

REVIEW ESSAY / ÉTUDE CRITIQUE

Une Intrigue criminelle de la philosophie: Lire La Phénoménologie de l'Esprit de Hegel

Jean-Clet Martin

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In the “Postface to the Anglo-American Edition” of his *Variations*, Jean-Clet Martin surprised his readers with the announcement of a new book on Hegel:

I begin to feel the need for a book on the *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, where the enemy will find a better place in the network of friendships, introduced by Deleuze in *What is Philosophy?* than he has found in the smiles of his most ardent disciples. In this book, there would be a follow up, a fugue for a new variation seeking counterpoints and singularities in the patience of the negative, instead of the joys and affirmations that Deleuze has legitimately found in Spinoza.¹

We did not have to wait long. Recently, this book has been published by La Découverte with the title *Une intrigue criminelle de la philosophie: Lire La Phénoménologie de l'Esprit de Hegel*. And what a surprise it is! It asks Kojève's battle-tested Hegel to yield his place to a Hegel with Deleuze's long nails and yellow eyes. The accursed share and the stubborn remainder of the *dimanches qui chantent* are now shown to be figures of a criminal plot that labours to find the Absolute in what is most improbable: “It is the most improbable, but also the most quarrelsome and indefinable that strives to come to being,” Martin says. (236)

In the title of Martin's book, the word “*intrigue*” has the same amphisemy as the English “plot.” It refers to the structure of a story, the articulation of a play, or the paratactic and hypotactic concatenation of

¹ Jean-Clet Martin, *Variations: The Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze*, (tr.) Constantin V. Boundas and Susan Dyrkton (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 216.

episodes in a diegesis. But it also refers to the unanticipated twists and turns, to the improbable sequence of events of a detective story that holds us breathless. Hegel's *Phenomenology* is, for Martin, an intrigue in both senses. To prepare the reader to approach Hegel's book as one would a fable or a tale, Martin introduces his chapters with "*où l'on apprend*" or "*où il est question*" or "*où l'on découvre*." Take, for example, the first chapter—"The Circle of Consciousness"—that Martin refers to as the "First Scene." The summary that follows, placed in the centre of the page and surrounded by empty space, begins with the following sentence: "*OÙ L'ON APPREND que le philosophe porte secours aux criminels et que la philosophie s'entend en un sens extra-moral.*" The second scene—under the title "The Roads of Desire"—has the curtain go up with this passage: "*OÙ IL EST QUESTION de la ruminant animale, du désir...*"—and so on and so forth. Now, neither a play nor a tale nor a detective story could be examples of their respective genres if their plots were arranged according to the deductive necessity of formal logic. It would not be an intrigue. In order to present itself with intrigue, Hegel's phenomenology has to attest to the contingency of becoming. "History," writes Martin, "cannot be conceived under the yoke of nature or the mechanical linking of social facts.... The Spirit has to tear itself off this double determination...in order to enter History successfully and to achieve the freedom of its deployment." (103)

But in what sense is the *Phenomenology*'s intrigue criminal? In what sense is it the tale of a crime? Initially, Martin unearths an essay of 1807—"Who Thinks Abstractly?"²—in which Hegel supports the philosopher, who, in his effort to gather all factors relevant to the crime committed, appears to side with the criminal, against the facile abstractions of *doxa*. And then Martin goes on:

We must assume a rapture, a scratch, in order to reach life—an inaugural crime that creates an opening.... Only in the death, the crime and the sacrifice of its perfection—only in the contestation of the angelic perfection of the Idea—the Spirit finds the means to open itself unto existence.... The Absolute does not bring

² Georg W. F. Hegel, "Who Thinks Abstractly?" in Walter Kaufman, *Hegel: Re-interpretation, Texts and Commentary* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966).

about a separation in the direction of the heights; it does not detach itself from the world in transcendence. On the contrary, it separates itself through a *Fall*, which is a movement of being submerged and divided according to a trajectory of immanence. In the last analysis, it is evil that stands for the root of creation. (236–37)

