of Radical Social Theory*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 101.

[348] If what we attempt to demonstrate below is true—that Schelling's critique of Spinozism and Hegel essentially repeats the Jacobian one, then the real genealogy of Feuerbach's "materialist" criticism of Hegel in favor of concrete reality against the mere idea can be traced back to Jacobi! This may come as a surprise to many, but it may goad us to revise how we think about "materialist" criticisms of idealism as stemming from anti-materialist sources. In other words, we may need to come back to Jacobi's insight that a consistent idealism is already materialism, and vice versa. See also the work of Manfred Frank for Schelling's influence over Feuerbach's materialist critique of Spinoza and Hegel. Manfred Frank, "Schelling's Critique of Hegel and the Beginnings of Marxian Dialectics" in *Idealistic Studies* 19 (3):251-268 (1989).

[349] We will show the Jacobian pedigree of Schelling's critique of idealism (and return to a theistic God) below, but the degree to which Schelling influenced so much of Continental philosophy as against Hegel cannot be underestimated. From Kierkegaard to Levinas, or from Heidegger to Deleuze, Schelling's critique of Hegel is almost repeated verbatim in these thinkers. See Stephen Houlgate, "Schelling's Critique of Hegel's Logic." *The Review of Metaphysics* 53.1 (September, 1999): 99-128. One may even venture to say how much Adorno's critique of Hegel's "identity-philosophy" is also indebted indirectly to Schelling, as opposed to the more overt influence of Nietzsche or Kierkegaard. We will show below why the Schellingean critique of Hegel remains in key respects the same Jacobian critique of Spinoza.

[Spinozism] is a system of mere necessity, i.e., which explains everything as just a necessary consequence of divine nature (not as free, contingent consequence of his will). But this is not a reproach which can be made exclusively to Spinozism.
--Schelling, *Lectures on the History of Modern Philosophy*

The literature on Schelling's last war against Hegel's "monstrous" philosophy is vast.[350] We know how Schelling was summoned by the throne of Friedrich Wilhelm IV to purge the "dragon-seed" of Hegelian philosophy from Berlin academia, and how that mission was to be executed not just theoretically, but practically by the monarch's push for censorship against young Hegelian journals.[351] We also appreciate how the philosophical basis for Schelling's rejection of speculative rationalism was already complete by 1808 in his *Treatise on Freedom*. It is interesting to note that Heidegger once called this study the one that signaled the "destruction" of German Idealism; how it even "annihilated" Hegel's *Science of Logic* before it was written.[352]

Our emphasis here will be different, as we want to trace the "destruction" of idealism (as Heidegger calls it) in Schelling's *Lectures on Modern Philosophy*, where he is most explicit about the links between Spinoza, the Identity-Philosophy, and Hegel's system. While one does not have to subscribe to Schelling's positive critique of Hegel, there is much in Schelling's account that shows a self-understanding about the neo-Spinozist premises of the original philosophical project he shared with Hegel, and how Hegel's break with Schelling in 1806-07

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[350] For a detailed account of the historical and political context of Schelling's late war against Hegel, see Bruce Matthews' editors' introduction to Schelling's Berlin lectures in F. W. J. von Schelling. *Grounding of Positive Philosophy: The Berlin Lectures*. (New York: SUNY Press, 2007).

[351] Schelling seems to have opposed censorship of certain journals, but the state wanted no attacks against Schelling from the young Hegelians. In a letter to Feuerbach from October 1843, Marx called Schelling's "Prussian policy *sub species philosophie.*" This was after Marx as editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung* was told by Prussian authorities not to include any articles critical of Schelling. See Todd Gooch, "Some Political Implications of Feuerbach's Theory of Religion" in Douglas Moggach's *Politics, Religion, and Art: Hegelian Debates*, (Northeastern, 2011), 278.

[352] Heidegger on Schelling's *Freedom* essay: "The treatise which shatters Hegel's *Logic* before it was even published." Martin Heidegger, *Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*. (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1985), 97.

did not constitute a real break from Spinozism, but a development of Spinoza's system. It was Hegel that remained the Spinozist, while Schelling drew increasingly closer to Jacobi's criticisms of idealism.

