

The Philosopher-Priest and the Mythology of Reason

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Though much of ideology's dangers for religion have been the subject of recent scholarly discussion, ranging from religion's ontological commitments to its self-captivity in the land of conceptual idolatry, far less noticed has remained, to the scholarly eye in any case, the counter risk of philosophy's aspirations to usurp the salvific role of religion. Lofty aspirations which, although never quite admitted as such, are kept hidden under what philosophy has always, or almost always, considered as its principal duty: namely, the supersession (read, incorporation or substitution¹) of religion by one or the other speculative systems.

This, in fact, was an accusation brought against philosophy (and philosophers) by none other than Nietzsche who, in his work appropriately named *Twilight of the Idols*, writes:

All that philosophers have handled for thousands of years have been concept-mummies [*Begriffs-Mumien*]; nothing real escaped their grasp alive. When these honorable idolaters of concepts [*diese Herren Begriffs-Götze*] worship something, they kill it and stuff it; they threaten the life of everything they worship.²

It is important to pay attention to Nietzsche's language. He speaks of a *worship* to which philosophers have dedicated themselves "for thousands of years"; but this is not the worship of the living God, "the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob" to use Pascal's terms, but, as one might indeed expect, the "God of the philosophers." Nietzsche is more accurate in his description: it is an *idol*, that is, a dead or counterfeit god. But how could a god die, as the madman of Nietzsche's *Gay Science* in so powerful a way declares?³ Religion, pagan and Abrahamic alike, has taught us that if man were to see god, man would die. "You cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live," Yahweh says to Moses (Exodus 33:20). In philosophy

¹ We will return to these two terms later when discussing Patočka's *Heretical Essays on the Philosophy of History* and Derrida's reading of them.

² Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, section 1: "Reason in Philosophy"; from *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (Penguin Books, 1982), 479.

³ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, book III, section 125.

this principle becomes reversed: when man sees god, god dies. And he dies by means of this very “seeing,” by means, in other words, of what we know in Greek as the *idea*, and in German as *Begriff*. It is, at once, the crime *and* the means of that crime that Nietzsche identified by calling the philosopher an “idolater of concepts.” Far from being a criticism of a religion not credible any more, as it is often assumed, Nietzsche’s proclamation of “the death of God” is a powerful condemnation of philosophy—at least of that philosophy which by means of the pure concept sought to re-establish a new Good Friday on the Golgotha of Absolute Spirit. Even if such Golgotha was newly situated in Jena.

Hegel’s demand, which is at the same time nothing less than a programmatic declaration, that the pure concept “re-establish for philosophy . . . the speculative Good Friday *in place* of the historic Good Friday”⁴ is well known. It is with such a prophetic tenor that he closes his early essay on “Faith and Knowledge”—the title of which is not fully understood unless seen under the prism of this very demand. The new philosophy, the only one worthy to be called a philosophy, that is, *speculative* philosophy, is precisely a philosophy which would encompass all three of the concepts in the title of that essay, namely, “knowledge,” to which the reflective philosophy of Kant, Jacobi and even Fichte had limited itself to; “faith” which of course here doesn’t quite mean historical religion but rather the metaphysical claims which the “Copernican revolution” of Kant had abdicated; and, above all, the synthetic conjunction “and,” of which we could say is here, for the first time, elevated to the dignity of a concept.

In the five years between 1802 and 1807, the promise that speculative philosophy could and, indeed, should replace the historical Good Friday with another of its own was fulfilled in the “Golgotha of Absolute Spirit” at which the *Phenomenology* finds its culmination. In doing so, philosophy proclaims itself not only as absolute knowledge, but also as absolute faith, that is, *philosophy has become religion*.

These are, of course, well known facts and one hardly needs to be reminded of them. As are also known the implications of religion’s appropriation by philosophy—for both, philosophy and religion. The question with which I propose to occupy myself in these pages is whether Hegel was the first to commit this crime; whether his ambition to eclipse historical religion for the sake of a higher form—which, incidentally, he recognized in his own system—was in fact unprecedented.

Certainly, there are developments in the history of philosophy prior to Hegel that lead, as through a predictable *via dolorosa*, toward the speculative Golgotha of Absolute Spirit. Was not, after all, the wish for a gradual overcoming of revealed religion by the “religion of reason” as in Kant’s religion of morality which Kant himself hailed as God’s true kingdom on earth?⁵ And did not Fichte’s *Attempt at a Critique of All Revelation* set the regulations by which this overcoming was to take

⁴ Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, trans. Walter Cerf and H.S. Harris, (Albany: State University of New York, 1977), 191 (my emphasis).

⁵ Kant, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, section VII of the Third Part “The Gradual Transition of Ecclesiastical Faith Toward the Exclusive Dominion of Pure Religious Faith is the Coming of the Kingdom of God” (6:115ff).

place? And beyond the immediate scope of philosophy if one were to look at the cultural atmosphere of the times—was not historical religion, in fact, first displaced and then replaced by an *ad hoc* created cult of nature and reason as demanded by the Republic of Virtue, as it called itself, but became better known in history as the Reign of Terror? It was precisely what the Enlightenment had detested most deeply, namely, the irrational orgiastic, that triumphantly returned in the consecration of the secular that, naturally, according to a certain logic, followed the profanation of the sacred.⁶

The accomplishment of religion's complete appropriation by philosophy, which constitutes at the same time its highest moment and its highest form, coincides with, or rather emerges from, the depths of the grief of the proclamation that "God is dead." Hegel sees the death of God—the death of the historical specificity of this God out of which the spiritual God emerges, that is, God as Spirit: *Geist*, but also *Begriff*—in counterpoint to "the death of the philosophy"⁷ which was, in his eyes, brought about by the perpetuation and the solidification of the distinction (epistemological, methodological) between faith and knowledge, revelation and reason.

It was as if God had to die for philosophy to live, and for God to live (undisturbed by philosophy's claims?), philosophy would have to die the death that turned her into mere reason, that is, understanding (*der Verstand*). Situated between these two deaths—God's and philosophy's—I propose revisiting the archetypal death scene in Plato's *Phaedo*.

