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This paper traces the way Quentin Meillassoux's metaphysics of the absolute and his thought on contingency and the future coming of God both follows Hegel's notion of 'Geist,' in an unexpected manner, and creates an impasse that only a certain return to Hegel's ontoanthropology can overcome. The challenge which Hegel accepts and Meillassoux takes up is to make thinkable the possibility for the secular to bring forth absolute newness and the event of the absolute – moreover, for Hegel, anthropologically, *we* are *Geist*, we are contingency, the possibility of being-otherwise incarnate.

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In today's secular *commercium*, the prospect of the coming of God in any strong sense seems to be foreclosed, in word no less than in deed. At most, we are offered to wait and hope – indefinitely, of course, and without fulfillment. That is why, against the infinity of expectation postulated by postmodernity's messianism without God – which serves only to prolong the way things stand now by introducing the non-arrival of God into the very definition of the messianic – it may be a fruitful task to reinstate the event of the Absolute as that which can and does arrive, as therefore a *real* possibility not relegated to an inaccessible future, to grasp the possibility of *kairos* positively, as an absolute actuality, to trace a kind of 'realism' with regard to God, to the coming of God and the Resurrection. To grasp *kairos* positively – such is, I think, the aim of a 'speculative' philosophico-theological tradition inaugurated by Hegel, that endeavors to incorporate both the fact of the death of God and an ascension to the Absolute as that which makes the future event of God, and of new life out of death, possible. To speak of the future of Continental philosophy of religion is, in this tradition, to speak of the future of God himself. Moreover, to speak of God's future as possible and real in a Hegelian way – from a Hegelian perspective – is not simply to assert that God's future *depends* on us; it is to assert that we *are* the future of God. Such is the central thesis of my paper.

In order to elucidate this Hegelian perspective, to actualize it in the context of contemporary Continental philosophy of religion and its future, I'd like to take Quentin Meillassoux's recent work on the messianic and the arrival of God as my point of departure. I'd like to examine not just the way Meillassoux's thought on the future coming of God in a sense follows Hegel – in a quite unexpected manner, I think – but also the way it creates an impasse, a dead end which, in my view, a certain return to Hegel (or, more precisely, to Hegel's ontoanthropology) can overcome. To that end, in the second part of my paper I will attempt to explain why Hegel's anthropological theory of the Absolute's intensive *blind spots*, as I would like to call it, matters with regard to the philosophical concept of God and its future.

Geist and Contingency

In my view, Hegel's notion of spirit (*Geist*) can be understood as providing a parallel and an alternative to Meillassoux's notion of contingency as the possibility of being otherwise in its relation to the Absolute. Importantly, Meillassoux and Hegel share the similarity of premise which is *twofold*: first, God is dead; but, despite that, God – the kingdom of *Geist* in Hegel – is still to come. For both thinkers, the space devoid of God is a fact, the actual condition of all contemporary thinking. To say that "God is dead" is not to smuggle in a 'self-concealing' God in whose very self-concealment we locate his presence. The act of God himself consists, according to this tradition, not in a voluntary transition to a state of withdrawal, as Jean-Luc Marion claims

in *The Idol and the Distance*, but in a voluntary act of death, which is the event of Golgotha. Accordingly, the future event of God is a break with the world of death, not merely a special kind of relation to God's 'absence' understood as 'withdrawal'. The challenge which Hegel accepts and Meillassoux takes up is to make thinkable the possibility for the secular to bring forth the event of God and the Resurrection, to give rise to true community and new life out of death. The challenge is to conceive of the future coming of God from *within* the status quo. Even though, says Meillassoux, "God no longer exists"³, God is "possible and to come"⁴, that is, God is possible *as God*, not merely as a phantasmal absolute witness, ontologized regulative ideal or vigilant revolutionary community, a community of negativity. It is precisely the twofoldness asserted by Meillassoux – a 'divine inexistence' that grounds the possibility of the coming of God – which is Hegelian *à la lettre*. (By contrast, say, Slavoj Žižek's appropriation of Hegel's theology is fundamentally *un-Hegelian*: it quietly drops the second premise, that of God's actual arrival as God. Meillassoux is, paradoxically, more true to Hegel's intuition of God-to-come than is Žižek.)