Schelling's criticisms of Spinoza in his *Lectures* cover much of the same ground that Jacobi's had covered before. Schelling recapitulates Jacobi's old dualisms between logic and cause, between concepts and realities, including Jacobi's distinction between a logical ground and an actual ground from the supplements to the *Letters* to Mendelssohn. Schelling here attacks Spinoza's system as a merely hypothetical one that confuses logical sense with real sense, and thus cannot transition from its realm of pure concepts to determinate being. Indeed, if we ever want to talk about freedom, life, and existence again, we have to assert "freedom from being," i.e., freedom from the general concept of being.[353]

In Spinoza's concept of substance, all potentiality, freedom, and life are excluded from it: "Possibility is swallowed by being. Because that First [Spinoza's substance] is that which can only be (and not also that which is able not to be), it is for that reason that which only is, i.e., being which is by the exclusion of all non-being—by the exclusion of all potentiality, and, in that sense, powerless being, because it does not have the power of another being in itself." Substance is essentially a dead thing; even calling it a *causa sui* is a misnomer, since mere logic cannot account for actual determinate causes.[354] Schelling, *pace* Jacobi—and even *pace* Hegel—argues that Spinoza cannot think the transition from the infinite to the finite, and thus, has a false sense of the infinite: "Because he [Spinoza] absolutely cannot admit any real transition from the infinite to the finite, he does not have any of these finite things arise immediately from the infinite." Finite things in Spinoza's system are explained through antecedent causes that go back

[353] F. W. J. von Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*. Translated by Andrew Bowie, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 116.
[354] Schelling, ibid, 65.

ad infinitum, and not from the concrete will of God (i.e., the true beginning of the finite for Schelling and Jacobi). But Spinoza cannot even explain how this chain of finite determination exists in reality. In other words, it is something merely posited by thought that one should not confuse with what exists.[355]

Since Spinoza's system is one of pure logical necessity, the indeterminacy of freedom cannot be accommodated. Schelling repeats Jacobi in claiming that Spinozism is fatalism, and that the freedom of God is replaced with the logical expression of a concept. Such divine freedom would be expressed in a direct act of creation that would give meaning and sense to the world, instead of the world being an expression of blind and monotonous necessity. The relationship between God and the world is thus not a free one (as the relationship between a divine act and its creation), but of a necessary connection.

In defining Spinoza's God's relationship to the world, Schelling agrees with Jacobi (and with Hegel) that it is essentially a-cosmic and nihilistic. It is a-cosmic since God is distinct from the world in terms of his static essence, and thus, one cannot properly move from the concept of God to the totality of finite things. However, it is nihilistic in the sense that God is also everything in terms of his existence, meaning there can be no real distinction between God and the totality of finite things the world represents either. In declaring God to be wholly immanent (i.e., a wholly immanent cause that inheres completely in its effects), reality itself becomes an indistinguishable blur between what is God and what is not God.[356]

Schelling, like Jacobi, does not simply assert Spinoza's atheism or nihilism, but works through a particular interpretation of Spinoza's idea of God as an immanent cause, showing how immanence produces a naturalistic fatalism. This interpretation has been challenged in recent

[355] Schelling, ibid, 70.
[356] Schelling, ibid, 73.

scholarship, particularly by Yitzhak Y. Melamed, and we have addressed it above. But what is important here is to see that Schelling does not add anything new to the critique of Spinoza. What he does add though is the critique of Hegel as a Spinozist.

4.6.2 *Schelling's Jacobian Critique of Hegel*

If Spinoza was guilty of confusing abstract logic with real causation, Hegel is doubly so for Schelling. Hegel's philosophy is a Spinozism run amok, where the concept is everything, leaving nothing outside of itself. It is the Spinozist concept that remains at the origin of Hegel's philosophy and Hegel—unlike Schelling—has yet to emancipate itself from it. Hegel assumes the old Identity-Philosophy that he forged together with Schelling, (or in Schelling's mind, plagiarized), in updating Spinoza's substance as a subject-object. While this is an advance over treating substance as a mere placeholder for the duality of extension and thought, it remains stuck in abstraction, and Hegel committed the worst of sins against genuine philosophy by repeating the errors of the old systems instead of going beyond them to a genuine "system" of freedom.

Spinoza is indeed the Old Testament to the future systems of Idealism according to Schelling: "The higher developments of a later time [i.e., of absolute idealist systems] are still foreign to [Spinoza], but they are prepared and hinted at in part; the sealed bud can still unfold into the flower. One might say Spinoza's philosophy (even considered within its limit) is, like the Hebrew, a script without vowels, the vowels were only added and made explicit by a later age."[357] Instead of substance, the idealists placed the idea, or mind, and Schelling here is repeating Jacobi's praise of Fichte for "inverting" Spinoza's cube in favor of thought, but still criticizing the inversion for its monistic (and hence anti-theistic) character.[358]

[357] Schelling, ibid, 69.
[358] For the metaphor of Spinoza's cube, see chapter 2.

