

Hegel: Philosopher of the Kingdom of God

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Materialists interpret the world in various ways, the point is to comprehend it

Abstract

In this paper, I argue that Hegel has made a substantial contribution towards our understanding of the nature of the kingdom of God, and our concept of the future of humanity, regardless of how Hegel has been traditionally perceived, or whether this was intentional in his work or not. My rationale for this view is that Hegel's key concept of 'absolute spirit' (Hegel, 1977 [1807], p.479) represents the end of the dialectical process—a state which Christians believe can only be achieved when God's will is (fully) manifested 'on earth as it is in heaven'. Furthermore, Hegel's dialectical process per se is analogous to the Christian faith's notion of sanctification.

In order to substantiate this claim, the paper first outlines how believers and non-believers have understood our material existence and God, and then posits a Hebrew perspective on the Word. If we view through this lens, God and our material realities are perceived as Mind and Spirit—the foundation of Hegel's system and Christian spirituality. Finally, the evolution of physics is explored to further support these claims. If this hypothesis is plausible, rather than associating Hegel with the ideology for totalitarianism, or the inspiration for Marx's humanist work, Hegel illuminates Christian thought and facilitates the universalization of the faith. I contend that it is precisely this kind of 'hidden treasure' which offers people the spiritual insights they crave for, providing we can escape binding fears and the traditions of our unfruitful theological ideas.

Key Words: Hegel, Kingdom of God, Spirit, Mind, Hegel's Dialectic, Evolution of Physics

Introduction

I'm Pink therefore I'm Spam

What is material reality? If we ponder this question, we can perhaps begin with Descartes and his well-known comment 'I think therefore I am' (Descartes, 1985 [1637])—the only thing we can be sure exists is our consciousness and thus everything else is supposition. Yet, despite his pronouncement, Descartes also held that there was a separation between mind and matter. This epistemology has formed the basis of all mainstream science in modernity and presupposes a material reality that exists fully autonomously of mind. Mind itself, with its

thinking, feeling, intuition and sensation elements, identified by Jung, is seen as simply the activity of a tangible, material constituted brain (Jung, 2017 [1921], p.6). In the language of philosophy, things exist ‘in themselves’, autonomously of the perceptions of people, and in some cases ‘for themselves’ if they are conscious of their own existence. In contrast to this Cartesian philosophical dualism, Hegel argued that all matter (including language) is crafted by thought and therefore *is* thought (Blunden 2012, p.9). Whilst it is probably beyond human comprehension to determine which is the correct view (we normally just assume the existence of material reality), for the purposes of illustrating the key points of this paper, I contend that Hegel’s focus on Mind is completely suitable. It is thought that instigates all human action, and perceives existence, and is, therefore, a necessary and sufficient entity for a study of how believers understand and interact with their God. The study of thought is also appropriate for non-believers (or agnostics) for comparison. In terms of the nature of material reality their views are similar. Orthodox Christian theologians posit that God created the material (and spiritual) universe, and via an interaction with Him the perceptions of it are changed. Similarly, non-believers consider a separation between mind and matter, as a general rule, and consider that perceptions of matter differ and can also be changed. The difference is that believers profess faith in an unseen, spiritual dimension of reality, a realm that God inhabits, and the non-believer does not. In Jung’s categories of thought, the thinking (e.g., rational or imaginative), sensational, intuitive and emotional aspects are the same in both groups. These aspects can also be conscious or subliminal. However, the thinking of a believer also contains their perceptions from interaction with their God—Spiritual revelation—and this needs to be included when considering their thought. From the perspective of the non-believer, this is, as Feuerbach remarked: ‘the dream of the human mind’ (Feuerbach 2008 [1841], p. xii). In Hegel’s system of thought, however, it is imperative that all types of thinking are included.