Given this premise, the crucial move on Hegel's and Meillassoux's part is to postulate an ontological principle that grounds *this* world 'as it is' and, at the same time, makes possible the coming of God and the Resurrection, and hence to conceive of the God-event as at once 'immanent' and 'transcendent', so that the very ontological principle that institutes and implicitly underlies the world as it stands now – the principle called *contingency* in Meillassoux and *Geist* in Hegel – harbours the "real eventuality"⁵ of the world becoming otherwise, which is, for both Hegel and Meillassoux, the event of the Resurrection. That is, I believe, the reason why in Hegel's triadic structure of the philosophy of subjective spirit the Resurrection corresponds, onto-logically, to the actualization of *Geist*. In order to make thinkable the possibility of being otherwise this possibility must be ontologically inscribed into reality itself, including the reality of God's death. The current laws of nature for Meillassoux belong to the epoch of the death of God. What must be philosophically asserted is their contingency, defined by Meillassoux as precisely the possibility to "be otherwise"⁶ and corresponding fundamentally to Hegel's notion of *Geist*, the birth of new life, new "freedom" "from and within the natural"⁷, where both prepositions, "from" and "within", are equally important.

3 Meillassoux, *Spectral Dilemma*, p. 268.

4 Meillassoux, *Spectral Dilemma*, p. 269.

5 Meillassoux, *Spectral Dilemma*, p. 275.

6 Meillassoux, *After Finitude*, p. 39.

7 Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie des Geistes*, p. 19.

In other words, Meillassoux's concept of contingency is, in my view, in an important way similar *not* to Hegel's concept of contingency, but rather to his concept of *Geist*. As has been said, the event of the future coming of God in Meillassoux – the event of *Geist*, the coming of the kingdom of Spirit in Hegel – is at once immanent and transcendent, no less a 'moment' than an 'event'. To be sure, the God-event is an "emergence" "in rupture with the present laws of nature".⁸ And yet this rupture is, ontologically, only a 'moment' in the life of the Absolute: in Meillassoux, the very principle of contingency – the principle of "unreason" – constitutes "an absolute ontological property" of the Absolute⁹; in Hegel, it is *Geist* whose very death structures and overarches that which is alienated from it, infusing it with the possibility for becoming otherwise. Meillassoux's principle of "unreason" – that "everything ... is capable of actually becoming otherwise *without reason*"¹⁰ – can best be grasped through Hegel's notion of *Verstand*, 'the understanding'; by "reason", Meillassoux means precisely *Verstand*, the standpoint of formal and causally stable rationality. From a *verstaendig* perspective, the principle of unreason dictates the transcendent character of the coming of God: things cannot immanently become otherwise being governed as they are by immutable laws; such is the reason why all contingency-events happen "without reason".

Community and 'Speculative' Thinking

This is why, to even conceive of the possibility of the event of God, a different, "speculative" way of thinking is required, one able to ascend to the Absolute and, from that, grasp the absolutely real possibility for God, for the kingdom of *Geist* to come. The task is to overcome the world of *Verstand*, which is for Hegel – as well as for Meillassoux – the world of death: "the simple abstract identity of *Verstand* is death", says Hegel¹¹ – and yet to overcome it from within this world. True thought, for both Hegel and Meillassoux, is therefore a "redefined reason",¹² a speculative force directed towards a possible future and able to immanently cope with what *Verstand* – which upholds the world of "immutable laws of becoming"¹³ – regards as "chaos" or even a "miracle".¹⁴ *Geist*, says Hegel, is the last to be noticed by a human being, even though the

8 Meillassoux, *Spectral Dilemma*, p. 275.

9 Meillassoux, *After Finitude*, p. 53.

10 Meillassoux, *After Finitude*, p. 53.

11 Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie des Geistes*, p. 139.

12 Meillassoux, *Spectral Dilemma*, p. 273.

13 Meillassoux, *After Finitude*, p. 83.

14 "The speculative," avers Meillassoux, "releases us from the phenomenal stability of empirical constraints by elevating us to the purely intelligible chaos" (*After Finitude*, p. 83); the speculative truth is in this sense 'irrational', is chaos to the understanding. (It is in this sense that Meillassoux embraces "irrationality" in "The Immanence of the World Beyond.")