This criminal intrigue, Martin tells us, is an Odyssey; the circle of its *nostos* is an infinity. (16) Upon returning to it, Ithaca is found to bathe in a different light because the sense of the beginning shows clearly only at the end. And it is not as if, upon returning, the essential truth of the origins is finally revealed behind the back of phenomena. In this sense, Hegel is the one who overturns Platonism. Instead of Plato's devaluation of phenomena, Hegel, in writing the *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, makes it clear that being is nothing without appearances. (20) We are not, therefore, invited to leave the cave. Rather, we are invited to descend into it because many of our illusions come from our strong will to truth. (20) There is no reason to move beyond appearances. It is enough to grasp them in their phenomenality in order to accede to the labour of the Spirit. (50) But then, given the fact that Hegel does not hide essences behind the phenomena and, consequently, cannot claim to find in the last station of the journey the essential truth that had always already been deposited at the point of departure, every touching of the base is *ipso facto* a new beginning. This is what makes the book infinite. (21, 23) Hegel, in other words, cannot be counted among the philosophers of identity. His *eschaton* does not retrieve the *archē*, with the help of the repetition that Deleuze has dubbed "naked." Rather, the repetition of the Hegelian Odyssey is of the "clothed or disguised" variety that exists in order to make the difference. Such a difference would be neither universal nor particular—it will be singular. It may not be so easy, therefore, Martin concludes, as friends and foes have tended to do, to read "identity" writ large in Hegel's cryptic statement about "identity being the identity of identity and difference." The vistas that this statement opens up must be negotiated very carefully. A lot depends on allowing the singularity of the *telos* having now turned into a new *archē* to express and release its lines of becoming, in accordance with the ambition of the criminal intrigue to retain its infinity. The Hegelian history is not cumulative. Each one of its moments is singular, with figures that must be grasped for what they are.

(132) And the same care must be shown in our reading of Hegel's famed struggle for recognition. The hasty reader is bound to ask: If the identity of the individual depends on his or her identification with the other, does this not imply that one's identity requires becoming the same with the other? Martin sees that things are more complicated:

To identify oneself with another cannot occur without coveting the place that the other holds, without becoming what the other is, and simultaneously without losing abruptly the sense of what one becomes.... [In this case, consciousness necessarily] loses itself since it discovers itself being another consciousness; but by the same token it abolishes the other, since in the other it sees its own self. (63)

Since this chapter of the tale comes much later in the criminal intrigue, Martin backtracks and joins the tale as it begins, with the illusions of sense certainty.

The world is given before and independently of my awakening to its presence (30) and sense certainty is to a great extent grounded upon this sort of givenness. This donation grounds also the conviction that perception—*Wahrnehmung*—is the capture of what is true. But since the given is given in its becoming, the presence of being that sense certainty celebrates is constantly deferred along the lines of flight of this becoming. Hegel, Martin therefore says, is one of the first to inject Being with becoming. (9) Becoming is stronger and more insistent than stable being. (31) In every entity, there is a becoming that renders it foreign to itself. Alienation is the line of flight that takes hold of being and thrusts it outside of itself. (31, 32) In the last analysis, “the reality of...sense certainty proves to be taken inside a structure and a construction that originate with a network of abstractions. It implicates, not the stone, the tree or the house, but rather myself.” (34) And yet,, given the irreducibility of becoming, the “I” of this “myself” is already always another. (35)

Things are what they are in an infinity of relations with other things. This is why Martin makes use of Nietzschean expressions to speak of things: things are forcefields. For Hegel “a thing is nothing but the provisional neutralization of opposite tensions...; in the depths of matter, there is dynamism and living opposition.” (51) Here, the language turns almost Bergsonian and Simondonian. Living things “tear

themselves away from the fluidity of life in order to acquire a form; they close upon themselves and conquer their individual autonomy.” (52–53) However, this closure, this individual autonomy, does not result in their coiling round themselves. On the contrary, need is the urgency of the organism to split up and turn its attention to the outside. Contrary to Kojève’s frequent claims, Hegelian desire, as Martin understands it, cannot be reduced to need:

Even the animal is often motivated by considerations different from the hunt for things that it does not have. It mobilizes webs and traps in order to satisfy its instincts and to transform the environment in accordance with its tendencies. Desire is not constitutive only of a devouring mouth or of a non-being that aims its bite at being. (61)

On the road that the living consciousness follows in its strife to become aware of itself, the desire of another’s desire, which precipitates the struggle for recognition, attests to the wisdom of the slave who knows how to wait and to defer his need; but it also reveals the brutality and foolishness of the master who, after risking his life and braving the anxiety of self-extinction, lives in absolute dependency, turning himself into the slave of his slave. (70) That the future belongs to today’s slave is the promise that Martin extracts (along with Marx, Kojève and Sartre) from Hegel’s “tale of initiation.”

Stoicism, skepticism and the unhappy consciousness are, in the *Phenomenology*, figures that tend to be struck in the aftermath of the struggle for recognition. Without these figures, which are often sublimations of otherwise painful lived experiences, self-consciousness, Martin claims, would not have been possible. Stoicism is thought’s own revolt, the escape valve of the one who is at the mercy of another. The stoic indifference to events, however, leads to their annihilation in view of the unique certainty that *omnis determinatio est negatio*. Here skepticism and the unhappy consciousness loom because, with the annihilation of the world of events, the certainty of the self that Stoicism had retained is also on its way out. Paradoxically, however, the absence of subjective and objective certainty endows the unhappy consciousness with the ability to stand closer than any other figure to the advent of Reason. Hegel, in this sense, anticipates Nietzsche (and Freud): stoicism, skepticism and

the unhappy consciousness may be figures and symptoms of a disease, but only in the way that being pregnant can be thought of as a disease.

From the vantage point of Reason, the world appears to consciousness as its own world. But Hegel's point should not be misunderstood: Martin makes it clear that it is Hegel who struck a mortal blow against German Idealism. His severe criticism of Fichte's idealist stance should not be overlooked. The right relation between self and world is not available to us at the beginning of the *nostos*. It has to wait for the labour of the Spirit to be deposited in the sedimentations of History. (85) Hegel is an enemy of interiority and of philosophies grounded on interiority as few philosophers before or after him are. This is how Martin puts it: "It is not in the interiority of the self that reason finds its essence, as if all that it is able to think were innate, with its substance having been deposited in it by a creator God or by a founding principle—or even by the recognition brought about by another self." (86) It is rather a question of a slow progress, often unconscious, across the figures of the Spirit that are deposited in History. The equation "thought equals Being" is shown to be true only "on the road" and requires "a patient effort to reflect on the way that the subjective spirit infiltrates the world in order to become progressively objective." (85) It requires that our understanding of the "real is rational" be supplemented by the comprehension of the "rational is real," since it is Reason that realises itself in everything that we observe.

The assistance that science offers along this road is not to be underestimated. With science, we are far from the naïve certainty of perception, for scientific observation is now fortified with the resources of industry and open to the deductions that permit predictions to be made. It is true that science with its verdicts and conclusions tends to arrest and freeze becoming, but this does not prevent Martin from discovering in Hegel's discussion of the laws of nature, not the reinstatement of static being, but rather the repetition of a vital difference. Far from being derived from a set of examples or cases, the laws of nature presuppose that the event being reproduced under similar circumstances is the repetition of a (unique) rule or law. (89, 90) It is true that science, in its attempt to derive the intricate articulations and attributes of an organism from the properties of the material from which the organism originates, often misses the principle and the forces responsible for the initial assimilation and choice of this material. But this should not make us give up on sci-

ence, for it is the same scientific spirit that remedies this illusion, as it demands the reconsideration of the dialectics of form and matter—the internal and the external—in order to apprehend the Spirit at work. It is probably with an eye to Bergson’s *élan vital* and to Simondon’s modulation again that Martin reads the relevant pages of the *Phenomenology*. But this does not prevent him from noticing Hegel’s reservation: No matter how helpful science is in the explication and comprehension of the objective Spirit, “the Spirit is not grasped through science; rather, it is understood through literature.” (100)