The Nature of God, the Word, Truth and Matter

The force that through the green fuse drives the flower
Dylan Thomas

It is not easy to conceptualize the nature of the mystical entity that others call God. St John, for example, described Him as Spirit—which depicts existence albeit from an other-worldly reality (John 4:24, NIV). Yet, as Berkeley noted, since God is perceived, He therefore exists (Berkeley 2021 [1710], p.11), at least subjectively, and is also conceived as omnipresent—which includes for some believers, presence in the material reality. This latter point is consistent with the bible teaching on the functions of Christ who: ‘sustains all things with His powerful Word’ (Hebrew 1:3, NIV) but also *was* God in becoming man in a physical form via an immaculate conception. In other words, in this interpretation, God is both immanent and transcendent— a philosophical and theological perspective known as panentheism. Sufi mystics, from Islamic traditions, also see God as unified with the entire spiritual and material universe in their concept of wahdat-ul-wujood, or unity of being (Chittick 2016, p.88). So, if God is seen to be sustaining the material, as well as the thought realities, with the Word of God, what is the specific nature of this Word?

At the outset of the gospel of St John, the writer describes God as synonymous with the Word: ‘in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God’ (John 1:1, NIV). It appears that St John is suggesting to the reader that the articulated thought of God, i.e., the Mind of God expressed to those that hear Him, then written and comprehended, is God. This perspective presents the substance of God as Mind itself, a view that is consistent with the Hebrew grasp of the meaning of ‘Word of God’. John Mastrogiovanni, a Christian theologian who has studied the Hebrew language and mindset, writes: ‘all of creation exists in the Ultimate Reality called the Mind of God. You are living in that Mind right now. Every breath you take, every move you make, is within the Mind of God’ (Mastrogiovanni 2018, p.51).

It is implicit in this theological perspective that there is a difference between the Mind of God and the natural mind of man, and this is confirmed by the bible statement: ‘my thoughts are not your thoughts’ (Isaiah 55:8-9, NIV). This is reiterated by the idea of sanctification as people are urged to: ‘not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind’ (Romans 12:2, NIV). In interpreting Hebrew thought, Mastrogiovanni explains that the two trees in the garden of Eden symbolize two thought sources, the tree of life represents God, and the other tree of the knowledge of good and evil represents the human ego and the deceptions that derive from the fall of man—he writes: ‘the consequence of eating this fruit is an illusion we call separation’ from the Mind of God (Mastrogiovanni 2018, p.93). The Hebrew idea is that if we look at any one of the trees, we are driven by its thought (and the other tree is invisible), and by switching our view to the alternative tree our entire thinking is changed (Ibid, p.90). This concept of two distinct consciousnesses is a recurring theme in mysticism. Jung, for instance, proposed that there was a pure consciousness that was differentiated from an ego consciousness (Segal 1992, pp.55-92) and the Gnostics also held that this formed the distinction between soul and spirit (IEOP 2021), notwithstanding some of their more questionable ideas. Another bible passage likens the word of God to a sword which: ‘penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit,’ (Hebrews 4:12, NIV) suggesting the same consciousness distinction. If people can think in either mode, rather than grouping people as either spiritual or natural-minded, the implication is that they think in one way or another at different times, regardless of whether or not they are conscious of a spiritual dimension or, if conscious, able to define it. In this sense, the category of spiritual thought, as part of the mix, is not the exclusive preserve of the believer.

Hegel used the term Spirit to refer to self-conscious thought, derived from truth that resonates with the thinker (Hegel 1977 [1807], p.263). Since truth, as Blake had noted, cannot just merely be reasoned, it has to be believed, this implies that, for Hegel, Spirit is always associated with faith per se, regardless of whether the faith was in a God or otherwise (Blake 1994[1790]). In his system of ideas, Hegel was also keen to emphasize the importance of thought manifesting in public, communal consciousness, rather than just being experienced by the individual, and this was particularly important with thought deriving from the divine. Hegel states: ‘The power of Spirit is only as great as its expression’ (Hegel 1977 [1807], p.5). He then writes that people who receive revelation, but do not meditate on it and/or share it: ‘such minds, when they give themselves up to the uncontrolled ferment of the [divine] substance, imagine that, by drawing a veil over self-consciousness and surrendering