latter *is*, ontologically, *Geist* and even though the future truth of the world is also grasped as and through *Geist*. The ultimate ‘reason’ of the God-event is here the very existence of the Absolute as the absolute possibility of being otherwise. This world, the world of death, is not to be destroyed, but transformed. “New heaven and new earth” – “See, I am making all things new”¹⁵ – means a reconfiguration of *this* world, not a transition to a different, otherworldly one. Time does not end with it – if only in a certain *verstaendig* sense which identifies time as a whole with the time of our current epistemic habits; the arrival of God is a change *within* history. What Meillassoux calls the “necessity of contingency” is, we may say, the necessary contingency of *chronos* able to give rise to *kairos*. The transition from *chronos*, an indifferent succession of “nows”, to *kairos*, the contingent disrupture of *chronos*, is the birth of a new time successive to this, born within it, nurtured by the very principle that sustains this state of the world. Meillassoux describes the coming of God in terms of “virtuality” which he opposes to “potentiality” which, for him, implies presence; but in fact what Meillassoux calls “virtuality” is, ontologically, an absolute, more radical kind of potentiality the actualization of which runs contrary to the laws of the space of God's death; and in this sense, *Geist* is also a virtuality, that which contradicts the current configuration of the world and the actualization of which is the coming of the kingdom of God.

“We seek,” says Meillassoux, “to think of a God who is not only the agent of eschatology, but also its result”,¹⁶ this result being, to supplement Meillassoux’s point, the Resurrection – the new life – as the universal event. God is to be understood here, in a “minimal” sense,¹⁷ precisely as the power of resurrection, so that the coming of God consists in nothing other than the “future rebirth of the departed”¹⁸ which Meillassoux calls “essential mourning”, “the completion of mourning for essential spectres”, for the dead who died “terrible deaths” and now “haunt” the living.¹⁹ The “spectral dilemma” is Meillassoux's way of reformulating the underlying *ontological* problematic – it is, so to speak, an ethical point of reference for the ontology – the ontology of contingency-*Geist* – that is 'Hegelian' in the sense outlined here.

Apart from being a death of death, the coming of God is turned by both thinkers into the principle of a community to come wherein the living are reconciled with the dead – not the dead as still dead, but the dead as resurrected. That is why, for Hegel, the event of the Resurrection,

15 Rev 21:5.

16 Meillassoux, *The Immanence of the World Beyond*, p. 463.

17 Meillassoux, *Spectral Dilemma*, p. 270.

18 Meillassoux, *Spectral Dilemma*, p. 271.

19 Meillassoux, *Spectral Dilemma*, p. 262.

the event of *Erinnerung* – the re-collection of the departed, of the world of death – logically precedes and grounds the institution of the true *communitas*, just as the Philosophy of Subjective Spirit in Hegel’s *Encyclopedia* grounds that of Objective Spirit – it is not reducible to the latter, as Zizek assumes. In Zizek, there is in principle no overcoming of the state of Death, so that the kingdom of Spirit comes, in the form of a community, within the world of death without any rupture of being-otherwise; the event of Death is for Zizek final and irreversible. As a consequence, Zizek’s revolutionary community is a community of Death, not of the Resurrection, as in Hegel’s and Meillassoux’s idea of the community-to-come. It would also do well to remember that, even though the Resurrection for Hegel did happen as a singular event, a Christ-event, it has not yet taken place as the *universal* event. That the Resurrection has not, or not yet, happened is, I think, the (perfectly 'orthodox') 'truth' of all the 'death of God' theologies, including Zizek's.

Meillassoux’s Impasse

By reenacting, within a different framework, Hegel’s speculative move – by going beyond or ‘outside’ the phenomenal in search of the ontologically absolute and then making this absolute the foundation of the God-event – Meillassoux’s project, as he himself acknowledges, is in a certain sense “pre-critical”.²⁰ Moreover, in Meillassoux’s ontology contingency does not apply to itself. It is always outside itself, so that everything is contingent apart from contingency; the possibility of being otherwise, the Absolute cannot but exist; hence Meillassoux’s insistence on the “necessity of contingency”. In other words, contingency is completely free from self-reference and self-reflection; by making contingency necessary, Meillassoux disposes of self-reflection as a characteristic of the Absolute, which in turn allows him, we may say, to distinguish between *an* event and *the* event which is the coming of God, as well as between the virtual and its actualization. There simply wouldn’t be any place for the virtual within the transparent logical space of reflection.