Now, Hegel’s *Phenomenology* is deployed in accordance with two planes, the compositions of which proceed according to different speeds. There is a plane of *figures* (social, aesthetic, architectural) clashing with one another and apprehended by means of events (shall we call it the plane of “actual history”?). There is also another plane—another series of sense—the plane of *moments*. Those who act in History do not perceive this plane, being oblivious to the becoming that takes place behind their back (the plane of “virtual becoming”?). Only the historian who is at the same time a philosopher is able to reconstruct the sense of this plane and does so, says Martin, retrospectively (shall we read instead, “through an act of counteractualization”?). (130–31)

Scene four of Martin’s report on Hegel’s criminal intrigue focusses on the “social creations” of the Spirit: the conflict between the Greek celebration of being’s unity and the shattering of it in the contradictions and crimes of the Greek tragedy; the genealogy of morals undertaken in the *Phenomenology*, in anticipation of Nietzsche; the arrival of European nihilism; and the anti-Christian lesson that Hegel derives from the death of Christ. Martin dedicates seventy-two pages (almost one-third) of his book to these social creations of the Spirit in order to emphasise the importance that Hegel attributes to the explication and recognition of the Spirit that take place through them. He reminds us that happiness does not lie, for Hegel, in man’s return to nature. Rather, happiness presupposes life in civil society. (109) In this review, I only have the space for few brief comments on the moment of the Greek city and the figure of the genealogy of morals.

The moving pages that Hegel dedicates to Antigone and her relationship with her family prompt Martin to call one of the sections of his fourth scene “The anti-Oedipal Family.” According to him, neither Freud nor Lacan ever read Sophocles the way Hegel did. If they had, they could

not have failed to notice his strong anti-oedipal and anti-psychiatric stance. “Within the family, violent love is desexualized and is sublimated in a subtle union that is tightly linked to the city.” (137) He goes on: “Between brother and sister, a mutual relationship is established, free of all natural-ness and of every narcissistic interest.” Claiming in the sequence to follow Hegel, Martin designates this relationship as a “motiveless relationship that realizes a veritable body without organs.” (137) Inside the city state, this body is suspended between, on the one hand, the Greek affirmation of the unity of Being and thought’s ability to conform to it and, on the other, the Greek tragedy that is constantly haunted by spectres of contradictions and crimes. Sophocles’ *Antigone* shows that, as soon as the family law is mixed with the law of the city, as soon as the two begin to overlap, the glorious Greek unity is in the process of fading away. Only the inflexible difference of the two orders was capable of maintaining its appearance. Hegel’s originality, Martin does not fail to notice, is in his refusal to take sides between legality and legitimacy. Justice may be claimed and reflected upon, with equal poignancy, from the side of Antigone as well as from the side of Creon. Neither one of the two ethical orders—the city’s or the family’s—emerge victorious in the tragedies. And Martin concludes his chapter with question marks (do they stand for the *à venir* of the Concept?)—question marks that bespeak the possibility of a distant resolution of the Greek dilemma and the elimination of the double bind that brings Antigone to her grave. One thing is certain: for the resolution to become possible, “the crime must change pace and nature and enter the concept itself.” (142)

Hegel and Nietzsche, according to Martin, are not as far apart from each other as we usually think. At least, they are not far apart with respect to their genealogies of morals and the “beyond good and evil” that is their joint conclusion. Hegel does not attempt to ground morality in a sense of duty the way that Kant did. Before Marx and Nietzsche, he criticised Kant’s ethics as the false image of the bourgeois (110) and anticipated Nietzsche on the question of the genealogy of morals. (123) “The Absolute Spirit...is absolute in the sense that it explodes the limits of moral conscience.... The explosion assumes the name of evil, fault, excess.” (219) Good and evil enter into chiasmic relations and exchange their predicates to the point that an “extra-moral” perspective is required if we are to think of them. This is why, whenever he thinks of ethics, Hegel would rather focus on the play of economic and political forces and

and on the need to coordinate one's own private interests with the interest of all. (150–51) The “ruse of reason” (Adam Smith’s “hidden hand”) can be relied upon to bring about the right results: “Just as evil can affect what is considered to be good, the good too can be discovered inside an evil committed.” (152) It is not insignificant, therefore, that, in the struggle between “noble conscience” and “servile conscience,” Hegel assigns what is dynamic and creative to the latter. The ruse of reason guides the slave to discover dialectically what it means to be of noble conscience.