Schelling was part of developing Spinozism into the flower of idealism. But, unlike Hegel, he realized that flower was sterile, and had to be plucked from reality. Hegel's attempt to continue the old Identity-Philosophy is obscene ("Hegel wanted to establish the same system"), since it commits all the same errors of mistaking mere thinking (which can think only possibilities) with real cognition of things. It mistakes what can be known with what is known. Hence, Hegel's philosophy of absolute negativity is precisely that: negative, and unable to think anything positive.

Even worse, this philosophy of negativity thinks it can understand Christian dogmas in a system of abstract thought, and not as revelatory events. For the creativity of God and Christ, Hegel substitutes a bland working out of the trinity in accordance with a logical progression of the abstract father, the abstract son, and the abstract spirit. It is not a real movement of spirit because the movement is merely logical, i.e., just a thought. The dialectics of the Godhead make for a serene, placid, and monotonous development (specifically a "monotonous, soporific progression"), since everything is contained within the logical beginning, i.e., in being.[359]

Hegel lacks true life that can only be provided outside of his system. Schelling reverses the importance of reason and understanding in his own philosophical conception. If Hegel once accused Schellingeanism of being a form of reason without understanding, then Schelling makes understanding the basis of knowing before reason. We can only know the Christian God through historical experience, and reason can be useful only if thought rests upon a real subject. Thought without a subject, without history, without experience, is simply arbitrary and a mere appearance.[360]

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[359] Compare Schelling's description of Hegel's serene dialectics with his characterization of the serene and quietist tone of Spinoza's system. As we shall see the basic serenity is masked in Hegel according to Schelling by a false appearance of the frenetic activity of divine action. See Schelling, ibid, 66.

[360] Schelling, ibid, 171.

Without this grounding in a groundless necessity, i.e., in revelation, Hegel manipulates Christian ideas in conformity with his abstractions. God is not just a concept, and negative philosophy can never approach the "thatness" or real existence of God. All Hegel can afford us is a cheap counterfeit God, reduced to a thought determination, instead of appreciated as a productive cause of the universe. Hegel starts with the most primitive idea of God in the *Logic* as pure being, completing himself through the dialectical process as a substantial spirit, but this burdens God with substance. God-- Schelling assumes—is a being that creates the world from nothing, and is ultimately separate from the world.[361]

Hegel's God has nothing to do with how "piety or [the] normal use of language understands the word." Schelling goes so far as to compare this God to Hindu deities—the same deities Hegel once compared Spinozist substance to. The only difference is that Spinozist substance is pure light or darkness, while Hegel's conception of the divine falsely attempts to inject a sense of movement or freedom into God:

> The Hegelian concept is the Indian God Vishnu in his third incarnation, who opposes himself to Mahabala, the giant prince of darkness (as if it the spirit of ignorance), who has gained supreme power in all three worlds. He first appears to Mahabala in the form of a small, dwarflike Brahmin and asks him for only three feet of land (the three concepts of "being", "nothing", "becoming"); hardly has the giant granted them than the dwarf swells up into a massive form, seizes the earth with one step, the sky with the other, and is just in the course of encompassing hell as well with the third, when the giant throws himself at his feet and humbly recognizes the power of the highest God…[362]

[361] In coming closer to Augustine, Schelling broke from Idealism in respect to see God as a genuine creator. For Schelling, God has to remain in some sense separate from creation, i.e., he has to remain complete enough in himself for *creation ex nihilio* to happen. God is not one with the universe but is its primal ground qua creator. The universe is still for Schelling ultimately contingent, and not a necessary moment of God's concept, even if God is not truly God without creating something separate from him (just like the eagle would not be a truly mature bird without flying). God is only truly God then in the event of creation (as the Christian God), and is not just a logical result of a conceptual process of thinking. But Hegel's God knows no real moment of creation: it doesn't even enjoy a "Sabbath," but acts in an entirely "blind" manner for Schelling. See Schelling, ibid, 160.

[362] Schelling, ibid, 148.