understanding they become the beloved of God to whom He gives wisdom in sleep; and hence what they in fact receive, and bring to birth in their sleep, is nothing but dreams' (Ibid., p.6). Hegel's recommendation echoes Paul the apostle, who urged the believers to prophecy rather than speak in tongues, since this led them to sharing divine revelation rather than simply edifying themselves (1 Corinthians: 14). Hegel reasoned that since philosophical study and exposition shaped truth, the study needed to pursue the goal of not just the 'love of knowing' but '*actual* knowing', in other words, true truth-seeking (Hegel 1977 [1807], p.3). Hegel's approach to philosophy is akin to Christian spirituality. According to Hegel, if and when Absolute Spirit can be achieved, truth-seeking has reached its zenith and previous contradictions are overcome—in Christian terms, God's kingdom is fully manifested. Hegel was keen to stress that there are constraints on rumination, and expression of autonomous thought, however, and he posited that these were stages on a continuum towards full autonomy.

In the Middle Ages people lived in fear of reprisals from the pope or king if they expressed the wrong view, and local priests were also able to deliver harsh punishments to locals that did not conform. This fear was tangible. Galileo was put in prison for stating that the earth revolved around the sun, for instance, and many early enlightenment thinkers wrote under pseudonyms to avoid repercussions. In our times, as Kuhn noted, autonomous thinking remains subjugated by science paradigms, that create parameters for accepted discourse, and change infrequently (Kuhn 2012 [1962]). People can be ostracized, or have their careers hindered, if they withhold deference to orthodox ideas. These paradigms form part of what Michel Foucault referred to as 'modes of domination' since they disable critical thinking and are dispersed through society (Mills 2003, p.34, Poster 1984, p.80). Yet, if narratives fail to resonate with perceived realities, these too can engender fear and uncertainty, which diminishes brain capability (Bond 2017). Cognitive dissonance, through the misplaced attachment to wrong ideas is pathological and can contribute to schizophrenia (Fletcher 2017). Since people do not ruminate as effectively when fearful, if the prevailing culture were to attribute a high value to innovative thinking, as well as agency, it is more likely to engender innovation. As the psychologist Sharot has explained, people are more likely to be emboldened in their autonomous thinking in environments where large numbers of people hold alternative views, since their primeval instinctual need for 'safety in numbers' is satisfied (Sharot 2016). People desire agency, of course, but also possess a strong emotive need to belong and tend to be aware of the consensual mood(s) of people-groups they wish to be included in, relinquishing (at least in part) their agency. Transaction analysis also reveals that the need to belong, and/or fearfully defer to others, can lead people to adopt inappropriate dependent child-to-adult behaviors with others, rather than adopt more fruitful and autonomous adult-to-adult relations (Berne 1964).

Hegel recognized all of these hindrances to innovative thought and encouraged a diversity that could lead to a society achieving it. He exhorted: 'culture must leave room for the earnestness of life in its concrete richness' ((Hegel 1977 [1807], p.3) for the life of Spirit to manifest. He further muses that, if thought autonomy could be achieved: 'the frivolity and boredom which unsettle the established order, the vague foreboding of something unknown, these are the heralds of approaching change' (Ibid, p.7) and this change comes in the form of

a Notion which then later is subject to its own critique—the Hegelian dialectic, until all contradictions vanish.