On the other hand, Hegel’s “beyond good and evil” goes hand in hand with *The Phenomenology*’s anti-humanism. (218) “The Hegelian intrigue,” writes Martin, “rises up towards a logical arrangement, towards the apprehension of a thought the notions of which no longer depend on man, but rather demand the creation of a mode of impersonal and inhuman narration indebted to the Concept which is capable of explicating itself according to its own ways.” (221) This demand for an impersonal and inhuman narration explains Hegel’s dissatisfaction with the Enlightenment’s radical humanism. The celebrated critical consciousness of the Enlightenment sustains itself only by what it negates. Behind its deconstruction of superstition and religious faith, one finds the call to man to re-internalise his own image that has, until now, been reflected and alienated in the mirror of his own fantasies. The materialism and utilitarianism that the Enlightenment propagates stand for the devaluation of all values, without any promise of a transvaluation to come. (180)

The Enlightenment causes the eclipse of distance and the unfamiliar from our world. The general will takes over the political horizon, and the widening of negativity is its only real accomplishment. The result is either revolution and terror or, as an alternative, the German internalisation of the imperative of autonomy in the guise of the law of duty, whose source and field of application the Self is. In this moral vision of the world, Being revolves around the Will. But with happiness being deferrable, as Kant knew well, moral conviction—the capacity to decide—and the violence that goes with it, no longer feel horrified in front of real actions and do not turn away from the vision of evil. In this context, for Martin following Hegel, only the beautiful soul maintains a semblance of an inner purity that is totally empty. What is needed is the dialectical unmasking of the baseness of the beautiful soul—its exposure as the morality of the slave—but also the fall of the noble and his plea for forgiveness. “Only then,” writes Martin, “the moral conscience that knows itself

vile and the acting consciousness that knows itself to be fallible will join each other for a new attitude to be born, where the Spirit finds its place inside the world and the world is lifted towards the Spirit.” (192)

The fifth scene of Martin’s book, titled “The Religion of Art and Eternity,” is no longer about consciousness facing the real or about self-consciousness and reason being present in our political passions. It is, rather, about the Spirit as it discovers itself in the process of depositing its “monuments” in the world, independently of the individuals and the social formations which nevertheless are required for the Spirit to live on. (201) In the case of natural religion, the monuments are representations. Since the gods are missing, we must call them to presence in marble and clay. In turn, this incarnation of the gods in the most modest substances, and their exhibition in public spaces, result in the Spirit’s loss of dignity and its debasement. What follows is the comic laughter that marks this moment (215), and soon after, the pain expressed in the harsh verdict, “*God is dead.*” (215)

Hegel does not fail to notice the passion for philology and archaeology that accompany the pain of his century and to discover in it the nostalgia that often follows melancholia. The works of art in their materiality offered the becoming-man and the *kenosis* of God; now, the Spirit will take the opposite direction and will assume the posture of the ascent—the becoming-God of man. This double becoming is dialectical—with the negative being here at work. However, unlike the negativity of the negative theology, which protects God behind the Kafkaesque walls of an inaccessible Castle, the negative here indicates that God abandons the limits of His perpetual reclusion and negates Himself as the “One,” undermining by the same token the Apollonian figures of the beautiful. Martin goes on, then, to warn his readers that those who emphasise the omnipotence of the negative in Hegel’s philosophy must also understand that the negative is what prevents the system from closing upon itself. They must also understand that the negative functions only as long as things possess the power and the capacity to bear the lack which torments them from the inside. The reverse side of lack is the force of an entity that manifests the capacity to transcend itself. (29) Hegel’s God-man is not the man inheriting the throne of God once God dies; he is the one who transcends the limits of moral conscience and good sense. Christ is one of the figures of the Absolute and Martin discusses at some length Hegel’s way of showing how pivotal Christ’s role is in the becom-

