

## Theodicee in Hegel's Shorter Logic<sup>1</sup>

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Many have the opinion that western philosophy is an appendix to Plato. This statement is true only up to G.W.F Hegel. Western Philosophy after Hegel is different free interpretations of Hegelian contributions to philosophy. Most of these interpretations are highly partial. More over many interpretations of Hegel's ideas are erroneous<sup>2</sup>.

For example Karl Marx<sup>3</sup> and Frederic Engels introduced Hegel as an idealist. But after reading the work shorter logic V.I Lenin commented that he could not find any idealism in shorter logic. Moreover, he says that it is materialism<sup>4</sup>. Actually Hegel harmonised idealism and materialism through speculative philosophy. According to Hegel logically derived nature of a reality and the nature of reality actually exist unifies together in *Idea*. In his own words "The idea is truth in itself and for itself – the absolute unity of notion and objectivity" (Hegel's logic, 213). Here notion represents logical derivation about nature of reality and objectivity means the reality that exists; the truth is the correspondence between idea and reality. These types of interpretations made by Karl Marx are recurring continuously in history while interpreting Hegel. Though his philosophy is entirely different from Plato and Marx, Karl Popper treated him as a person with them as an enemy to open society. But a reading of entire collections of Hegel reveals that Hegel is a champion of concrete freedom. Concrete freedom means freedom actualised and imagined. Imagined freedom for him is caprice. Why Hegel is misinterpreted continuously?

### Theologian or Philosopher

Without understanding the real aim of each text written by Hegel, the entire text becomes ambiguous. While reading a fiction or viewing a motion picture, many of the initial incidents narrated or presented in a motion

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<sup>1</sup> Shorter Logic is taken from the *Encyclopedia of philosophical sciences* by William Wallace, first published in 1873. Quotations in this article are taken from the book *Hegel's Logic* published by Marxist internet archive published in 2009. It is the part one of the *Encyclopedia of philosophical Sciences*.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Houlgate, *The Hegel Reader*, Blackwell publishers Ltd, Oxford, 1999, p1-2.

<sup>3</sup> Forward to the second German edition of *The Capital*

<sup>4</sup> "In the most idealistic of Hegel's works there is the least idealism and the most materialism. Contradictory, but a fact!" V I Lenin, *Collected works*, volume 38

picture, will understand only at the end of the fiction. After reading the Hegelian text, reader should read again from the beginning, through the perspective of the end of the text. The views of the text from the beginning and from end are different. Hegel says “only in the end of the proposition empty beginning becomes actual knowledge”<sup>5</sup>.

My hypothesis is that the main end of different texts of Hegel is to prove that Jesus is the centre of history. So his general aim is theology and not philosophy. Establishing Jesus as the centre of history he never uses the biblical text as source material. He uses the nature of reality (philosophy) and nature of knowledge growth (epistemology) to prove his aim. Hegelian projects are an attempt of a theologian, to prove the centrality of Jesus in history by using philosophy. All his works are theodicee. This study is an attempt to narrate theodicee in Hegel’s shorter logic.

Hegel begins his academic profession by writing a treatise criticising Christianity. In that work he establishes that Christianity is becomes an appendix of Jewish religion which actually rejected by Jesus Christ. However, he rejected his earlier proposal and wrote another treatise on Christianity named “Essence of Christianity”. In that work he realises that Christ rejected the “legality” and tried to establish a kingdom on earth based on Love. He defines love as “Love is the union of union and non union”.

## **Theology by using signs of Philosophy**

Hegel uses the ideas in Bible without using quotations from it. He considers trinity as the core principle of all reality in this universe. Few examples from shorter logic reveal this end of Hegel. For achieving this aim he defines nature of reality as the nature of Jesus Christ as explained by theologians.

Firstly, the chapter preliminary notion of *Shorter logic* the concept original sin is explained in his own way. He interprets fall of man from parousia – moving away from natural harmony – as a natural process. Fall from original innocence gave the awareness to man that knowledge is divine. And thus he realised that he bears divine image. (*Hegel’s logic* 24n)

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<sup>5</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*,23

He says that syllogism is the truth of all beings. Syllogism is the coupling together of universal and particular. The syllogistic form is a universal form of all things. Everything that exists is a particular, which couples together the universal and the singular. The syllogistic structure is logic and he continues that this logic (logos) is in the heart and lips of every object in this universe. (*Hegel's logic*, 24) A non-Christian reader seldom understand that the above statement is a quotation from St. Paul<sup>6</sup>.