It is, however, precisely the connection between an event and the event which ultimately remains, in my view, the *weakest* point in Meillassoux. For Meillassoux, once we postulate the possibility of *an* event, we must inevitably admit the real possibility of *the* event; no other connection exists for him between the ontological principle of contingency and the event of the Resurrection, whereas in Hegel they are bound together within the concept of *Geist*. Meillassoux’s ethical aim is first and foremost to rekindle hope. And yet, *despite* that and contrary to his own ethical intentions, by ontologically delinking God from the Absolute, by

²⁰ Meillassoux, *After Finitude*, p. 7.

divorcing contingency from the concept of God, Meillassoux leaves in fact little to no place for hope. As Hegel would put it, there is, in contingency as Meillassoux understands it, hope in itself, but not *for us*. If God is simply externally bound by contingency – no matter if this bond is itself contingent – *there is no hope*. Not only may the God-event *not* take place – in which case we fall back into the same position from which we sought to escape, into the infinite and empty waiting, in death, for the (non-)arrival of God – but, more importantly, there is in fact no rationale in Meillassoux for assuming that the coming of God, even if it does really happen, would yield any kind of *lasting* advent of justice; there is always the possibility for the arrival of God to be contingently *reversed*, and for new “essential spectres” to appear. One possible way out of this dead end is precisely a Hegelian one: it is only by linking back – ontologically, through the concept of *Geist*, and anthropologically, through a certain kind of *praxis*, a certain practice of transformation (for there is no practice in Meillassoux) – the principle of God to the principle of contingency we may really hope for God to have a future. To understand this, however, further interpretative remarks must first be made.

A Throw of the Dice

Meillassoux’s latest book, *The Number and the Siren*, describes a certain configuration of the divine, or the Absolute, in terms of diffusion, Chance and Infinity that serves the purpose of decoding the “unique Number” evoked in Stéphane Mallarmé’s poem “A Throw of the Dice.” Importantly, Meillassoux undertakes to decipher the Number encoded in Mallarmé’s poem without writing it off as merely a “pure poetic metaphor”, but rather seeking to analyze “how it works” and what its “structure” is. It is not just that “he who understands the meaning of such a Number thus understands the meaning of the drama that plays out in the poem”²¹ – it is not only, or even primarily, a question of meaning: from a philosophical standpoint, the task is to theorize the very “principle of encipherment” at work in Mallarmé’s poem and put it in a wider (an *absolute*) context, which is at the same time the context of Meillassoux’s own thinking of the Absolute, to bring together the principle of the Number and the principle of the Absolute. The question is: “How did a simple, elementary secret code acquire a fundamental poetical importance for Mallarmé?” – and, by extension, why should it be of importance for us today?

Mallarmé’s *Coup de dés* focuses on the scene of a shipwreck: a ship that drowns leaves above the water only its shadow (that haunts the place of its disappearance) and a ‘Master’, of whom we know nothing except his hesitation over whether or not to throw the dice that he is holding in his hand. We are not told whether the dice have been thrown as the Master disappears into a

²¹ Meillassoux, *The Number and the Siren*, p. 20.

whirlpool. The poem closes with the hypothetical possibility, punctuated by the word “perhaps” and described as “consecrated”, of an emergence of a stellar constellation, as if set in motion by a celestial throw. The Master is identified by Meillassoux with the Poet, and it is this configuration – the dice, the shipwreck, the Master’s hesitation, and a possible future newness in the form of a new constellation initiated by Chance itself – a new constellation of the divine – that is, according to the interpretation put forward by Meillassoux, the configuration of a “diffusion”, or, in other words, a “wager”. Not only does the poem *describe* a wager, but it *is* itself a wager, in which the Poet, identified with the enigmatic Master, wagers on the “unique Number” encoded in the poem in order to attain to Infinity, provided his wager is successful. And it is precisely this infinitization of the wager – Meillassoux insists and purports to demonstrate that it was indeed successful for Mallarmé, that he did attain to the infinite via the Number – it is this infinitization that makes it important, even ontologically important, for Meillassoux.

In other words, for Meillassoux, the importance lies in the very structure that Mallarme proposes in his concept of Chance, brought close by Meillassoux to his own concept of contingency. Meillassoux calls this structure a “diffusion of the divine”,²² the Eucharistic mode of presence in absence, grounded in the past and orientated towards a possible future: “The divine is there, among the elect, in the very host – but is not yet returned”.²³ And so the answer to the question “*Why* the number?” is, to attain to Infinity through Chance, or even through *becoming Chance*. To wager on Chance is not to sacrifice the Absolute, but to diffuse it. Mallarmé’s wager was to encode the Number in his poem, the unique Number that *is* Chance itself and reveals the Infinite. That also means that, by itself, alone, a diffusion is “not enough” – it must be an infinite diffusion and infinite Chance. It is not enough to diffuse divinity into the Number that embodies Chance – it must be an infinite embodiment. The task is to “confer the dimension of infinity upon the risk,”²⁴ to create an “infinite structure that permits Chance to be at the same time all possible options of a dice-throw, its failures and successes alike.”²⁵