Behind the masquerade of forms and moments—behind the bacchanalian revelry[363]--is the same pantheism that "eats up being." In devouring the whole of being, Hegel's God becomes indistinguishable from being. "As such, therefore, this doctrine is Pantheism..." Here though, Schelling distinguishes—superficially perhaps--between the pantheism of Spinoza and Hegel's. While Spinoza's pantheism was quiet, and allowed things to be merely the emanations of a divine nature, Hegel's pantheism is loud and ridiculous, trying to introduce a "system of divine activity and effect" that ends up in the same monotony. Divine "freedom is all the more ignominiously lost [in Hegel] because one had given oneself the appearance of wanting to save it and sustain it." Freedom in Hegel's God is "illusory, because at the end one nevertheless sees oneself unavoidably pushed towards the thought which negates all having-happened, everything historical, because one, on reflection, must return again after all into the purely rational."[364]

There is more to the world than reason for Schelling and the Christian God cannot be accommodated by Hegel's upgraded pantheism. As Kierkegaard summed up Schelling's position on Hegel, Hegel was nothing more than a "sophisticated Spinozist," and not a true Christian.

4.6.3 *Schelling's Counter-Tradition: Pascal, Hamann, Jacobi*

We do not want to pass over Schelling's criticisms of Jacobi. Jacobi's fast-track to God through inner-feeling did not appeal to Schelling. Indeed, it eliminated the historical awareness that Jacobi had elaborated early on in his more "historical" period for Schelling, before treating his understanding as another form of intuitive reason in later writings. Schelling thus wants to overcome Jacobi's subjectivist mistakes with a grounding in the actuality of Christianity. However, no matter how superficial he was with the actual content of Christian

[363] Schelling remarks in his Berlin lectures that the Hegelian bacchanalianism of the *Phenomenology* and *Logic* only pretends to be drunk, making it all the more obnoxious. Deleuze repeats Schelling's remarks in Nietzschean language when he says Hegel tries to inject Dionysian energies into the veins of Apollonian reason without ever ceasing to be totally sober. See F. W. J. Schelling, *Grounding of Positive Philosophy: The Berlin Lectures*. (New York: SUNY Press, 2007), 176. See Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (London: Continuum, 2007). p. 331.
[364] Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*. ibid, 159.

revelation, Jacobi was still seen as a prophet by Schelling, heralding the need for a positive philosophy beyond the narrowness of negative philosophy (or speculative rationalism). Jacobi at least understood that the God of the metaphysicians was not the real one.[365]

Schelling did not forget Jacobi's struggle against him in the third phase of the Pantheism Controversy. In Schelling's attempt to treat nature as worthy of philosophical speculation, Jacobi mistook this as a form of pantheism. But Jacobi did not understand that a new "historical science" of revelation was needed, which included nature as part of God's power. Without nature, God cannot become into his own as a creator, any more than an eagle can exhibit their power of flight without overcoming gravity.[366] So, it is not a question of resolving the tensions between the real and the ideal or the divine and the material on one side against the other, but allowing us to think the contradiction (even if we cannot sublate it into one rational system). But Jacobi, in declaring science to be simply rationalist and speculative, conceded too much to Spinozism. It is thus up to Schelling to rehabilitate Jacobi's critique of rationalism on what he calls "scientific" grounds: better to have given negative philosophy its due and then admit its need for extra-logical grounds than to have retreated into one's feelings to find God.

Schelling agrees with all of Jacobi's programmatic demands: "It is all very well to say, like Jacobi: "I demand a personal God, a highest being to whom a personal relationship is possible, an eternal thou which answers my I, not a being which is merely in my thought...I demand a transcendent being which is also something for me outside of my thought."[367] What he disagrees with is the means of achieving them, though Schelling sees the earlier attempts of Jacobi, Hamann, and Pascal as precursors to his new historical science. This is the counter-

[365] Schelling, ibid, 177.
[366] Schelling, ibid, 173.
[367] Schelling, ibid, 165.

tradition Schelling traces as against Spinoza and Hegel. Pascal, as one of the greatest sources of Jacobi's historical "education," is a necessary starting point: "Whoever is still seeking [after God], whoever demands a measure of how comprehensible and understandable a truly historical philosophy must become, should read Pascal's *Pensées*. Whoever has not already irretrievably lost all sense of what is natural and healthy via the unnaturalness of some other philosophy will come via an attentive reading of Pascal's thoughts to think of the idea of a historical system, at least in a general way." From Hamann we can achieve some real insights, since philosophy truly is a work of "great experience," i.e., spiritual experience. Hamann understood that not everything hangs together by the virtue of reason alone, and emphasized the a posteriori knowledge of God as against a priorism. Or, in other words, Hamann, like Jacobi and Pascal, understood reason cannot understand the "that-ness" of God's existence, but only the possibility of God. All three men anticipate what for Schelling is positive knowledge of God that is irreducible to the concept.[368]

4.7. *Purging the Dragon-Seed*

Schelling's criticisms of Hegel were not only theoretical. They were political, and his political criticisms grew more vehement with the emergence of left-wing Hegelianism. In the *Lectures on Modern Philosophy*, Schelling connects the idea that God can externalize himself in the world through the historical consciousness of humankind to a vulgarization of God. This idea of God exhibiting himself through the world, and through worldly pursuits, sets "the basest tone of affability [*Leutseligkeit*] for this system; it can be gauged from this in which strata of society it had to sustain itself the longest."[369] From the realm of scholarship, Hegel's ideas trickle down to "the lower strata of society," and it is easy to see for Schelling how such ideas found

[368] Schelling, ibid, 168-169.