The Hegel Dialectic

Seule la totalite personnifie la verité
G.W.F. Hegel

As a grand theorist of historical transition, Hegel is attractive for eclectic thinkers since his idea of the dialectical process allows for the fullest possible range of human thought—transcending Jung’s four categories of thinking outlined above. His dialectic includes the totality of ideas—Hegel’s system— where the central focus is the individual Notion, inseparable from the totality and constituted by reasoned, intuitive, imaginative, sensual *and* mystical thought. The Notion then proceeds through a time process of reasoning. The Notion is first posited and then, via its internal critique, is subjected to negation. According to Hegel, the Notion negation transcends the initial presentation of the idea, but then also, and importantly, *preserves* the idea’s essential nature in the negation’s existence. Next, a new negation of the initial negation then transcends both, but yet preserves the initial idea and the negation in the new system of thought. Nothing is lost, and everything is in the process of ‘becoming’, and is defined by, and dependent on, the ‘other’, e.g., the concept of heavy only making sense in conjunction with the concept of light—a unity of opposites. Hegel writes on his idea of preservation and is worth quoting in full: ‘The more conventional opinion gets fixated on the antithesis of truth and falsity, the more it tends to expect a given philosophical system to be either accepted or contradicted; and hence it finds only acceptance or rejection. It does not comprehend the diversity of philosophical systems as the progressive unfolding of truth, but rather sees in it (sic) simple disagreements. The bud disappears in the bursting-forth (sic) of the blossom, and one might say that the former is refuted by the latter; similarly, when the fruit appears, the blossom is shown up in its turn as a false manifestation of the plant, and the fruit now emerges as the truth of it instead. These forms are not just distinguished from one another, they also supplant one another as mutually incompatible. Yet, at the same time their fluid nature makes them moments of an organic unity in which they not only do not conflict, but in which each is as necessary as the other; and this mutual necessity alone constitutes the life of the whole’ (Ibid., p.2).

This Hegel concept of preservation is analogous to the Christian concept of spiritual growth via revelation and subsequent sanctification. The apostle Paul, for instance, first appears in the bible as a pharisee who gives his approval to the persecution of believers. However, following the incident on the road to Damascus, Paul is a changed man but, nevertheless, who he has now become depends upon who he was. The changed nature only makes sense in relation to who he once was, and thus according to Christian thought stands as a permanent testament to what God established in his life through changing his thinking—a person in the process of becoming.

Mental labor, for Hegel, is therefore the basis for all human action, and also explains historical transformation. In addition, the thought per se is subject to continual reflexiveness,

as thinking interacts with notions of material reality. Instead of being conceived as the ‘final *outcome*’ of a never-ending historical process, the Notion is a *process*’ (Ibid, p.16). In this sense, the real historical trajectory towards *universal* emancipation, for Hegel, is not linear but instead evolves according to a dialectical process firmly located in human thinking. This may mean the real process takes a step backwards before a step forward is made, or goes round in circles, but it is still destined to move forward at some point, as a consequence of the internal contradictions within the Notion. It is process that is important for Hegel, not the end result, where all things are in the process of ‘becoming’ and everything is preserved in the totality of ideas. Again, the analogy with Christian thought is striking. Once a person has become a believer, following the interaction with God, it is then surmised that they embark on a journey of having their thought transformed. However, they are certainly expected to make several mistakes along the way.

An example of the dialectical process could be the idea of a social contract between people and the state. In the Hobbes state of nature, where life is ‘solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short’, the individual first has a Notion of their freedom (Hobbes 1968 [1651], chap.13). Next, the negation of the idea, through reasoning, suggests that if they deferred to a ‘Leviathan’ they will transcend the inadequacy of this freedom, since the concept of freedom is nonsensical if life is too dangerous and short. Later, during the process of reasoning with the idea, deference to the Leviathan is theorized as giving a much-improved freedom in the order created—the negation of the negation. The idea has thus now developed into a higher stage, by transcending and yet preserving the initial stages (Hegel called this process sublation). Next, further contradiction may occur, and the process continues. In contrast to the existential Kant, Hegel had conceived of an idea being present communally, in the form of Spirit, and manifested in the conscious mental interaction of the people (Blunden 2012, p.6) This occurs because, as Hegel writes, ‘the world is continually at odds with how it should be’, and so the historical dialectical process becomes the story of the resolution of these conflicts in the arena of thought (Ibid, p.15). Since the individual ideas also sit within an overall ‘system of ideas’ in Hegel, part of the idea’s internal reasoning process is driven by the internal reasoning process of the other ideas, and consciousness derived from others, until such a time is reached when the Notion (or, theoretically, all of the ideas together) becomes ‘absolute spirit’ i.e., is then no longer subject to latent negation. Historical transition is completed, based on thought devoid of contradiction.