ing-Other of man. Without man, God would not be God, but man without God would be nothing but man. (218) Christ inaugurates a new religion, making God immanent in man. He shows that God becomes man only on condition that man turns into a higher being—the “overman.” The double becoming of God and man is dialectical, provided that we do not confine “dialectics” to the pacified reunion of the universal “Substance” with the singular “subject.” Dialectics is also the index of a separation and an openness of the self to that which is not the same. (219, 220)

The resurrection proclaims the death of man but also the death of God, in the sense that it makes possible a being and a thinking that are beyond the human and beyond divine transcendence. It is the “arrival of the spontaneous alienation of the divine essence” in the death of God and the “becoming-man that is brought about by this death.” With this metamorphosis and death, human consciousness and the form of the Self are being liquefied.” (223) Or again: “Death is not only an end; it is also the transfiguration of what it negates—the death of death—for all those who know how to grasp what persists, that is, existence itself.... What dies subsists in a hard memory, in a virtual registry that we do not know how to describe but only by inventing a style, a montage and a narration.” (223) And finally: “Being must die and disappear in order that we deprive it of its figure, make its funeral mask and detach it from its natural ‘here’ and ‘now.’” (226)

It is not accidental, Martin opines, that Hegel’s *Phenomenology* culminates in the discussion of art and image. Throughout the entire book, the search has been for the Spirit as it appears and for the mode of its sensible emergence. “The Hegelian concept creates the possibility to reanimate all the ectoplasms of whatever appears.” (230) Subjects do not disappear with their transient life; they can be eternally conserved in the eternity of the material that retains them. Indeed, Martin seems to credit the Hegelian Concept with the ability to anticipate Nietzsche’s vision of the eternal recurrence. As with Faraday’s wheel, the rotation of which induces a real perception of movement and is capable of associating drawings that are totally separated from one another, the Concept endows what is transient with a virtual eternity. (231) The notion of the “spiritual automaton” finds its application at this precise point. “The entire Preface of the *Phenomenology of the Spirit*,” Martin writes, “celebrates this spiritual automaton, capable of conferring upon the image the appearance of reportage—a reportage of our silhouettes, dead forever,

yet also able to project and to maintain themselves upon an absolute and inalterable support.” (232) Now, the notion of the “spiritual automaton” that we find first in Leibniz and Spinoza stresses the involuntary nature of thought’s response to moving images, suggesting that the thought aroused by the image is like that of an alien thinker within, and that it plays a pivotal role in all attempts to leave subjectivism and humanism behind and to establish the identity of being and thought, without falling into the trap of Idealism. This is why the Hegelian Concept is not subjective. It bears some similarities, Martin assures us, to the Deleuzo-Guattarean concept. It is not a mere notion that stands for a class of objects; rather, it captures the movement of the real and shows the internal difference of things. Far from being an ideality extrapolated from things, the concept designates the force of creation and destruction—the intimate life—that inhabits them. (24, 25, 26) It designates a “coming to...” and, therefore, is able to skirt the fixed sense of representations. And this makes this reviewer wonder: In assuring the eternal repetition of the different, wouldn’t Hegel’s Concept secure for the author of the *Phenomenology* the title of the philosopher of Difference in itself? Isn’t this what Martin invites us to conclude, when he writes that “we must not understand the expression ‘absolute knowledge’ according to ‘pure logic.’ For Hegel, there is no absolute without imperfection.... From the side of the ideal, there can be no effective realization. It is necessary that the ideal dies.” (235–36)