Plato's Speculative Good Friday

It is Patočka who credits Plato with the invention of religion. By this he means that Plato succeeded in overcoming the mythical, demonic, and orgiastic character of Greek cults with what he understands as religion proper, i.e., the overcoming of the ancient cultus and the distinction between sacred and profane within which it operated.⁸ "Plato is just the one who changes myth into religion. . . ." And then again, ". . . in Plato's teaching . . . takes birth . . . something like religion."¹⁰ This birth occurs, in Patočka's opinion, in the *Phaedo*. We could, therefore, say that religion is born as Socrates dies; that religion is born at the same time as

⁶ Patočka's observation on this score is most insightful. After citing Durkheim saying that "[u]nder the impact of the common wave of enthusiasm, matters wholly secular by nature were transformed into sacred, as Fatherland, Liberty, Reason," Patočka then adds: "[t]hat, to be sure, is an enthusiasm which, for all the cult of Reason, has an orgiastic case." *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History*, trans. Erazim Kohák (Chicago: Open Court, 1996), 113. See also Derrida's reading of Patočka's essay in *The Gift of Death*, trans. David Wills (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), chapter one "Secrets of European Responsibility."

⁷ Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, xx.

⁸ "Religion is not the sacred, nor does it arise directly from the experience of sacral orgies and rites; rather, it is where the sacred qua demonic is being explicitly overcome." Patočka, *Heretical Essays*, 101.

⁹ Jan Patočka, *Plato and Europe*, trans. Petr Lom (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 126.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 127.

philosophy's emergence as the art of dying. Can we be sure that the religion of which Patočka speaks, the religion to which Plato gives birth, is still religion and not philosophy? Or is it a double birth which we witness in the *Phaedo*, the birth of religion and its double, namely, philosophy?¹¹

At a first glance, the *Phaedo* is about neither the death of philosophy nor the death of God, but simply the death of a philosopher, even if we are to take Socrates as the embodiment of the philosopher par excellence—a figure if not divine, at least demonic, as Friedländer argues.¹² Yet, in this unique text, which can perhaps be compared only with the long chapters of Jesus' testament in the Gospel according to St John (chapters 13-17), death looms over its pages and it is not only the death of Socrates. It is, again, a double death: death in philosophy (for it is here that we find the memorable definition of philosophy as *ars mortis*), but also death in and because of religion, that is, *sacrifice*. These two themes are not of course unrelated, but rather internally connected, and first and foremost, by the logic of exchange: the one for the other, the one in place of the other. Implicit here is also a certain hierarchy: the higher in place of the lower, giving up the lower for the sake of the higher. We should not fail to notice that this is also the logic that governs sacrifice and that, therefore, *Phaedo* opens with the question of the sacrifice of the sacrifice: the old sacrifice to the orgiastic and demonic (the Minotaur); the ritualized sacrifice in commemoration of the release from the old sacrifice (the orgiastic becomes organized); and finally, Socrates' sacrifice. That last one is double too: Socrates' sacrifice (execution) by the *polis* has been preceded by Socrates' self-sacrifice to a life dedicated to philosophy.

Recent interpreters of the dialogue have paid considerable attention to the ritualistic context within which Plato frames Socrates' last hours.¹³ His execution has been delayed on account of a festival in honor of Apollo Delius that commemorated Theseus' intervention which had put an end to the annual sacrifice of fourteen young Athenians offered as sacrifice to the mythical monster Minotaur. Ancient readers of Plato would have also been aware of the fact that during the festival, which was known as *Thargelia*, the city ritualistically purified itself (*νόμος ἔστιν αὐτοῖς ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ τούτῳ καθαρεῦειν τὴν πόλιν*, 58b5-6).¹⁴ One of the ways that the city's purification was carried out was the expulsion of two of its citizens, considered as *pharmakoi*. In earlier times, their expulsion might have taken the form

¹¹ The discussion of religion's counterfeit doubles in philosophy, and especially Hegel, has been taken up with mastery in William Desmond's *Hegel's God: A Counterfeit Double?* (Ashgate, 2003).

¹² "There also came a moment [for Plato] where the human master grew into the mythical figure of the great demon Eros himself." Paul Friedländer, *Plato*, trans. Hans Meyerhoff (New York: Pantheon Books, 1958), 174.

¹³ See, among others, Friedländer, (ibid.): "The *Phaedo* alludes to this area of mystery cults through the concept of 'purification,' signifying the soul's separation from the body (67c); for cathartic rites are characteristic of mystic initiation" (p. 71).

¹⁴ The identification of Apollo Delius' festival with Thargelia was supported by Jan N. Bremmer, "Scapegoat Rituals in Ancient Greece" in *Oxford Readings in Greek Religion*, ed. Richard Buxton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 291-2.

of a sacrifice.¹⁵ The 12th century Byzantine poet John Tzetzes preserves for us another interesting detail of the ritual:

The (rite of) *pharmakos* was a purification of this sort of old. If a calamity overtook the city by the wrath of God, whether it were famine or pestilence or any other mischief, they led forth as though to a sacrifice *the most ugly* of them all as a purification and a remedy to the suffering city. They set the sacrifice in the appointed place, and gave him cheese with their hands and a barley cake and figs, and seven times they smote him with leeks and wild figs and other wild plants. Finally they burnt him with fire with the wood of wild trees and scattered the ashes into the sea and to the winds, for a purification, as I said, of the suffering city.¹⁶

Frazer believes that Athens maintained a stock of ugly people to be used precisely as *pharmakoi* whenever either the festival or an extraordinary occasion called to do so: “The Athenians regularly maintained a number of degraded and useless beings at the public expense; and when any calamity, such as plague, drought, or famine, befell the city, they sacrificed two of these outcasts as scapegoats.”¹⁷

This religious festival to which Plato calls particular attention is supposed to facilitate the reader in making the connection between Socrates and the heroic founder of Athens, Theseus. Instead of corrupting the Athenian youth, Socrates, like Theseus, rescued them. But from what kind of monster? One might suggest their own ignorance, assuming, therefore, that the interaction with Socrates helped those young minds to escape the perils of the unexamined life. The answer, however, as the dialogue itself seems to suggest, is not as simple. Theseus had put an end to a cruel and unenlightened practice, that of sacrifice, a practice that had been accepted and perpetuated in the name of religious superstition, and he had done so by means of his reason.¹⁸ If Theseus is a fitting counterpart for Socrates in the analogy that Plato is trying to establish at the opening of his dialogue, that is because Socrates too had used his reason to put an end to that very same superstition.¹⁹

¹⁵ “The character of the *pharmakos* has been compared to a scapegoat. The *evil* and the *outside*, the expulsion of the evil, its exclusion out of the body (and out) of the city—these are the two major senses of the character of the ritual. Harpocration, commenting on the word *pharmakos*, describes them thus: ‘At Athens they led out two men to be purifications for the city; it was at the Thargelia, one was for the men and the other for the women.’ In general the *pharmakoi* were put to death. But that, it seems, was not the essential end of the operation. Death occurred most often as a secondary effect of energetic fustigation.” Jacques Derrida, “Plato’s Pharmacy” in *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 130-2 (emphasis in the original).