Hegel’s Impact on Marx

Nothing great in the world has ever been accomplished without passion

G.W.F. Hegel

The most famous protégé of Hegel was Marx, an avid student who had been in agreement with the Hegelian system after the philosopher’s death and joined the so-called ‘left

Hegelians’, but following Feuerbach’s critique of Hegel, Marx’s views changed. Feuerbach pointed out that Hegel’s system started with an initial positing of an idea as a philosophy, rather than an idea derived from the sensual experience of the material (Marx 2017c [1845], p.1). In this sense, Hegel presented what Marx called, only ‘the abstract, logical, speculative expression for the movement of history, which is not the actual history of man as a given subject, but only the act of creation’ (Marx 2017a [1844], p.64). Marx, on the other hand, had argued that the *idea* did not follow from what ‘men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated’ but rather starts with *matter* per se and the ‘real, active men’ with their ‘ideological reflexes’ to it (Marx 2017b [1845]). In other words, Marx presupposed matter as reality and argued for analyzing the actual social processes of man’s response to it, experienced at the outset, rather than simply attributing ideas as the starting point. In this regard, Marx recommended placing Hegel the ‘right side up again, if you would discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell’ (Marx 2021 [1873]). There are others who have agreed with this Marx critique of Hegel, e.g., Althusser (Althusser 1969), but to all intents and purposes it is an unresolvable issue—we either presuppose matter or we do not. It is interesting to note that Marx had also criticized the materialism of Feuerbach, for not including subjective thinking in the dialectical process, which Marx had, like Hegel, considered part of ‘human sensuous activity’, with all other aspects of conscious activity (Marx 2017c [1845], p.1). The position of this paper is that, for purposes of anthropological analysis, it is inconsequential which view is taken, and as stated earlier, determining the best approach is probably impossible. That said, recent developments in physics point us back towards Hegel.

The Physics of the Spirit

What’re quantum mechanics? I don’t know. People who repair quantum, I suppose
Terry Pratchett

Isaac Newton et al. had defined the physical laws of our material existence, until we considered the physics of the universe that existed outside of our gravitational field. This study consumed Einstein, leading him to formulate the general theory of relativity, and posit the speed of light as a speed limit, viewed as an absolute law of the known universe by mainstream science. But, as Al-Kahili stated, so-called ‘quantum entanglement’ reveals that sub-atomic particles appear to communicate instantly across distance, and this suggests, according to Bohr, the existence of superluminal speed (Al-Kahili 2014). Einstein disputed this account, and engaged with Niels Bohr in several theoretical battles, arguing instead that the matter had some superdeterministic property that explained the phenomena. However, conclusion of the matter remains unresolved in 2021. Regardless of the merits of the discussants, it is not beyond the realms of possibility to conclude that physicists have stumbled across an unseen physical reality, observing particles that may be impacted by mind or spirit. The so-called ‘observer effect’ gives additional weight to this perspective, where it was discovered that the attention of the observer leads to permanent change in the sub-atomic particles of an entity. Pascual Jordan, working alongside Bohr, stated: ‘observations not only disturb what has to be measured, they produce it’ (BBC 2021). Hegel’s focus on thought, therefore, that defines our reality, gains more credence in the light of quantum mechanics. The idea of God inhabiting and sustaining materiality also appears more plausible.