But if the throw, which always results in just one option, finitizes Chance, how can there be a throw that would result in all options at once? The solution consists in “displacing the demand that the gesture (of throwing or not throwing) be infinite, onto the Number itself”.²⁶ Only thus, insists Meillassoux, can the resulting Number “present the hesitation” inherent to the moment

22 E.g., Meillassoux, *The Number and the Siren*, p. 132.

23 Meillassoux, *The Number and the Siren*, p. 111.

24 Meillassoux, *The Number and the Siren*, p. 127.

25 Meillassoux, *The Number and the Siren*, p. 128.

26 Meillassoux, *The Number and the Siren*, p. 138.

before the throw, which initiates “a ‘shaking’, a ‘quavering’ of the dice, a moment whose ambiguity contains the contraries ... in at least *virtual* fashion”.²⁷ To make this all-encompassing virtual Infinity a real eventuality, however, to throw the dice, is “to produce the Number – but a ‘unique Number’ supporting in itself the virtually contradictory structure of Chance”, a Number that “would be, itself alone, all the options, all alternatives”.²⁸

The Absolute’s Blind Spots

To grasp the Absolute as Chance also means, according to Meillassoux, that, in order to truly make newness possible, the Absolute must necessarily precede any self-reference. As such, it can only be blind to itself in its own beginning. It would seem that things are different with Hegel; this difference would be particularly asserted by those who tend to interpret Hegel by overemphasizing his ‘reflective’ moves. To be sure, it may be tempting to read the Absolute in Hegel as an absolutized reflexivity and thus to extend the peculiar traits of the *Wesenslogik* – the second part of the *Science of Logic* – onto the whole of Hegel’s thought. For a different Hegel, however, we need to turn, in my view, to his Berlin Philosophy of Spirit understood not as a linear ascension from nature to *Geist*, but rather as an emergence of the world of spirit, in a manner reminiscent of Fichte, from *within* an ‘onto-anthropological’ point of the Absolute. Hegel’s Anthropology – probably the most obscure and underappreciated yet crucial part of his Philosophy of Spirit, his doctrine of an individual human soul – is usually read as having to do with the realm of nature, not *Geist*. In Catherine Malabou’s reading of Hegel’s Anthropology, for example, the realm of spirit is first opened up at the stage of *habit*, that is, almost at the very end of the Anthropology section. Hegel’s own clearly drawn distinction between Philosophy of Nature and Philosophy of Spirit – which begins precisely with the beginning of Anthropology – is thereby erased, made meaningless by Malabou. The same holds true for Slavoj Žižek’s reading of Hegel’s Anthropology in his recent chapter on Hegel in *Mythology, Madness, and Laughter: Subjectivity in German Idealism*. Žižek and Malabou both seem to mistake *Geist*’s blindness for the absence of *Geist*.

Contrary to Malabou and Žižek, I argue that there *is* an important reason why Hegel includes Anthropology into his Philosophy of Spirit, not of Nature. It is no coincidence that the Absolute Spirit makes its decisive appearance right at the beginning of Hegel’s Anthropology in the form of (what Hegel calls) “a play of the Absolute Spirit with itself”, as an impetus which “posits”²⁹ an individual intensive point – Fichte would call it a “point of individuality”,

²⁷ Meillassoux, *The Number and the Siren*, p. 129.

²⁸ Meillassoux, *The Number and the Siren*, p. 138.

²⁹ Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie des Geistes*, p. 31.

*Individualitätspunkt*³⁰ – which is a human soul, this “point of individuality” being eventually no less than a place of knowledge’s “actuality”, *Wirklichkeit*. It is here, I contend, that the realm of *Geist* – and thus of the possibility of being otherwise – commences, and not, say, at the stage of habit, as in Malabou’s reading. And that’s why the *whole* of Anthropology is incorporated by Hegel into Philosophy of Spirit. Anthropology is, in Hegel, the realm of the virtual, of *Geist* as already *Geist* but not yet actualized. The German language has a wonderful word – *Bestimmung* – meaning both “definition” and “goal”, the word that signifies for Hegel precisely this kind of inbetweenness, the fact that *Geist* is, so to speak, on its way.