¹⁶ From Tzetzes’ *Thousand Histories*, quoted by Derrida, in “Plato’s Pharmacy,” 133, (my emphasis).

¹⁷ Frazer as quoted by Derrida in “Plato’s Pharmacy,” 133.

¹⁸ Another example of a similar confrontation between humanistic reason and monstrous irrationality is that of Oedipus and the Sphinx, for more on which see my essay “Thebes Revisited: Theodicy and the Temporality of Ethics,” in *Research in Phenomenology* 39:2 (2009): 292-306.

¹⁹ See also Ross Romero’s paper “Without the Least Tremor: Ritual Sacrifice as Background in the

Religious language and imagery abounds throughout the *Phaedo*. We read about *epodai*, (incantations), *teletai* (rites), and *spondai* (libations) and since such language is not unusual for Plato (I will be examining some examples from his other dialogues below), it is easy to ignore it and focus on the “arguments.” In “Socrates’ Last Bath,” Douglas J. Stewart suggests that the ritual background of the dialogue should serve as the key that unlocks its interpretation. He summarizes his thesis as follows: “the whole *mise-en-scène* of the *Phaedo*, is the simulation of a *telete*, a ritual of initiation and purification practiced by . . . the Orphics.”²⁰ He identifies, as other scholars have done as well, allusions to specific religious practices that punctuate the dialogue. Above, however, the various specific examples in which religion is alluded to, religious practices re-enacted and even parodied, or rather through them all, a larger picture emerges, that of Socrates as the ultimate sacrificial victim, the *pharmakos par excellence*, as notoriously ugly as our sources tell us that the *pharmakoi* usually were. Indeed, one of the meanings of Socrates’ proposal in the *Apology* (36d), namely, that he deserves to be fed on the city’s expense, assumes now the more sinister character of a self-identification as a *pharmakos*. A sacrificial victim, therefore, that willingly becomes such; who willingly takes and drinks the *pharmakon* of hemlock in a moment which, in a Hegelian fashion before Hegel, would become the point of culmination that would surpass and therefore suppress all sacrifices.²¹ In order to complete this picture we need only to add here that he, as Diogenes Laertius testifies, was born “on the sixth day of Thargelion, the day when the Athenians purify the city.”²² It seems, therefore, that Plato’s *Phaedo* has Socrates dying on the day of his birthday, making the day of his death another, more spiritual kind of birthday. Out of the death of the son of Sophroniscus a different and yet the same person emerges, Plato’s speculative Socrates.

I mentioned earlier the Fourth Gospel and in particular St John’s account of the passion which, as it is well known, differs significantly from that of the synoptics. To understand John’s narrative of the passion it is important to consider the timing, the place, and the language he employs in describing it. By placing Christ’s crucifixion on the day of the feast of the Jewish Passover and indeed at the very moment when the lambs would have been sacrificed at the temple of Solomon in preparation for the feast, John succeeds in portraying Christ’s passion as a *mimesis* of the Jewish ritual and as a sacrifice, performed outside of the city’s walls in order to purify Israel. Recall, for example, what the High-priest says in typical Johannine irony: “it is better for one man to die for the people” (John 11:50). At the

Phaedo,” a paper delivered at the 7th annual meeting of the Ancient Philosophy Society (Boston College, 12-14 April, 2007).

²⁰ Douglas J. Stewart, “Socrates’ Last Bath,” in *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 10:3 (July 1972), 253.

²¹ A slightly more sympathetic reading is offered by Desmond who, however, reaches the same conclusion that “Socrates is transubstantiated into a sacrificial victim. . . . [h]is death will be a desecration, like the killing of the criminal as a sacred figure.” See, *Beyond Hegel and Dialectic: Speculation, Cult, and Comedy* (New York: SUNY Press, 1992), 90.

²² Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, II, 23; cited also by Derrida, “Plato’s Pharmacy,” 134.

same time, however, Christ's sacrifice becomes the fulfillment and the truth of that ritual which, once it has been revealed and taken place, renders it inoperative.

Similarly, Socrates' sacrificial death in the *Phaedo* is supposed to imitate a variety of rituals associated with Greek religion, revealing thus their "higher truth" and, by doing so, overcoming them. In connection with the *Phaedo*, but also with the *Symposium*, Paul Friedländer understands this overcoming precisely in Hegelian terms when talking of "a sublimation in truly Hellenic spirit of the noblest form of piety of a people."²³ So what in Greek religion is "naively" understood as a rite that aims at purifying and, thus, at restoring for the conscience which is aware of itself as defiled by sin the possibility of a renewed rapport with the divine, becomes in Plato the lofty ideal of the pursuit of knowledge. "To Plato, however," Friedländer continues, "'purification' is knowledge or pure thought (*φρόνησις*)."²⁴

Catharsis (*κάθαρσις*) means for Plato nothing other than the right way to philosophize (*οὔτοι δ' εἰσὶν [οἱ κεκαθαρμένοι] . . . οἱ πεφιλοσοφηκότες ὀρθῶς*, 69d). If we were to exclude the reference to the purifications of Thargelia at the opening of the dialogue, the theme of purity is first introduced at 66d8 as qualifying the kind of knowledge that the true philosopher desires, namely, *pure* knowledge: "It really has been shown to us that, if we are ever to have pure knowledge [*εἰ μέλλομέν ποτε καθαρῶς τι εἴσεσθαι*] we must escape from the body."²⁵ To obtain such purity of knowledge the philosopher must strive to dissociate his soul from his body as much as possible, effecting a continuous anticipation or rather mortification, during each and every day of his life, of that separation that will finally occur only at his last hour. This separation becomes identified as *catharsis* and *lysis* later in the text (in 67c5 and 67d4). *Lysis* (*λύσις*) here indicates a release from the bodily fetters, *as* one is freed from a prison. It was precisely this idea that the image of a Socrates newly released from his prison chains had anticipated at the opening of the dialogue.