Martin’s book is a new and challenging reading of Hegel’s *Phenomenology*. It will be of special interest to readers of Deleuze because, in protecting Hegel against the simplifications of his friends as well as from the hasty conclusions of his detractors, it helps Hegel emerge from its pages as a philosopher of (negative) difference and (infinite) repetition—the brother-enemy that Deleuze had been waiting for and with whom he established plurivocal relationships that cannot be conveniently summarised in Deleuze’s Nietzschean moment. This new and challenging reading, in my estimate, is likely to attract the attention of Hegel scholars as well—especially those who search for the renewal of a field that, for the time being, seems to be suffering from the foundering of left- and right-wing Hegelianisms alike. As someone looking for this renewal and also as a Deleuze scholar intrigued by the strong Deleuzean

flavour of Martin's reading of Hegel, I have a few questions to address to his book:³

1. I would like to know how and why a reader of Deleuze experiences the need *today* to reopen the files of the relationship between Deleuze and Hegel. What are the philosophical and political stakes *today* of extricating Hegel from the clutches of the philosophies of identity?

2. Readers of Deleuze know that philosophies of difference are not compatible with the thought of the negative and that the Hegelian dialectic is an expression and a subterfuge of the servile will. In *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, we read that "for the affirmation of difference, [Hegel's dialectic] substitutes the negation of that which differs; for the affirmation of self, it substitutes the negation of the other; and for the affirmation of affirmation, it substitutes the famous negation of the negation."⁴ It is, therefore, intriguing to discover in Martin's book subtle qualifications and circumspect hesitations that would prevent the negative and the dialectic from becoming the sworn enemies of a thought that takes its flight from the joys of Spinoza and the affirmations of Nietzsche. For example, he holds that those who emphasise the omnipotence of the negative in Hegel's philosophy must not obscure the fact that it is the negative that prevents the system from closing in upon itself. Moreover, Martin writes, "the negative [would not] be able to operate...if the thing [did not] possess...the power and the capacity to bear the lack which torments it from the inside. On the other side of lack, we have the force of an entity that manifests its aptitude to transcend itself." (29) Finally, when Martin speaks of the Hegelian dialectic, he characterises it in a way that brings it closer to the critical unmasking that we are accustomed to associating with the genealogy. I wonder, therefore, what he would say to the one who voices his suspicion that his qualifications subordinate the negative

³ Jean-Clet Martin's responses to my questions are given in an interview that he kindly allowed me to publish in *Deleuze and Hegel*, (ed.) K. Houle and J. Vernon (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, forthcoming).

⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, (tr.) Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 96.

to an originary affirmation and fail to emphasise, beyond its critical function, the creative potential of the dialectic movement.

3. If Hegel holds evil to be the root of creation, as Martin maintains, his characterisation of the *Phenomenology* as a criminal plot is justified. But then it will be difficult to maintain that Hegel's critique of moral vision leads to a space "beyond good and evil." A space "beyond good and evil" can be maintained only if the Fall of the Absolute ushers in a "disease" (not a crime) which, like pregnancy, gives rise to the new, the better and the nobler. Wouldn't the assimilation of the Fall of the Absolute to crime cause, despite Martin's qualifications, the negative to have the last word?

4. It seems to me that we need a more elaborate explanation of the claim that Hegel is in fact an anti-humanist and that his anti-humanism can be counted as a variation on Deleuze's own. Two more of Martin's claims are relevant to this point. "Man," he says, "in the finitude of his most rudimentary values...experiences a desire in view of which he appears to himself as a being that must be overcome." (218) I grant him that Hegel thinks so. But then he adds: "It is this desire that derails the merely organic life and sends it over to the inorganic of art and philosophy." This may be Deleuzian, but I am not yet convinced that it is Hegelian. In derauling desire and overcoming man, some of Hegel's readers seem to have established man's "deification" rather than the production of the life of the inorganic.