This anthropological point – this “intensive form of individuality”³¹, as Hegel calls it – is pre-reflective and at the same time belongs in the Absolute; self-reflection is *not*, in Hegel, an inextricable property of the Absolute *qua* the absolute beginning. Otherwise, Anthropology would not at all be possible as part of Hegel’s Philosophy of Spirit. This starting point is blind to itself; and yet it is already *Geist*. It is, says Hegel, “the immediate spirit”,³² and so it “must be grasped as spirit”.³³ In fact, the dividing line in the *Encyclopedia* between Philosophy of Nature and Philosophy of Spirit is not really a *transition* – which is the traditional way of viewing it – but rather a *pure difference*, a hiatus between nature and *Geist*, between the (seemingly) unchangeable *status quo* and the possibility of new life and new community. It is as if, in Hegel, the generative gap between Philosophy of Nature and Anthropology acted in *suspension* of the natural order so as to *inaugurate* the spiritual one. Spirit, says Hegel in his lectures on Philosophy of History, begins “from spirit”,³⁴ and the same words that Hegel says of the birth of a human child apply to the ontoanthropological birth of every human soul: ‘The birth is a *saltus*, not merely a gradual change’.³⁵ The first form of spirit is precisely an individual’s *body*, Anthropology being the pre-reflective materiality of *Geist*.

The rupture with the natural, the *saltus* which institutes Hegel’s Anthropology is already *an* event of *Geist*, even though it is not yet *the* event, not yet the universal actuality of the kingdom of spirit and the Resurrection. And this is precisely the paradox: that spirituality is introduced by Hegel as *a blind spot*, an individual blind spot belonging in the Absolute, and therefore a blind spot *of* the Absolute. In this, Hegel goes beyond the cartesian transparency of self-reflection in order precisely to bridge the lacuna between the possibility of being otherwise (the Absolute)

30 Fichte, *Darstellung der Wissenschaftslehre* (1801/1802), p. 202 (“Individualitätspunkte”).

31 Hegel, *Enz* §405A. (*Theorie Werkausgabe* 10:125).

32 Hegel, *Enz* §387 (*Theorie Werkausgabe* 10:38); §387Z. (*Theorie Werkausgabe* 10:40).

33 Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie des Geistes*, p. 11. Cf. *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie des Geistes*, pp. 3, 20, 30.

34 Cited from Stederoth, *Hegels Philosophie des subjektiven Geistes*, pp. 106-107. Cf. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie des Geistes*, p. 52: ‘[G]leich nach der Geburt zeigt es [=das Kind] sich als Menschliches’.

35 Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie des Geistes*, p. 52.

and the God-event, the lacuna we saw in Meillassoux, as the main weakness of Meillassoux's project. Being a point of actuality without which no universal reality of spirit would be possible, an individuality embodies both the necessity of its being as it is *and* the possibility of becoming otherwise. Not only does Hegel say that *Geist* begins only from *Geist*, he also insists that *Geist* exists now only as singularity, *Einzelheit*.³⁶ Contingency is thus, from this Hegelian perspective, actualized only in and through individual, singular events of contingency – all bearing testimony to the possibility of *the* event, the coming of God. In Hegel, it is *we* who are contingency, our *Bestimmung* being the Absolute as the absolute event.

The Future of God

And this is also where Hegel's Christology – read as logically centred on the Resurrection, rather than the Death, of Christ – comes into play. Whereas in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* God is revealed as 'self-consciousness', in the later *Philosophy of Spirit* God is revealed, anthropologically, as a singular *intensity*, "the actual man", "der wirkliche Mensch",³⁷ that is, as Christ. The onto-anthropo-logical development of every individual human soul to the actualization of *Geist*, to becoming otherwise (what Hegel calls "free spirit"), is a path to the Resurrection, an *imitatio Christi* which is at the same time a transfiguration. Instead of self-evidence, Hegel places self-transfiguration, self-transformation at the heart of his Christian anthropology – and in this he radically breaks with what Michel Foucault calls "the Cartesian moment".