[369] Schelling, ibid, 160. See also *Schellings Munchener Vorlesungen: Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie und Darstellung des philosophischen Empirismus*. (Leipzig: Verlag der Durrschen Buchhandlung. 1902). p. 160.

themselves "in the so-called greater public." Perhaps, Schelling continues, Hegel would not have appreciated how his good philosophical sense has become a vulgar common sense, but all of this derives from "converting true relationships which were true in themselves, namely when taken merely logically, into real relationships, whereby all necessity disappears from them." But the necessity Schelling is concerned with here is the necessity of Christian thought, and Hegel's exoteric doctrine of opening up the mind of God to humanity as a whole debases the idea of God into something abstract and universal in a vacuous sense.

These criticisms from Schelling prepared him for the next and final stage of his career as the academic viceroy of Friedrich Wilhelm IV in Berlin. With the rise of atheistic and pantheistic ideas among the intelligentsia, the "Romantic on the throne" summoned Schelling to purge the Hegelian dragon-seed of pantheism from the students (*die Drachensaat des Hegelianismus ausreuthen*).[370] The Berlin lectures Schelling gave were thus part of a general exorcism of the ghost of Spinozism still haunting German philosophy, a ghost that, ironically enough, Schelling had invoked for inspiration decades before. With Schelling's appointment to the university of Berlin, Jacobi's work of banishing Spinozism from official mainstream discourse—overt and covert—was completed, and Hegel's left-wing students eventually suffered censorship, repression, and exile soon after.[371]

But what was Schelling's final opinion on Hegel, his old philosophical comrade-in-arms? He might have characterized him as a sophisticated Spinozist, but was Hegel responsible for the rise of a left-wing political opposition against the throne, too? Indeed, for Schelling, he was. In the Berlin lectures, Schelling claims Hegel's philosophy has exhausted itself in the most "brazen

[370] Terry Pinkard, *German Philosophy 1760-1860: The Legacy of Idealism* (Edinburgh: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
[371] See Stathis Kouvelakis' account of this in *Philosophy and Revolution: From Kant to Marx*. (London: Verso, 2003).

atheism." Perhaps despite Hegel's intentions, he turned his philosophy into one for intellectual reformers and rebellious plebeians. It was not a philosophy suited for Restoration Europe, genuine Christianity, or the Christian state, but a doctrine supplied for the destructive urges of dangerous classes.[372] As Kierkegaard said after hearing Schelling's lectures, Hegel's God had become the unclean mob. Hegel's "dissolute pantheism" and the rise of revolt were thus part of one demonic process.[373]

[372] Schelling, *Grounding of Positive Philosophy*, ibid, 145.
[373] Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling and the Sickness Unto Death*. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2013), 445.

Epilogue: Left-Hegelians vs. Left-Heideggerians on the Spinoza-Hegel Connection

The true founder of German philosophy--if one wishes to name a personal representative for the spirit of the age--is none other than the thinker whose world view lies equally at the foundation of French social philosophy: Spinoza.

--Moses Hess

While the Left-Hegelians were a motley crew of thinkers, and each had different approaches to Hegel, many of them shared a common intuition that Spinoza remained at the core of German philosophy, and of Hegelian philosophy in particular. Spinoza, as the "Moses of modern-freethinkers and materialists", was used to bring Hegel down to earth, for a "materialist" reading of spirit as human beings embedded in nature. Instead of seeing spirit as essentially and completely transcending nature, self-consciousness becomes a way of knowing itself within the dynamism and activity of the whole. Or, as Hegel remarks elsewhere, spirit does not abstractly negate nature (as it might in Fichte), but restores nature.[374] The revolution in interpretation that some of the Left-Hegelians like Heine advanced in their synthesis of Hegel and Spinoza claimed that it wasn't abstract spirit, or even man, that was the real subject of philosophy, but "holy matter."[375]