5. Does Martin's claim that Hegel anticipates Deleuze in the distinction between becoming and history also entail that Hegel anticipates Deleuze in the separation between virtual and actual? If so, what does it mean to say that "at the time of the *Phenomenology*, the moorings of this amphibious being have yet to be found: the reconciliation of the two worlds that Hegel senses moving inside him—the real and the virtual—proves to be very far away"? (234–35) If Martin's "real" at this point stands indeed for Deleuze's actual-real, and his "virtual" for the virtual-real, his readers may be excused for being confused, since they bring to their reading of his book the knowledge that the incommensurability between becoming and history, in Deleuze, is not affected by the passage of time.

6. Martin, in his discussion of Hegel's interpretation of the *Antigone*, designates the relationship between brother and sister as "a motiveless relationship and a veritable *body without organs*." (137) In a footnote to this designation, he claims that "this concept of Gilles Deleuze fits marvellously to the passages that Hegel dedicates to the concept of an essentially non-oedipal family." (137 n. 19) I wonder, having read these claims, whether he realises the boldness of his own reading and his own conclusions. Lacan's interpretation of *Antigone* has fuelled readings and debates among readers that vigorously challenge the plausibility of attributing "non-oedipal" and "BwO-like" designations to Sophocles' masterpiece. Lacan's reading makes Antigone's appeal to the law of the gods an unsustainable breach of the symbolic order.⁵ Not to be outdone, Judith Butler counters by discovering in this appeal "the scandalous performative disruption and perversion of the symbolic order."⁶ When it comes to what *Antigone* is all about in the Greek tragedy, the interpretations are indeed legion: the intended supplementarity of the laws of the city and the laws of the family has been advocated; Antigone's refusal to assume any responsibility has been emphasised; the claim that the real clash in the tragedy is between the laws of the gods and their prohibition against killing anyone who is a Greek and the laws of the city, the application of which governs only the affairs of the city, has found merit with several readers. All of these readings go against Martin's, and some of them have inspired powerful political agendas.

7. Hegel suggests that the *kenosis* of God is central to the transformation of man. But the death of the mediator reveals that God is not one to come in and help us escape our dire straights. Instead, Hegel, conflating Easter and Pentecost, argues that the death of the mediator ushers in the presence of the Spirit. The agony of realising that we humans are finite becomes the realisation that the life lived on the other side of the death of God is what is meant by the life of the Spirit. That may well be a new kind of life that transcends our prior existence. But does it justify the

⁵ Jacques Lacan, *Le séminaire livre VII: L'éthique de la psychanalyse* (Paris: Seuil, 1986).

⁶ Judith Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship between Life and Death* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 22.

coining of a new term—“overman”—for this new humanity, along with the anti-humanist rhetoric that this term carries with it? How does the death of God carry with it the death of man and the advent of the overman? When I read in Martin’s book about the overcoming of man, I need to know whether the overcoming is proclaimed *à la* Nietzsche (and his bootstraps) or whether Christ is, for Hegel, the one whose death combines the *ef hapax* (absolute singularity) of his death with the universality of the becoming-Spirit.

8. Does Martin discover in Hegel’s *Phenomenology* the anticipation of the Deleuzian distinction between the virtual event and the actual state of affairs? Would such a distinction make the Hegelian Concept virtual? And, if it does, where exactly would Hegel and Deleuze differ from each other with respect to the Concept?

9. Speaking of Faraday’s wheel (the invention of which follows the *Phenomenology* by a few years) and Goethe’s experiments with colour (which Hegel knew of), Martin writes: “The wheel infinitely circulates a retinue of dead images, which, thanks to their being superimposed on one another, are capable of moving without changing place. This particular form of circularity of the optical wheel that Faraday imagined promises its animations a virtual eternity: it shows the galloping animal capable that returns without beginning or end, when the origin returns endlessly.”(231) Would the reader then be justified to conclude that Martin’s interpretation supports an argument for the presence of intensive time in Hegel’s *Phenomenology* and a vision of the eternal recurrence of the different? Should we conclude that, between Hegel and Deleuze, when it comes to the question of being philosophers of pure difference, the difference is in the details—a matter of degree rather than of nature? And if this is the case, how can we resist the conclusion that Martin’s book proves Deleuze to be mistaken in his assessment of the distance that separated him from Hegel?

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