In between those two moments, Socrates shifts the reference of the language of purification from its literal sense, denoting the purity of knowledge to which the philosopher aspires and which the body and all its functions prevent, to a purity understood already in a metaphorical sense, that is, in a strongly religious sense:

[W]e shall be closest to knowledge . . . if we are not infected with [the body's] nature but purify ourselves from it [*ἀλλὰ καθαρεύομεν*]. . . . In this way we shall escape the contamination of the body's folly [*οὔτω μὲν καθαροί*] . . . and by our own efforts we shall know all that is pure, which is presumably the truth, for it is not permitted to the impure to attain the pure [literally: "it is not lawful for the impure to touch what is pure"] [*μὴ καθαρῶ γὰρ καθαρῶ ἐράπτεσθαι μὴ οὐ θεμιτὸν ἦ*] (67a-b).

Purity becomes now a question of complying with the prescriptions of *θέμις*, *τὸ θεμιτόν*, of what is or is not permissible in accordance with the divine law. Thus the

²³ Friedländer, *Plato*, 72.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 71.

²⁵ For *Phaedo*'s English text I use G.M.A. Grube's translation from John M. Cooper's *Plato: Complete Works* (Hackett, 1997).

contamination of the pure by what is impure is considered as an act of sacrilege (*ἀθέμιτον*), the violation of a taboo.²⁶ Yet this purification is not any more *of the body*, as it was for the religious rites of which we hear at the opening of the dialogue and which continue to remain a constant theme and reference in its background, but rather a purification *from the body*, as we can now speak—for the first time perhaps—of a *purified mind* (*διάνοιαν κεκαθαρμένην*, 67c4). It becomes self-evident, then, that only such a purified mind can aspire to attain the pure knowledge which was set earlier in our text as the goal of philosophy. Thus, the question now becomes a question regarding the ways and the means by which and through which the philosopher can purify himself from his body. The answer, as we have already seen, is philosophy itself; philosophy itself is the new *ritus* (a ritual without ritual, as it is fitting, perhaps, for this “religion without religion”), the *disciplina*, which, when practiced rightly, *ὀρθῶς*—we will see later what this means for Plato—can ensure for its adherent the attainment of pure knowledge.

Finally, there is the question of the purity of one’s intentions. For others, like the philosopher, might display the same philosophical attitude but for the wrong reasons. Externalities, such as the right decision or the right action, even if they are right, are only appearances and therefore can hardly be enough to qualify the philosopher as a true lover of wisdom. What is needed is to turn one’s examining eye inward toward oneself, to undertake an introspection, thereby discovering—for the first time perhaps—what will be known from now on as the subject’s interiority, that is, the true sanctuary where philosophy as pure religion can set its altar (one could recognize here a characteristically “Lutheran” move). At precisely such a moment of introspection one feels the birthpangs of conscience.

The famous passage of the *Phaedo* (80e) . . . describes a sort of subjectivizing interiorization, the movement of the soul’s gathering of itself, a fleeing of the body towards its interior where it withdraws into itself in order to recall itself to itself, in order to be next to itself, in order to keep itself in this gesture of remembering. This conversion turns the soul around and amasses it upon itself. It is such a movement of gathering, as in the prefix *syn*, that announces the coming-to-conscience.²⁷

Does not, however, the much-praised immediacy of the Greeks with their world, the secret of Greek cheerfulness, come to an end as soon as man becomes hollowed with the depth of such an interiority to which conscience has opened for itself? And if it is so, would not Nietzsche be right in accusing Plato of doing precisely this? Furthermore, is it a coincidence that this return of oneself to oneself that gives birth to conscience takes place as soon as the world itself—now understood as exterior to me, exterior to my interiority—has become characterized as impure, guarded, so to

²⁶ The Liddell-Scott defines *ἀθέμιτον* as lawless and godless. *Θέμις* describes an act established not by (civic) law but by custom (=an unwritten law, inspired by the gods).

²⁷ Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 13.

speaking, by a prohibition against touching it? Recall how Socrates puts it: “it is not lawful for the impure to touch what is pure” (67b). Conversely, is it also not unlawful for the philosopher who desires what is pure, and therefore must himself remain such, to touch what is impure? And does not such cultic taboo, such fear for defilement, re-inscribe the logic of the old religion, the law of the orgiastic, at the very foundations of philosophy?

To return to our reading of the text: Socrates exhorts Simmias to undertake an examination of one’s motivations, an examination of conscience:

If you are willing to reflect on the courage and the moderation of other people, you will find them strange.

In what way, Socrates?

You know that they all consider death a great evil?

Definitely, he said.

And the brave among them face death, when they do, for fear of greater evils?

That is so.

Therefore, it is fear and terror that make all men brave, except the philosophers (68d2-12).

Such are those people who “exchange pleasures for pleasures, pains for pains and fears for fears” in the way one exchanges money, “the greater for the less like coins” (69a6-8). Yet, such exchanges, insofar as they do not remain both interior and, at the same time, superior to oneself, that is, insofar as they do not transcend the bodily altogether, are nothing more than counterfeits. The “only valid currency for which all these things should be exchanged is wisdom” (69a9-10). Myth and priestcraft could make someone appear virtuous by promising worldly or heavenly pleasures and by threatening with punishments in this life or the afterlife—exchanging, thus, “pleasures for pleasures, pains for pains and fears for fears.” Against such an economic exchange of counterfeit money stands the true currency of philosophy—but, as with every forgery, the challenge is that of differentiation: how to tell the true philosopher from fake ones and true philosophy from its counterfeit—which is, at the same time, the question of distinguishing true religion (that is, philosophy) from counterfeit religion (for Plato and the philosophers, “cultic,” or, as some people may say today, organized religion).