Master and Slave

Man is born free but is everywhere in chains

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Hegel's concept of the master/slave had clearly inspired Marx's materialist dialectic, and points towards a similar utopian society, and the establishment of 'absolute spirit', at the culmination of the dialectical process. Notwithstanding Hegel's known propensity towards misogyny and racism (partly excusable given the cultural context of 19th century Prussia), Hegel provides us with the notion of critical discourse driving humanity towards a society with an emancipated systemic ideology that works for everyone (Blunden 2012, p.1). Hegel's example begins by describing the formation of a master and slave relationship, a social phenomenon occurring many times throughout history. At first sight, it appears that the master has created a rewarding relationship of personal benefit to himself, but if the issue of the masters' self-consciousness of their identity is explored (better received via an [autonomous] other person), contradictions arise in the 'idea' of the master/slave relation itself. The reason is that the master does not value the validity of the (deferential) slave's view, and thus is unable to receive the appropriate recognition of his/her own identity. The slave, on the other hand, does receive real recognition of their identity (albeit with the absent existence of freedom) from an autonomous thinking master. As Hegel puts it the 'servitude has the lord for its essential reality; hence the *truth* for it is the independent consciousness that is *for itself*.' (Hegel 1977 [1807], p.117). In addition, whilst the slave's own labor is now objectified, as the slave awaits their emancipation, the slave becomes conscious of the master's alienation from the slave's produce consumed. Meanwhile, the slave is not subject to the same alienation and becomes aware of their master's need and vulnerability. Hegel's essential point is that neither master or the slave can experience mental emancipation until both are free, and the process of the master/slave idea undertakes its internal reasoning process of negation until this emerges. The new Notion has not discarded the notions associated with the old relationship, but rather *preserves* all of the past notions so the reality of the free-men relation is defined more appropriately. It is also important that the master/slave concept is not confined to social relationships where people are the sole property of another, but instead refers to anyone in a form of relationship where autonomy of thought does not exist.

The master/slave concept of emancipation could be applied to criteria for policymakers, where objectives would aim to facilitate change for the benefit of everyone, and the environment. The notion of inclusion thus removes the separation (or alienation), that is inherent in contradiction. The important point is that an individual cannot be free until all are free, where an individual's identity is inextricably linked to everyone as if they were one living organism. This is expressed in the Zulu concept of ubuntu, for instance, which literally translates as 'I am because we are' (Wikipedia 2021), or in the Christian notion of 'one body, many parts' (I Corinthians 12, NIV). The apostle Paul echoes the same sentiment when he gives a description of the slave Onesimus, who had stolen from his master Philemon and escaped. After converting to the faith, via Paul's ministry, Paul then suggests to Philemon that Onesimus is welcomed back into his house as a changed man. Paul writes: 'Perhaps the

reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back forever —no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother’ (Philemon 15-16, NIV). The dialectic continues until relations have no contradictions.

Changing Our World

Philosophers interpret the world in various ways, the point is to change it
Karl Marx

The thought of humanity, regardless of its source, enables people to take charge of affairs rather than simply be subject to circumstance. Christian belief posits that divine revelation is the best vehicle for this, as the bible explains: ‘the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed’ (Romans 8:19-27, NIV). Atheists may pursue different ideas, but what matters is whether or not the internal contradictions, inherent in the ideas, are negated. In this regard, Marx recognized that removing false consciousness was crucial to meaningful change (Eyerman 1981). Marx also argued that allegiance to pope and king falsified the consciousness of agents, in the way Feuerbach reasoned man was alienated by religion, since people deferred to a behavior/belief/priest rather than seek enlightened consciousness of their ability to change the material conditions of life. Christian spirituality challenges this view on the basis that divine revelation is not a man-made (natural minded) doctrine, but instead emanates from the mystical realm and is fluid, and thus needs to be differentiated from the religious catechisms of men.