Secondly the main contribution of his work *Phenomenology of Spirit* is an interpretation of the first four chapters of Old Testament. Phenomenology explains the different steps through which a man realises himself. In eastern world many sages used the method of contemplating on one own self to know one's own self. They never considered (a) work-transforming nature by labour and (b) interaction with another as a method of achieving the self awareness. No philosopher before Hegel identified that self awareness is achieved through work and relationship with other human beings. By interpreting original sin, Hegel says, human beings realised that "While dealing with outside things (nature and other human beings) man is dealing with himself" (*Hegel's logic*, 24). Transforming the self by transforming nature and other is the way through which man reaches to self-consciousness according to Hegel<sup>7</sup>. The other as the mediator for reaching to self consciousness is the basic proposition of the book of genesis "Adam said, "This is now bone of bones and flesh of my flesh"<sup>8</sup>. in Hegel's own words, "in the other sees its own self"<sup>9</sup> "for this other is itself"<sup>10</sup>

Thirdly the main emphasis of Hegelian theory of being is revolved on the fulcrum, self negation. Being negate itself and transforming itself into some other reality and progressing towards an end, which is inside the being as germ. This process of negation, assimilation of riches in previous stage<sup>11</sup> and transforming into another is considered as the immanent nature of all realities in world. In his own words "Thus the life of god and divine congrition may well be spoken of as a disporting o love with itself, but this idea sinks into mere edification, and even insipidity, if it lacks the

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<sup>6</sup> St Paul, Letter to Romans,10:8

<sup>7</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*,195,179,180.

<sup>8</sup> Genesis,2:23

<sup>9</sup>Hegel,Op cit, 179.

<sup>10</sup> Hegel, Op cit, 180.

<sup>11</sup> Hegel, History of Philosophy, Introduction.

seriousness the suffering, the patience, and the labour of negative”<sup>12</sup>. Jesus says negate one self and follow me. St.Paul says that god negated himself and become man and gone through death and transformed into nothingness and resurrected. Hegel says being negated itself and become nothingness and transforms into another. What remains in the process is essence and self conscious essence is subject and that is Man. So god is also self conscious essence or subject<sup>13</sup>.

The process of negating the self and transforming into the other by annihilating and assimilating the riches in the earlier stage is dialectics, is the life of reason, actuality and God. Hegel uses the term “*Aufhebung*” which unifies two opposite meanings negation and assimilation (Hegel’s logic,86,96) Dialectics is change with assimilating the riches in the earlier stage of a being. This change is progress. But the change without assimilating the earlier stage is decay. So change can be either decay or death. Plato viewed change as decay and death. Due to this error Plato defined God and soul as changeless static reality<sup>14</sup>. Plato also considered soul as changeless and body as changing reality.

Church fathers of antiquity used Platonic categories to interpret life of Jesus and Christians. The resultant answers of church fathers viewing life of Christ through the lens of Plato is the fundamental dogmas of church. Thus dogma made God a changeless substance rather than a subject. This theology does not corresponds with the teachings of Christ who teaches that God is a reality which is always active, self negating and disporting love. Hegel says that due to this basic error in philosophy – defining nature of reality as changeless – Augustine, Aquinas, Descartes, Spinoza, Jacobi and Kant failed to realise the true nature of god. The definition of Kant that thing in itself is not possible to know, indirectly says that it is impossible to know God. Hegel tries to rectify the errors in theology by redefining the nature of reality as a process dialectically - *aufheben* – moving towards the end. In Hegel’s philosophy, change and changelessness is unified(Hegel’s Logic,32).

## **Science of Logic or Logos**

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<sup>12</sup> Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit, 19.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 23.

<sup>14</sup> Plato, *Republic*,381c.

The text shorter logic can be divided into two parts. The first five parts of the text shorter logic critically explains existing theories of logic. The remaining part is Hegel's contribution to knowledge of nature of reality .(a) Doctrine of being (b) Doctrine of essence and (c) Doctrine of notion and idea explains Hegelian view about reality.

His analysis is centred to syllogism. For him syllogism is the basic nature of notion(cocept) and reality. Syllogistic structure has three parts (a) universal part, (b)individual or particular part and (c) the meditation between universal and particular. Using the traditional example (a) All men are mortal – universal statement (b) Socrates is a man – meditation and (c) Socrates is mortal – Particular.

He says that all realities God, man, universe and all particular beings in this universe is following this structure (Hegel's Logic 24n). Take the case of a fruit. Fruit is a universal reality. We cannot purchase fruit from market. But grapes, orange, pineapple etc are available. So in grapes universality (fruit) and particularity (peculiarities of grapes) are unified and formed grape (individuality).