Such a task belongs to dialectics, that is, the art of division and collection, about which Socrates admits his love.²⁸ The particular task of distinguishing the true philosopher through such a process of division is taken up in the *Sophist*. Interestingly enough, however, what the philosopher can be confused most easily

²⁸ See, *Phaedrus*, 266b.

with are not the Sophists but gods. “Are you bringing a visitor, Theodorus? Or are you bringing a god?” Socrates asks about the Eleatic stranger at the beginning of the *Sophist*. Theodorus replies that his companion is not a god, although divine—“but then” he goes on to add, “I call all philosophers that.” Socrates’ answer is worth quoting at length:

And that’s the right thing for you to do, my friend. But probably it’s no easier, I imagine, to distinguish that kind of person than it is to distinguish gods. Certainly the genuine philosophers who “haunt our cities”—by contrast to the fake ones—take on all sorts of different appearance just because of other people’s ignorance. As philosophers look down from above at the lives of those below them, some people think they’re worthless and others think they’re worth everything in the world. Sometimes they take on the appearance of statesmen, and sometimes of sophists. Sometimes, too, they might give the impression that they’re completely insane.²⁹

Philosophy has always operated according to such distinctions, while reserving for herself the right to regulate them: distinctions between being and non-being, between true and false, between purity and impurity, between authenticity and inauthenticity. In the passage above what is at stake is the equivocation between the true philosopher and what resembles him closely: the statesman, the sophist, the madman. The potential of misidentification is then compared to the ambivalence that characterizes the stranger (who, incidentally, is also the neighbor, that is, the one who resembles me more closely, for if the stranger was wholly strange there would have been no ambiguity). Is the stranger friend or foe? An enemy or a god? To take this a step further: how can one tell true gods from fake ones, gods from idols? Plato’s call to a diacritical hermeneutics remains problematic as the verdict to such questions belongs to philosophy (to knowledge—ultimately each of these questions is driven by the desire to know), which had produced these distinctions in the first place.³⁰

Elsewhere in Plato, however, it is the figure of the priest who bears the family resemblance to the true philosopher and it is, therefore, against religion that philosophy must be contrasted as sharply as possible. Thus, in a criticism against religious *Afterdienst*—to use Kant’s term of disparagement—of which Kant himself would have been jealous, Plato has Adeimantus say the following:

Beggar priests and diviners go to the doors of the rich man and persuade him that the gods have provided them with a power based on sacrifices and incantations [*epodai*]. If he himself, or his ancestors, has

²⁹ *Sophist*, 216c2-d2, translation by Nicholas P. White in *Plato: Complete Works*. For a discussion of the peculiar prologue of this dialogue, see John Sallis, *Being and Logos: Reading the Platonic Dialogues*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975 [3rd edition 1996]), 460-464.

³⁰ On diacritical hermeneutics see the work of Richard Kearney and in particular “What is Diacritical Hermeneutics?” in the *Journal of Applied Hermeneutics*, (December 2011), 1-14.

committed some injustice, they can heal it with pleasures and feasts; and if he wishes to ruin some enemies at small expense, he will injure just and unjust alike with certain evocations and spells. They, as they say, persuade the gods to serve them. . . . And they present a babble of books by Musaeus and Orpheus, offspring of the Moon and the Muses, as they say, according to whose prescription they busy themselves about their sacrifices. They persuade not only private persons, but cities as well, that thought sacrifices and pleasurable games there are, after all, deliverances [*lyseis*] and purifications [*katharmoi*] from unjust deeds for those still living. And there are also rites for those who are dead. These, which they call initiations [*teletai*], deliver us from the evils in the other place; while, for those who did not sacrifice, terrible things are waiting (II 364b-365a).³¹

Within a few lines, Adeimantus manages to condense almost every aspect known to us of the religion of his times. Granted, such criticism against religion is delivered in defense of an unconditional justice, but isn't it precisely so too with Kant's unconditional morality that despairs of the externalities of priestcraft?

The question, however, is not simply philosophy's criticism of religious practice, but rather the much more ambitious claim of philosophy's appropriation of religion, that is, philosophy's self-elevation to a new religion, or as Patočka says, "a new mythology."³² Was not, after all, such a "mythology of reason," one of the objectives quite explicitly demanded by *The Oldest System Program of German Idealism*?³³

In the well-known palinode from the *Phaedrus*, Socrates enumerates three kinds of madness that are meant to demonstrate how the fourth kind, namely, *eros*, is also a divine gift beneficial to men. It is interesting to notice that all three madresses mentioned at the following passage are aspects of the traditional Greek religion.

The prophetess of Delphi and the priestesses at Dodona are out of their minds when they perform that fine work of theirs for all of Greece, either for an individual person or for a whole city, but they accomplish

³¹ *The Republic*, II 364b-365a, (Allan Bloom's translation). As James Adam comments, "Plato agreed with the more *enlightened* section of his countrymen in condemning such degrading cults and superstitions on the ground of their immoral tendency." *The Republic of Plato*, volume I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 81 (my emphasis).

³² In *Heretical Essays*, 106.

³³ "First of all I will speak here of an idea which, as far as I know, has never occurred to anyone before—we must have a new mythology, however, this mythology must be in the service of ideas, it must become a mythology of *reason* [*eine Mythologie der Vernunft*]." Trans. Dennis J. Schmidt in *On Germans and Other Greeks* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 85. This short text, first published by Rosenzweig in 1917, although written in Hegel's handwriting, is attributed to Hegel, Schelling, and Hölderlin alike. For a (somewhat uncritical) commentary on it, see David Farrell Krell, *The Tragic Absolute: German Idealism and the Languishing of God* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 16-44.

little or nothing when they are in control of themselves. We will not mention the Sybil or the others who foretell many things by means of god-inspired prophetic trances. . . . Next, madness can provide relief from the greatest plagues of trouble that beset certain families because of their guilt for ancient crimes: it turns up among those who need a way out; it gives prophecies and takes refuge in prayers to the gods and in worship, discovering mystic rites and purifications. . . . Third comes the kind of madness that is possession by the Muses, which takes a tender virgin soul and awakens it to a Bacchic frenzy of songs and poetry.³⁴ (244b-245a)