However, the problem with such Left-Hegelian interpretations on the relationship between Spinoza and Hegel was their lack of sustained argumentation. Despite all the insights, intuitions, and connections Feuerbach, Heine, and Hess made in their various sketches of German philosophy, they did not develop a coherent theory or synthesis. For instance, Feuerbach understood the importance of Spinoza, but he rejected Spinozist substance as a "phlegmatic blob." and speculative philosophy along with it. When it came to Hess, other competing philosophical influences jarred with Hess's Spinozism when he juxtaposed it with a philosophy

[374] See Hegel's polemic against Fichte's anti-naturalism in *Faith and Knowledge*, ibid. Also, see Hegel's review of Göschel in *Miscellaneous Writings*, edited by Jon Stewart. G. W. F. Hegel, *Miscellaneous Writings* (Northwestern: Northwestern University Press, 2000).
[375] Heine, ibid, 176.

of action derived from Fichte. And Heine's insights, while perhaps the most important in understanding the historical connections between Spinozistic pantheism and Hegel, (along with their political consequences for the history of Europe), did not develop these connections beyond the few paragraphs of his seminal book, *Religion and Philosophy in Germany*.[376]

While the Left-Hegelians in the 19th century saw Hegel and Spinoza as sharing the same God, French interpreters of the 20th seemed more concerned with putting them at loggerheads, and reverted back to the old Jacobian representations of Spinoza. This process may be traced to two French currents, one neo-Hegelian and one neo-Spinozist, where such a sharp bifurcation of Hegel and Spinoza was made possible through the impact of Heidegger's philosophy in France. For those inspired by Heidegger's critique of onto-theology, either Spinoza was considered the culmination of bad rationalistic metaphysics, or Hegel was. Whatever the case, the old assumptions about reason and humanism shared by the Left-Hegelians where thrown out in the French Hegelian and French Spinozist attempts to overcome rationalistic metaphysics.

While the Left-Hegelian attempts to synthesize Hegel and Spinoza rested on a common set of 19th century assumptions about nature, humanity, and reason, the turn to historicism, Heidegger, and other post-metaphysical ideas made it possible to cast Hegel and Spinoza in a much different light. For Kojève, Hegel became the philosopher who anticipated the fundamental insights of Heideggerian ontology, and for Althusser, Spinoza became one of the first theoretical anti-humanists in the tradition of Nietzsche and Heidegger.

Kojève criticizes the Spinozistic position in his note on "Eternity, Time, and the Concept." Here, Kojève repeats many of the same objections Jacobi made against Spinozism. If we, as finite human beings, apply our own concept to the concept to God, we are involved in an impossibility, since God is totally other than us. In other to contrast the bad metaphysical infinite

[376] Yirmiyahu Yovel, *Spinoza and Other Heretics: The Adventures of Immanence*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989), 51-78.

with a good historical one, Kojève introduces a distinction between what he calls "eternity" (or the standpoint of Parmenides-Spinoza) and the "eternal," which he thinks is reached by human beings becoming self-aware of themselves at the end of history. The eternal can only be related to Time, (i.e., history) and Spinoza cannot possess an adequate concept of God because Spinoza is not God, i.e. he is only a finite human being.[377]

Kojève argues after Heidegger that we only think in a temporal world, i.e., only as historical and finite beings. Knowledge of the eternal at the end of history—but not knowledge of eternity—cannot be of anything other-worldly. As Kojève says "Absolute Knowledge is the entirety of the relation between the (eternal) Concept and Time." If God is eternity, then there can be no "possible Knowledge" relating to God. What is eternal then is reformulated in a voluntaristic sense, as man's striving, or "Pure will", and the Concept is now defined as "historical time". Once the pure striving of human beings in their struggle for recognition ends, history itself ends, but not in the sense of metaphysical closure. The only "metaphysical" closure one can speak of is the closure of time, when humans stop striving and revert back to the level of self-satisfied and uncreative animals.[378]

Kojève admits that his interpretation of Hegel along anthropological lines is a heresy; "Hegel is less radical…he admits the existence of a cosmic Time." But the root of Kojève's heresy is the evacuation of metaphysics from Hegel, in the form of his rejection of Hegel's *Science of Logic* as "Spinozist". What Hegel says in the *Logic* disturbs Kojève as betraying a non-historicist and Parmenidean philosophy, where the world is considered not as a working of man, but a reflection of God. It attempts to see "the thought of God before the creation of the World", and that clearly is impossible. Kojève condemns the *Logic* since "like Spinoza's *Ethics*, it is theo-logy—that is,

[377] Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit*. (Ithaca: Cornell, 1980), 125.
[378] Kojève, ibid, 129.

the logic, thought, or discourse of God."[379] Another way of saying this is to condemn Hegel's *Logic* not as ordinary theology, but what Heidegger called "onto-theology" Kojève thus reads Hegel against himself, and he interprets Hegel on a Heideggerian basis by evacuating Hegel's metaphysics as illicitly Spinozist, and not "Hegelian" enough, i.e. not historicist enough.