God the father (universe) Son the Jesus (particular) Holy spirit as the mediation between father and son, combines together forms single subject(Hegel's Logic 161). Hegel also solves the problem of Deism and Pantheism logically by using Syllogistic structure. Jews god and nature are two entities opposing each other and is known as Deism. On the other hand Greeks agree that god and nature are fused together and named as pantheism. Is Christianity a Deistic religion or pantheistic religion? Till this date Christian theologians are with Deism. But Hegel says that god and universe are two entities. God is universal and universe in particular both are unified into one by sprit which is active in universe, man, and in history. Spirit tries to establish Jesus the embodiment of logos or notion in history. For him history is the activity of spirit establishes logos or logic notion through time. god and nature are unified through spirit and harmonised through logic. Through this shorter logic solves the age old problem of monism of Sri Adi Shankara and dualism of Sri. Madhvacharya (*Hegel's Logic,36*).

## **Criticism of Nature of god**

Shorter logic do not reject the existence of god. Instead it tries to redefine the nature of God and the methodology of knowing god till Emmanuel Kant.

His criticism about nature of god begins by criticising Jewish concept of god. The name of God as defined by Jews is I=I, or I am who is I am. This is an empty tautology. This state of identity gives any determinations about god. Hegel considers it as a first step in knowing any reality. When one sees a coconut, the first knowledge about coconut is that coconut equals coconut. The coconut has to disport itself into another which has determinations. Then we begin to know slowly about coconut. But only in the end of the coconut tree we realise the meaning of the beginning or the real meaning of coconut. Similarly god is known only from the result or end towards which spirit guides the history to end<sup>15</sup>.

Second line of criticism shorter logic raises against the Methodology followed by Aristotle to Aquinas for proving the existence of god. This method moves towards the knowledge about god from predicate to subject. Subject as the cause of predicate gives no knowledge about the nature of god. By using the epistemological principles Hegel proves that the method of moving from predicate to subject leads to the Kantian fallacy that thing in itself or God is not knowable.

Immanuel Kant explains that experiences derived through senses are the only way to reach knowledge about a reality. Hegel critically examines this proposition(Hegel's Logic,50,51). He says that senses never experience the universals in reality. Speculative thinking is the means to know about reality. If senses are the only way to know thing in itself, the proposition of Immanuel Kant that 'thing in itself' is unknowable is true. It is the problem of methodology of Kant (*Hegel's Logic*43,44). But man, through speculative thinking, dialectically moving towards to the idea or truth (Union of reason within man and reason within reality) by transforming himself through transforming material word and human world. In other words man can know god.

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<sup>15</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*,20

Thirdly the school of intuitive knowledge assumes that God resides in mans thought. It equates thought with God. Shorter logic proposes three criticisms against this argument.

- a) If the thought of all individuals are equal to the thought of God, then common opinion about God is treated as the native of god (*Hegel's Logic*71).
- b) In man we find evil and virtue and this reflects in his thought and concludes that in Gods nature also virtue and evil exists together (*Hegel's Logic*72).
- c) Man creates a God in his own image( *Hegel's Logic*73).

More over intuitive knowledge creation about God leads a fallacy that without using reason or rigorous intellectual training. St. Anselem is quoted to establish this argument( *Hegel's Logic*77).

### **God: Substance or Subject**

Science of logic culminates into the analysis of being, essence and notion. Being is transformed into essence. Self reflection about the full grown essence is notion at the end. Notion at the beginning is nothing. No one knows anything about being.

This can be understood by using the example of the growth coconut seed. In the beginning, the person who sees coconut seed first time, knows nothing about the nature of coconut seed. This being after some time sprouts and grows into small plant. In this stage coconut disappeared and little plant appeared. Being (coconut) becomes non-existent or nothing and coconut plant becomes existent (new being). While coconut was being coconut plant was nothing.

In the next stage coconut plant (being) becomes nothing and it transforms into coconut tree (which was non-existent in earlier stage). Ultimately coconut tree bear its fruit, coconut. The beginning was coconut (Alpha) and the end also coconut (Omega). Jesus says "I am the alpha and omega". Only at the end the coconut tree realises, if it has self consciousness, that its beginning was coconut. And here the self consciousness and actuality becomes unified and is the absolute idea or truth. What remains after the process is essence.

In phenomenology of spirit Hegel explains the process happening in a human being like that of the growth of a seed. None other than human being has self consciousness. For Hegel, man is a self conscious being transforms the material and social circumstances. Through this process he transforms himself into essence. So mans supreme activity is not contemplation but transforming the universe which confronts him. Thus man is a self conscious essence or subject – not a fixed point – moving towards his end. Similarly God is a self conscious essence transforming the world through spirit towards the end. Thus Hegel declares that God is continuously active and not contemplative like Aristotle and Aquinas. As Jesus says “my father is continuously active”. The notion of Aquinas that God is contemplative is wrong. For Aquinas contemplation is supreme activity. But for St Paul love is supreme activity. Love is verb not noun. If God is love then God is active eternally.