Here are then prophecy, ritual, and music, or, as perhaps it would be better understood, hymnology—all and each of them aspects of religious practice. The remaining of the palinode, via the great story of the heavenly journey of the soul’s chariot, will try to demonstrate how *eros* fits in this scheme of such God-given passions. The reader cannot but wonder why philosophy is not included as one of the four divine madresses. In the *Phaedrus* alone, we have seen the philosopher being in love, not only with *sophia*, whose professed lover by definition he is, but also with the beautiful youth, in this case with Isocrates; we have seen him purifying himself for the offense committed against Eros (243a3: *καθήρασθαι ἀνάγκη*; 243a4: *καθαροῦ ἀρχαῖος*); we have seen him identifying himself as a prophet (242c3: *εἰμὶ δὴ οὖν μάντις*), delivering oracles to Lysias (278b7-278e4) and a prophecy concerning Isocrates’ future (278e10, *μαντεύομαι*); and we have seen him speaking almost in dithyrambs (238d3), possessed by the nymphs like a true poet (238d: *νυμφόληπτος*), or giving the palinode in the name of a poet (244). Philosophy is then not missing from the list of the divine madness, rather it is the hyper-madness that encompasses and recapitulates in itself all of them, just as Socrates reveals himself as, at once, lover, poet, prophet and priest.

“We have to see Plato’s rationalism,” Barrett observes “not as a cool scientific project such as a later century of the European Enlightenment might set for itself, but as a kind of passionately religious doctrine—a theory that promised man salvation from the things he had feared most from the earliest days, from death and time.” And he continues “[t]he extraordinary emphasis Plato put upon reason is itself a religious impulse.”³⁵

The moves in the operation of substitution that Plato sets in motion can be confusing: the philosopher deems himself as the true priest and then he establishes the criteria and the critique that denounces the priest as a fake philosopher-priest.³⁶

³⁴ *Phaedrus*, 244b-245a, in Alexander Nehamas’ and Paul Woodruff’s translation (in *Plato: Complete Works*).

³⁵ William Barrett, *Irrational Man* (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), 84.

³⁶ Ancient sources make reference of a “priestly” Plato as well. Thus, the Augustan historian Dionysius of Halicarnassus in his *Epistula ad Pompeium* shares the observation made by the fourth-century BC renowned critic Demetrius Phalereus and, as he says, “by many others and often” that there is much of a priest in Plato’s style: *καὶ πολὺς ὁ τελέτης ἐστὶν ἐν τοῖς τοιοῦτοις παρ’ αὐτῶ, ὡς καὶ Δημήτριος ὁ*

But here lies the trap: for the philosopher-priest is already a fake priest—a self-proclaimed and (self-)idolized priest and thus truly an idol—and therefore the philosopher’s exposé of religion as a false image of philosophy (see, superstition, *Afterdienst*), negates a negation, affirming thus what should have been evident all along, namely, that only the priest is a priest.

If my suspicion that in Plato’s philosophy we find *more* than a philosophy in the “narrow” sense (such as that whose limits Kant’s *Critiques* clearly delineated), or better yet, a philosophy within which religion has been sublated—*aufgehoben*—and therefore now it poses itself as a higher form of religion, then we can appreciate the irony of the accusation which philosophy traditionally directs against religion. That is the derision of historical or revealed religion for being a counterfeit service to God—*Afterdienst* in the language of both Kant and of the *Oldest System Program of German Idealism*—cannot but be returned to philosophy, ever since the latter donned religion’s garb and proclaimed itself as “worship of god” (λατρείαν τοῦ θεοῦ) or *Gottesdienst*.³⁷ Indeed, it went as far as considering philosophers “like a consecrated priesthood, set apart and offered up as a sacrifice [in the very Socratic fashion that the *Phaedo* illustrates] to the spirit.”³⁸

Monotheism of Reason, Polytheism of Imagination

I have attempted to sketch the basic lines of the operation that seeks to replace historical religion by such a hierophantic philosophy as the one found in Platonism—an operation of replacement, inaugurated by Plato, but carried on by his Neo-Platonic epigones down to Hegel, Schelling and beyond. One needs to follow attentively the intricate layers of readings here: on the one hand, Patočka’s reading of Plato, especially in the fifth of his *Heretical Essays*, and, on the other hand, Derrida’s reading of Patočka’s essay in his “Secrets of European Responsibility”—for this is an exchanging of sacred secrets over the centuries. Let us begin by a

*Φαληρεὺς εἴρηκέ που καὶ ἄλλοι συγχοί. Epistula ad Pompeium, II, 228, in Opuscula, ed. Hermann Usener and Ludwig Radermacher (Teubner, 1899), as quoted by Friedländer in Plato, 367. Indeed, Plato’s philosophy as religion comes complete with all the doctrinal points one might be expected to find in a religion. First and foremost the cult of the executed founder: “One might possibly say today that, instead of re-forming the old myths of his people, [Plato] created the myth of Socrates.” Friedländer, *Plato*, 172. “The greatest Platonic myth is the myth about Socrates as the representative of the gods, who carries out his divine commission through examination.” Patočka, *Plato and Europe*, 128. One also finds a cosmogony (as in the *Timaeus*), a cosmology and cosmological geography (as in the *Phaedo*), various versions of eschatology (as in the *Gorgias*, the *Phaedo*, and the *Republic*) as well as the ritualistic repetition of *epodai*, only now prayers have become transformed into arguments. See, for example, Socrates’ exhortation that the arguments about the immortality of the soul “should be repeated like *epodai*.” *Phaedo*, 77e, 114d.*

³⁷ The self-proclamation of philosophy as worship (*Gottesdienst*) belongs to Hegel’s *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion: One Volume Edition*, ed. Peter C. Hodgson, trans. R.F. Brown, P.C. Hodgson and J.M. Stewart (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 194. For a discussion of this theme, see the second chapter in Desmond’s *Beyond Hegel and Dialectic*, as well as the second chapter in Desmond’s *Hegel’s God*. Hegel follows here too Plato who defines philosophy as a “worship of god” (λατρείαν τοῦ θεοῦ) already in the *Apology* (23c).