With Louis Althusser, Spinoza is the one who is affirmed as the post-metaphysical thinker at the expense of Hegelian idealism, though on "anti-historicist" grounds.[380] Althusser called his type of Spinozism heretical too, insofar as Spinoza himself would never subscribe to it, though he insists such heresies did not necessarily contradict Spinoza. In fact to be a heretical Spinozist was in keeping with Spinoza, since "Spinozism can be said to be one of the greatest lessons of heresy the world has seen!"[381] For Althusser, it was necessary to lead materialism beyond Hegel via Spinoza, and against idealism.

Hegel, according to Althusser, "begins with the Logic, 'God before the creation of the world' and then the Logic becomes alienated in Nature, which in turn is alienated (or turns over) in Spirit, which itself turns back to the Logic, making a full circle that turns into itself, and thus negates its own origin." Through the negation of the negation, we reach the goal, or the absolute, or--as Althusser calls it--"Absolute Presence in transparency."[382] In contrast to Hegel, Spinoza begins with God, i.e. substance, and sticks to it rigorously, never allowing for any "Goal" to emerge within pure immanence. Working through Spinoza was necessary then for Althusser because it allowed him to see how Hegel's conception of negation allowed for teleology, and that in turn allowed him to discover "the special form and site of the "mystification" [i.e. the mystification Marx alludes to in his famous Preface to *Capital*] of the Hegelian dialectic." Hegel

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[379] Kojève, ibid, 148-149.

[380] If Kojève's Heideggerianism was inspired by *Being and Time*, focusing on being as part of an explicitly human reality, then Althusser's is closer to the Heideggerian *Kehre*, or the later Heidegger of *The Letter on Humanism*, where the human da-sein is downplayed as merely a site (or at best a shepherd) for being. See footnote #9.

[381] Louis Althusser. *Essays in Self-Criticism*, (Verso: New Left Books, 1976), 132-141.

[382] Althusser, ibid, 135.

though found the Subject not only in the form of the "'becoming-Subject of Substance'….but in the interiority of the Telos of the process without a subject, which by virtue of the negation of the negation, realizes the designs and destiny of the Idea."[383]

Spinoza and Hegel start with God for Althusser, but Althusser seems to be confusing the order of being and the order of knowing in both thinkers. For Spinoza, even if we start with a true Idea in the *Emendations*, or start with substance in E1D1 in *Ethics* Book I, there is still the matter of demonstrating these ideas through systematic deduction and proof. We are not born with a sublime knowledge of God, but have to reflect on the content of the Idea in order to fully grasp it. In other words, the true Idea we have at the beginning is still underdetermined, though it is the same Idea. Hegel, too, argues that God is always-already actual and that our logical investigations reveal an already existing unified order of being.[384] Both Spinoza and Hegel can thus be classified as anamnestic philosophers, as all metaphysical knowledge is a matter of recollection and is ultimately a circular process.

But does Althusser actually adopt Spinozist substance? Indeed, in later works, Althusser dissolves substance into a rain of Epicurean atoms, as substance is re-discovered in a Heideggerian vein as nothing but a "void" or even "nothingness" itself. Althusser defends this thesis by pointing out again how Spinoza begins his *Ethics*, starting not with the world or the mind of man, but with God. It is not a position that starts with another entity, like the Cartesian certainty of the cogito, to lead up to God, but a position that begins "in God." This God, Althusser reads, is the ultimate "void" itself, a God that is a "beyond in which there is nothing". Because God exists in an absolute state, in the absence to relations to anything else, God itself is a "nothing". And since God as the fundamental void lacks all relations or limitations to any other

[383] Althusser, ibid, 136.