For Hegel, to be otherwise is to be transfigured ('in Spirit'); and it is in this sense that Christ "introduced all newness by introducing himself" (Irinaeus): that which happened singularly, must now happen universally; this universality is, however, nothing other than a manifold of local intensive events of transfiguration, all made ontologically possible by the event of Christ. This possibility exists as a virtuality, as that which contradicts the secular space. The "secular" is to be understood here as the epoch of God's death, which *is* the messianic epoch, one in which the Resurrection has not yet taken place as the universal event. All this invests the time of God's death – the secular time – with an unparalleled importance, for, from the Hegelian perspective, it is precisely *this* time which is that of the possibility of change which is the possibility of the God-event. It is here, within this logical gap between the death and the Resurrection, the death and the coming of God – the gap in which we live now – that the possibility of the true cult, transfiguration, as well as of the community-to-come, is opened up. The epoch of the messianic,

³⁶ Hegel, *Enz* §391 (Theorie Werkausgabe 10:51).

³⁷ Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie des Geistes*, p. 31.

the *in-between*, is inaugurated by the Incarnation of Christ – which, says Hegel, made possible “the definition of *Geist* as *this one*”³⁸ – followed by his Death – which made this definition, *Bestimmung*, and thus the world of death, universal by including every human being in the Absolute as its blind spot and a point of its future actualization (and thus made possible Hegel’s Anthropology in which *Geist* actually exists only as a singularity) – this epoch is to be closed by the universal actuality of the Resurrection, the arrival of the kingdom of *Geist*. In theological terms, contingency – *Geist* – is the cross of Christ, and we are carrying it thanks precisely to the ontoanthropological fact that the Absolute first became blind after the death of Christ – and now we are *Geist*’s, the Absolute’s blind spots through which the God-event, the kingdom of Spirit, is to be realized.

The Christ-event makes possible a singular multiplicity, an onto-anthropological multitude that now presents the Absolute and, to go back to the structure of Chance that Meillassoux discovers in Mallarmé, the Absolute’s hesitation before the throw of the dice and the production of the unique Number that is, in Hegel, the Number of multitude that we are. We, as multitude, are the Number. As multitude, *we* are “all the options, all alternatives”. But if Meillassoux’s Chance cannot produce *actual*, not virtual contradictions, Hegel’s *Geist* can: the Absolute Spirit “oscillates endlessly”³⁹ between all the individualities that constitute its multiplicity, and the individualities themselves are actual – even when the Absolute itself is latent. The Absolute is now *in-between*, and it is this *in-between* that immanently produces the anthropological individuality that serves as the place of knowledge’s future eventuality. The Absolute is the milieu in which we are born. Without first Christ and now us, the Absolute would be indefinite, a hesitant Absolute. We, however, are Chance as the unique Number, the multiplicity that is the Absolute’s throw of the dice which, if we think of it as a directed throw, goes in *all* directions at once – and not because any direction is equivalent to any other, but because there need to be all directions at once in order to enact the real eventuality of the Absolute. The Absolute is Chance without actuality, a shaking of the dice, a wager, a “play of the Absolute Spirit with itself.” However, without actualization it would not be all things at once, would not be able to produce, in reality, infinity and newness.

It is in us that the *infinitezation* of the Absolute after the Death of God occurs, and this infinity is both real and determinate. In his Death, the impulse of Christ becomes a *thing*, a world of things and thing-ness, a world of death, described phenomenologically by Hegel as the world of *objects* of consciousness. It is only the Resurrection that transforms this Christ-thing into a Christ-event.

38 Hegel, *Theorie Werkausgabe* 12:393. Cf. *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, 4:15 (“als Diesen”), as well as *Enz* §569 (*Theorie Werkausgabe* 10:376) (“Einzelheit”).

39 Meillassoux, *The Number and the Siren*, p. 133.

Finally, through the Anthropology, the singular impulse of the Christ-event (the Resurrection) is combined with and strengthened by all other soul-individualities, bringing about a Christ-centric community of multiplicity, a Eucharistic singular multitude. This multitude is unmediated (an individual soul is posited directly by the Absolute, in a *saltus* from nature, not mediated by the latter) and immanent (there is no transcendence anymore, or at most there is only a transcendental transcendence – God as the logical foundation of consciousness). In his Death, Christ ‘failed’ as the Absolute because he had to choose, *and thus finitize himself*. The Death of God is a finitizing gesture, but the Resurrection displaces the demand of infinity onto Chance, or contingency, embodied in the unique Number that we are – a number “at once immutable and quavering, both structured and fleeting”.⁴⁰