³⁸ The reference is to Hegel’s remarks from the *Science of Logic*, paraphrased by Desmond in *Beyond Hegel and Dialectic*, 87.

passage from Derrida's essay in which Derrida outlines carefully the operation of replacement which Patočka identifies in Plato's work, most notably in the *Phaedo*, as we have already seen, but also in the famous allegory of the cave from *The Republic*. "This presentation," Patočka writes, "especially in its dramatic part, is a reversal of the traditional mysteries and of their orgiastic cults." And he continues:

Those cults already aimed if not at a fusion, then at least at a confrontation of the responsible and the orgiastic. The cave is a remnant of the subterranean gathering place of the mysteries; it is the womb of Earth Mother. Plato's novel idea is the will to leave the womb of Earth Mother and to follow the pure "path of light," that is, to subordinate the orgiastic entirely to responsibility.³⁹

We need only keep two points from this reading: Plato's coming out of the subterranean cave—a symbol and topos of the old religion—constituting, at the same time, a *reversal* and a *subordination* of the old religion by the new philosophy-cum-religion that places itself under the light of the Apollonian sun. What is paradoxical, however, in this attempt to leave the maternal womb/cave of religion (and, thus, we return to this image of birth, of Plato giving birth to religion or philosophy, one is never quite sure) is that Plato does not quite succeed, if we assume that *that* was his intention anyway, to leave behind entirely the cave but somehow re-instituting the cave's role or function on a higher plane. Thus "the Platonic *anabasis* does not provide a passage from orgiastic mystery to nonmystery," as one might have expected, but rather, as Derrida continues,

it is the subordination of one mystery by another, the conversion from one secret to another. For Patočka calls the Platonic conversion that turns an eternal gaze towards the Good a "new mystery of the soul." This time the mystery becomes more internal, it takes the form of an "interior dialogue of the soul." Although it does correspond to a first awakening of responsibility by means of the soul's relation to the Good, this coming-to-conscience still retains its mystical element; it still takes the form of a mystery, this time unacknowledged, undeclared, denied.⁴⁰

This mystical element, the mystery or the mysterious, both re-instituted and denied by philosophy, does not hold under its spell only Plato but extends, in Derrida's reading, to Hegel, and even as far as Heidegger.

Like those which will follow Plato's *anabasis* throughout a history of responsibility that capitalizes on secrecy [Derrida does not name them here explicitly but hints at them], the first conversion still retains within

³⁹ Patočka, *Heretical Essays*, 104.

⁴⁰ Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 8.

it something of what it seems to interrupt. The logic of this conservative rupture resembles the *economy of a sacrifice* that keeps what it gives up. Sometimes it reminds one of the economy of sublation [*relève*] or *Aufhebung*.⁴¹

Thus, we have arrived at Hegel whose ghost Derrida evokes often in his reading of Patočka's essay. Yet it does not stop with Hegel. In a paragraph that traces the substitution of religion by philosophy far beyond Plato—although, in an essential way, it always remains within the space and the inheritance of Platonism—Derrida outlines for us the genealogy of sacred secrecy all the way to the inner sanctum of Heidegger's *Being and Time*:

That very idea, namely, this *melete* or *epimeleia* [for and toward one's death, as discussed in the *Phaedo*] that one can rightly translate by "care" or "solicitude," opens the vein—and begins the vigil—within which will be inscribed the *Sorge* ("care") in the sense Heidegger confers on it in *Being and Time*. In particular let us think of the moment when Heidegger, following the tradition of the *cura* but without naming Plato, evokes nothing more than the *solicitude* of the Vulgate, Seneca, and the *merimna* of the Stoics, . . . which, however, like the Platonic *melete*, also signifies care, concern, and solicitude.⁴²

Thus, this story of replacement and substitution, which, more or less, overlaps with what we know as the history of philosophy, comes to be summarized by the "economy of a sacrifice that keeps what it gives up."⁴³ A sacrifice in the literal sense of *sacer facere*, of making sacred what has been desacralized, consecrating it again, but this time in the name of a new good, in the service of a different deity; but also a sacrifice in the sense we have already encountered at the opening scene of the *Phaedo*. We have come full circle to those crucial first pages of the narration of Socrates' last hours, confirming now that the operation that these pages set in motion, an operation we have described in detail, permeates not only the Platonic work but philosophy as such. The "economy of sacrifice" meant in the *Phaedo* three distinct transformations of the theme of sacrifice, culminating with the sacrifice of sacrifice as subsumed in the (sacrificial) discipline of philosophy.

As we look back to the scene of Socrates' sacrifice, I would like to remind the reader that Plato has always placed Socrates under the auspices of Apollo. It is during Apollo's holiday that the death of Socrates takes place. What Socrates offers as sacrificial victim to his patron god is nothing else than the orgiastic, that is, the Dionysian: the Minotaur slaughtered in the darkness of the labyrinth, the amazing darkness that he elsewhere recognizes inside himself when he compares himself to another chthonic monster, that of the Typhon (*Phaedrus*, 230a4). However,

⁴¹ Ibid., emphasis in the original.

⁴² Ibid., 12-13, emphasis in the original.

⁴³ Ibid., 8.

precisely because the economy of sacrifice “keeps what it gives up,” the Dionysian, orgiastic, demonic, and chthonic element is very much retained and, at times, it resurfaces under different guises, in Neo-Platonic theurgy, for example, in the Renaissance’s fascination with magic (Paracelsus), but also with mathematics (Galileo),⁴⁴ in the sacralization of the profane during the Enlightenment, and the religion of aesthetics to which German Idealism devoted itself.⁴⁵

How philosophy itself becomes a “new mythology,” having first turned itself against the old mythology and replaced it—even if that means only the “subordination of one mystery by another,⁴⁶—is explained by the mechanism of incorporation which, like that of digestion, the original and literal form of incorporation, seeks to turn what is outside to inside, interiorize the exterior, and assimilate the heterogeneous. According to Patočka, Platonism does precisely this when it incorporates the “traditional mysteries” of Greek religion and, in particular, its “orgiastic practices,” by reversing them, “elevating” them, and finally appropriating them: “Because of this incorporation that envelops demonic or orgiastic mystery, philosophy remains [even at its highest, most speculative moments] a sort of thaumaturgy.”⁴⁷ One detects in that last reference a scorn that means to remind us of how, historically, Platonism degenerated into theurgy at the hands of such thinkers as Iamblichus and Julian the Apostate. Such degeneration, of course, could not have been for Plato anything less than a betrayal of his efforts or, better yet, the revenge that the orgiastic takes in the form of a return of the concrete and the external, despite its sublation at the hands of the philosopher. Nevertheless, the truth of the matter is that all aspirations in elevating philosophy as “true” religion usually succeed at nothing more than turning philosophy into a sect. This is the insight of Nietzsche’s keen perception when he writes:

Among the Greeks several attempts to found new Greek religions failed—which speaks for the higher civilization of the Greeks even in rather early times. It suggests that there must have been in Greece at an early time large numbers of diverse individuals whose diverse needs and miseries could not be taken care of with a single prescription of faith and hope. Pythagoras and Plato, perhaps also Empedocles, and much earlier yet the Orphic enthusiasts, aimed to found new religions; and the first two had souls and talents that fitted them so obviously for the role of religious founders that one can scarcely marvel enough that they should have failed. Yet all they managed to found were sects.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Patočka draws the connection between the two phenomena in their common ancestry: “Galileo is, notoriously, a Platonist.” “Thaumaturgy, astrology, alchemy, and the Paracelsian medicine of the Renaissance are likewise Platonic.” In *Heretical Essays*, 110-1.

⁴⁵ “Religion is love of beauty” was Hölderlin’s memorable definition at the *Hyperion*.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴⁸ F. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, book III, section 149, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 194-5.

The attempt to found a new religion, or better yet, philosophy's attempt to establish itself as a religion in place of religion—always, of course, as a “religion without religion”⁴⁹—is always the same, even if at one time it emerges “among the Greeks” and another among the Germans. Yet, each time one can easily foresee Nietzsche's unheeded prophesy coming to pass. One such notorious effort was the ambitious program voiced in a particularly epic tone by the *Oldest System Program of German Idealism*:

At the same time we so often hear that the great masses must have a sensuous religion. Not only the great masses, but the philosopher needs it too. Monotheism of reason and heart, polytheism of the imagination and of art—this is what we need.⁵⁰

The two terms, polytheism and monotheism, should not confuse us. They have nothing to do with any form of theism, except, perhaps, with atheism.⁵¹ Indeed, between these two positions, which are artificially posed here as antithetical only so that they can later be declared as unified, there is no room for God, nor indeed for any kind of real transcendence, since, as the same text had made explicit, we “cannot seek either God or immortality outside” ourselves. Intellectual monotheism and aesthetic polytheism are, at bottom, two sides of the same coin of atheism. They are juxtaposed, rather cunningly, as two polarities which the philosophy of the new epoch to dawn must unite. That new epoch is, of course, anything but new, and rather quite ancient: it is indeed the vision of ancient Greece that is described here and the unity to be achieved between reason and the senses is nothing else than that old “unity” of Apollo (monotheism of reason) with Dionysus (polytheism of the imagination). Yet, as Olympiodorus' *Commentary to Phaedo* reminds us, Apollo is only the unification of Dionysus' scattered reflection, thus one can hardly talk of a real unity of opposites here.⁵²

Indeed, philosophy is nothing more than the sobering of the orgiastic, the Apollonian mask of Dionysus. “The same hand stages orgies and organizes

⁴⁹ An allusion to John Caputo's last chapter *On Religion* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001). Whether the post-modern “turn to religion” continues both faithfully and successfully the philosophical supersession of religion in a manner after Plato and Hegel, as discussed here, is the work of another day, even though an apparent continuity—from pre-modern Plato to post-modern Derrida through the modern Hegel—can be safely assumed.

⁵⁰ Translated by Dennis J. Schmidt in *On Germans and Other Greeks*, 85. See also note 32 above.

⁵¹ The argument that polytheism (especially Greek polytheism) is a contradiction that hides atheism, as is strict monotheism, was made successfully by Origen in his *Contra Celsus*, (see III, 73), as well as in his *Exhortation to Martyrdom*, §§ 5 and 32.

⁵² “When Dionysus had projected his reflection into the mirror, he followed it and was thus scattered over the universe. Apollo gathers him and brings him back to heaven, for he is the purifying God and truly the savior of Dionysus, and therefore he is celebrated as the ‘Dionysus-Giver’ [Διονυσιοδότης],” from Damascius' *Commentary on Phaedo*, translation by L.G. Westerink, *Platonic Texts and Translations* vol. III (The Prometheus Trust, 2009), 80-1. For an excellent genealogy of the philosophical affiliation with the cultus of Apollo or Dionysus from Socrates to Hegel but also beyond, to such figures like Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Bataille and even Levinas, see Desmond's *Beyond Hegel and Dialectic*, 90-94.

everydayness.”⁵³ The orgiastic is essentially boring, its holy mania fed by the unattainable desire to escape itself, its own boredom. Like Hegel’s unhappy consciousness,⁵⁴ the Dionysian is torn in and by itself. Yet, once its unhappiness is overcome in the “unity” that something like the self-determination of the *Oldest System Program* affords it, its Apollonian happiness is “masking the religious misery of its own delusion with self-determinating immanence.”⁵⁵ Truly, then, “[p]hilosophy isn’t something that comes to the soul by accident,”⁵⁶ it is rather something to which the soul arrives naturally. That man is, by nature, the “metaphysical animal” is only symptomatic of his orgiastic origins, which, like Oedipus, the metaphysician *par excellence*, insists on denouncing or forgetting. Accordingly, metaphysics is not any less orgiastic than the orgiastic itself, metaphysics is not any less blind than the blindfolded initiate to the mysteries—no: its blindness is its presupposition, yet, a presupposition that goes unacknowledged. Such duplicity within the philosophical endeavor tears philosophy between the denied, yet all-too-alive, orgiastic, and its allegiance to the Apollonian sun. Philosophy, thus, *becomes* the unhappy consciousness itself, yet nothing could reconcile it to itself, as the only thing that could, namely, religion, has been appropriated by that suffering philosophy herself.

⁵³ Patočka, in *Heretical Essays*, 114. See also Derrida’s comment that “[t]here is an affinity, or at least a synchrony, between a culture of boredom and an orgiastic one.” *The Gift of Death*, 35.

⁵⁴ See, Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, sections 206 and further.

⁵⁵ William Desmond, *Hegel’s God*, 55.

⁵⁶ Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 15.