Marx held that the essence of man was communal and was not able to find expression in the capitalist mode of production. In contrast to theorists like Rousseau and Kant et al., who argued for a social contract between people and state through the law, enabling society to transcend the (selfish) state of nature, Marx posited that if the production system were changed, our nature would also change (Rousseau 1968 [1762]; Sullivan 1994, p.10). In other words, Marx claimed the economic system drives behavior, and the inner nature of man was not selfish, despite its capability to be so. It is our alienation from this essence, and the non-consciousness of it, that Marx viewed as the problem, and its transcendence constituted an essential condition of his concept of emancipation. Marx explains how ‘estrangement of man to man’, inherent in our commodity production, caused separation from our ‘specie-being’ (Marx 2017a [1844], p.32). Marx’s idea of historical transition, outlines the contradictions between classes, determined by their material relation to production, leading man (via their communal, sensuous engagement with conditions) to engage in the transformation of the economic system through class struggle. As Marx noted ‘we call communism the real movement which abolishes the present state of things’ (Marx 2017a [1845]). For Marx then, the process continues until all class contradictions have been transcended and history is complete. It may not be sensible, for society to seek, like Marx, a common ownership of the means of production. Indeed, many theorists argue that this would lead to a centralized autocracy prone to inhumane suppression, such as Hayek (Hayek 1944). But Marx’s analysis of the mechanics of our present economic system, such as the existence (measured by abstract labor) of a tendency for the rate of profit to fall, offers valuable insight that we would be unwise to miss (Kliman 2007).

It is common in mainstream Christianity to disparage what is purported to be atheist ideology from Marx but, more often than not, this is based on fallacy and theological confirmation loops. It is clear that Marx took an anti-religious stance in his adult life, as a consequence of his view that deference to doctrine dampened any animated responses to material circumstances, but it is not clear that Marx dismissed mystically derived thinking from the dialectic. The position of this paper is that Marx, like Hegel, adopted the full range of thought. Furthermore, myths about Marx also derive from academics. The idea that Marx insisted the collapse of capitalism was inevitable is false, or the idea he supported permanent centralized planning is false, and the so-called ‘transformation problem’, that was promoted by Bortkeiwitz, has been eruditely refuted as nonsense (Kliman 2007, Potts 2010). Hegel’s most famous protégé deserves a fairer hearing.

Concluding Remarks

If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, Infinite
William Blake

The beauty of Hegel’s system presented in this paper is that the message is universal, everyone is included, the environment is protected, and the totality of thought remains present—a theory of everything. Most philosophers, since Hegel’s death in 1831, appear to have avoided such a holistic, grandiose attempt to do this and, as a consequence, are littered with far too many ‘we don’t know anything about anything’ types of ideas. However, as the neuropsychologist (and Blake enthusiast), Iain McGilchrist, has identified, the entire western mindset is predicated on rational thought, which ignores the value of intuition, imagination and spirituality and is devoid of Hegel’s focus on relational context (McGilchrist 2017, pp.133-174). Hegel re-imagined this.

The paper has outlined notions of the material, and the mind, and concluded that it is entirely valid for Hegel to have chosen to solely focus on mind. Indeed, debates in quantum mechanics question the appropriateness of enlightenment thought, in assuming a thought-material duality, and Christian spirituality, through a Hebrew lens, posits that God is mind and sustains existence as we know it. God can also be seen to exist in material things, and a transcendent ‘unseen’ realm simultaneously. The notion of mystical thought (as externally sourced) was then explored in relation to natural mindedness, using the analogy of the two trees in the garden of Eden. It was concluded that Hegel’s concept of spirit, as animated, resonating thought expressed in the communal consciousness, and the continual critique of ideas in the dialectic, defined human historical transition on its trajectory towards liberation for all. The totality of ideas, and their preservation in Hegel’s system, is seen as analogous to the Christian notion of sanctification, as a testament to the transforming nature of interaction with God. It is not always easy to obtain the autonomy of thought necessary for the dialectic process to be meaningful, and it is implicit in the paper that this creates hindrances to progressive thought, via the concept of master/slave. Marx, is then explored, as an example of someone heavily influenced by Hegel (albeit with his materialist focus), and it is concluded that the dialectical process changes our world. However, it was also noted that

Marx's own ideas contain contradiction. The key takeaway is that Hegel's dialectic offers a theoretical framework for humanity to imagine current and future autonomous ideas, that leads us all towards an inclusive future, a view consistent with the Christian ideal.

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