Hegel’s infinitization of the absolute wager is thus notably different from Meillassoux’s in that it proceeds through an anthropological multitude. Meillassoux’s ontological *passivity* stands in contrast to Hegel’s ontoanthropological *practice* of the Absolute. As a whole, Hegel’s encyclopedic system may be an attempt to code the ‘non-codeable’ total, but Anthropology is where the initial hesitation is revealed and theorized, and different avenues open up – where nothing has *yet* been “premeditated”. As Chance, we are the absolute’s singular *body* which is the locus of the speculative as orientated towards a new future *from within* an intensive corporeal individuality. The Absolute’s singularity can only be positively singular (that is, be all options at once) as a multiplicity of individualities, so that the Absolute is thereby affirmed *locally* yet *infinitely*. This configuration describes, again, “a diffusion of the divine”. In Hegel, the absolute is among, or rather in-between us, as hesitant, virtual, but not yet actualized, so that we are now the anthropological reality of Chance. To wager on Chance is not to sacrifice the Absolute, but to diffuse it among individual intensities – such is the *microphysics* of the Absolute offered by Hegel’s Anthropology. Every point of the Absolute’s actuality is at the same time a productive force, an intensity, creating the tension that is the Absolute.

To turn again to the text of Mallarmé’s poem, in the aftermath of a shipwreck that is the Death of God, in its haunting shadow, the Master, or the Absolute, hesitates to throw the dice – a virtual throw that is at the same time a non-throw because it does not produce one single result, does not finitize itself, but rather results in an infinite Number that is, in this Hegelian reading, the anthropological multitude, that upholds the possibility that *perhaps* there can emerge a new stellar constellation – the possibility of the universal event of the Resurrection and the kingdom of Spirit. The Number thus “seems to be the anticipated result of throwing the dice, but also that of the storm and the shipwreck.” It is the shipwreck, the Death that contains “the promise of the

40 Meillassoux, *The Number and the Siren*, p. 139.

Number.” To overcome the world of Death and attain to a new infinity, a multiplicity is required. As Mallarme himself wrote, under the influence of Hegel, “...it is chance that accomplishes its proper Idea in affirming or denying itself. [...] It [...] permits Infinity to be.”⁴¹

Mallarmé’s driving concern was to create a modern ritual “capable of extracting from the Catholic Mass the secret of its perennial power”⁴² – it was, in other words, a *cultic* concern. Mallarmé even went so far as to specify the form of the cult that he wished to substitute for that of Catholicism, describing in detail the new ceremony centered around a Book. In Hegel, the multiplicity itself is, in its origin, structure and goal, *cultic* as orientated towards the future of the divine. This structure, however, can only be grasped by a ‘speculative’ kind of thinking, one able to ascend to the Absolute that is Chance, contingency, the possibility to be otherwise. In the words of Mallarme, “every thought emits a Throw of Dice.” For Hegel, we are (embodied) thought, and we are the throw. As Chance, as the throw of the dice, we are the principle of speculation, of speculative thinking incarnate. We are thus the very act that we think through. It would seem that, diffused among all the various individuals with their distinct goals, relations and trajectories, the Absolute could lose itself forever. Yet this diffusion is a mode of ‘absent presence’ orientated towards the possible future, and as such, it is (the body of) Chance, it is contingency, a wager and a play rather than a pure nothing. And therefore a throw of the dice never will abolish Chance.

In Meillassoux, a “thinking being” – the “ultimate” being – “knows his own contingency”⁴³; in Hegel, we may say, a thinking being knows, moreover, that *he* or *she* is contingency. In this Hegelian *Gemeinwesen*, every individuality is a virtuality; the Resurrection has not yet taken place as a universal event, God is still dead, and now, according to Hegel, *we* are *Geist*, *we* are contingency, the possibility of being-otherwise incarnate; it is *we* who must bring about the universal actuality of the Resurrection which universally repeats and, in this repetition, brings to completion Christ’s own (singular) Resurrection, instituting the true community, community of the Resurrection. And since the Absolute for Hegel – the possibility of new life – actually exists only in and through a “plural vastitude” of singularities, this repetition of the Christ-event, the Christ-*saltus* – this very repetition *is*, in an important sense, the Absolute. And it is in this – ontoanthropological – sense that we are God’s future.

41 Meillassoux, *The Number and the Siren*, pp. 29-30.

42 Meillassoux, *The Number and the Siren*, p. 149.

43 Meillassoux, *The Immanence of the World Beyond*, p. 462.

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