[384] "The movement of the Concept must be considered, so to speak, only as a play; the other which is posited by its movement is, in fact, not an other." Hegel's *Encyclopedia Logic*, edited and translated by Theodore F. Geraets, Wallis Arthur Suchting, and Henry Silton Harris, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991). §161, 238.

thing, the whole of Spinoza is essentially "nothing."[385]

Althusser's interpretation of Spinoza comes extremely close to Jacobi's in regards to Spinozist substance being an absolute that excludes all negativity and relations from itself. From the a-cosmic void substance represents, this nothingness for Althusser allows for an atomistic, contingent, and "aleatory" relationships. Here, we witness the same kind of dissolution process Jacobi warned in identifying Spinozist substance with blind and meaningless nature. For Althusser, the a-cosmist void opens up the empty ground for the "transcendental contingency" of being, and he treats Spinoza's infinite attributes as akin to Epicurus' rain of atoms, where they all "fall in the empty space of their determination like raindrops that can undergo encounters."[386] Instead of metaphysical unity of substance and its modifications, Althusser's Spinoza--*pace* Heidegger—presents us with substance as a void, and modes as enjoying absolutely contingent relationships. In the end, this picture of Spinoza would be nothing that Jacobi could fundamentally object to. For both Jacobi and Althusser, Spinozist substance is precisely an empty void, and the only salient difference is that Jacobi rejects this portrait of Spinoza as nihilistic in his return to orthodoxy, while Althusser embraces it.

Pierre Macherey's *Hegel or Spinoza*, while in the Althusserian camp, provides many useful criticisms of Hegel's approach to Spinoza, but falls into similar dilemmas. Like Althusser, Macherey accepts a specific interpretation of Hegel's metaphysics as humanist, teleological, and metaphysical, and counterposes Spinoza as a potentially more "materialist" alternative. But it is an idiosyncratic type of materialism that comes close to Althusser's own interpretation of substance as "the void." Spinoza's credentials as a metaphysical monist are cast aside, since, according to Macherey, if substance is completely identical to each one of its attributes, it is impossible to speak of any one substance, but of the attributes themselves as constituting

[385] Louis Althusser. *Philosophy of The Encounter: Later Writings*, 1978-87. (London: Verso, 2006), 176.
[386] Althusser, ibid, 177.

many substances.[387]

Through his rejection of Hegelian categories such as totality, teleology, negativity, etc. where substance can resolve itself as completely intelligible as subject (or as a unity in difference), Macherey's Spinoza becomes a "negative theologian," where substance can only be defined through the negative. Like Jacobi, substance for Macherey cannot be thought of positively, but only through its empirical effects or modifications. As Macherey argues:

> Substance does not precede its modes or lie behind their apparent reality, as a metaphysical foundation or a rational condition, but, in its absolute immanence, it is nothing other than the act of expressing itself immediately in all its modes, an act that is not itself determined through the relations of modes to each other, but that is on the contrary their effective cause[388]

With Macherey's interpretation, we are unable to account for the unity of attributes in God: if all attributes function like independent substances, they cannot be thought as part of the same idea, as they function as their own infinite not only in kind, but absolutely. In other words, they cease to be truly different from one another if they are all truly infinite and self-caused, and the logical flow of Spinoza's first twenty propositions of the *Ethics* is obstructed and reversed. Instead of substance as the absolute infinite ground for the attributes—that are infinite after their own kind—substance as a unitary structure cannot be thought of at all.

In contrast to both the French Hegelian and French Spinozist traditions, it is my contention that reading Spinoza with Hegel, with an emphasis on Hegel's critical reflections contained in *Faith and Knowledge*, can start to resolve some of these conceptual problems exacerbated by pitting Spinoza against Hegel (and vice versa). Hegel in *Faith and Knowledge* and other Jena writings preserve the unitary nature of Spinoza's infinite idea as something self-differentiated and intelligible. Notions such as teleology are not reducible to the purposes of

[387] Pierre Macherey, *Hegel or Spinoza*. (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2011). 97.
[388] Macherey, ibid, 200.

human beings or external creator Gods, but are understood as the whole determining its part, just as the logic of substance determines the whole of the universe. In Hegel's earlier reading of Spinoza, immanent and transitive causes are united in one single true expression of the infinite. Neither the finite, nor our ability to know God is sacrificed in what is genuinely self-caused.

Hegel's *Faith and Knowledge* will not resolve all the differences between Hegel and Spinoza. But if we can rehabilitate Spinozist substance away from Parmenidean and Orientalist caricatures, then we have made effective steps in a new rapprochement, not between Hegelian and Jacobian spirit, but between Hegelian spirit and Spinozist substance. Such a rapprochement will continue the work of the forgotten tradition of Hegel's pantheistic students, who understood spirit and substance as two names for the same rational whole. Old Jacobi may have been wrong about Spinoza and speculative rationalism, but he seemed right about one thing in his judgment of Hegel. Before he died, Jacobi still thought Hegel was traveling along the same "pathway of thought," the path of Spinozism.

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