

# Chapter 11: Nietzsche's Zarathustra as Model for Hegel's Essence

Cadell Last

For G.W.F. Hegel, the principle of concrete existence, which appears in Book 2, Section 2 of the *Science of Logic*, is *appearance*. This is already an interesting paradox to think about, since in our common sense ideology, we juxtapose concrete existence and appearance as opposites. Hegel rather thinks about concrete existence and appearance as entangled contradictions in need of an essential mediation by spirit. For Hegel, this essential mediation is necessary in order to derive the objective concept (ultimately, the concept of God which is concept qua concept). Does this Hegelian gesture, as so many post-Hegelian philosophers have remarked, put Nietzsche's project into direct contradiction with Hegel's?

My reading leaves room for doubt.

Hegel's main target throughout the *Science of Logic* is without question Immanuel Kant. Hegel has "laser eyes" for Kant throughout all three doctrines. Here in Book 2, Section 2, we get a unique window into this targeting. For Hegel, Kant wanted to start with the "absolute concept" qua transcendental a priori concept without demonstrating how simple essence mediates itself and becomes a proof of the concept as a result of this mediation. For Hegel, jumping to the absolute concept without understanding the mediation of essence is a big mistake, since, for Hegel, it involves confronting the paradox that the "abyss of finite reason is at the same time the positive ground of emergence of the concrete concept." This captures a long-standing

affirmation by Hegel that the contradictions of finite reason do not lead to a negative or null result, but rather a positive result (even a result that is “truly infinite”). Understandably, this is something which “ordinary consciousness,” struggles to grasp, concretely. One could say that Hegel is suggesting ordinary consciousness “does not know” the “nature of mediation it performs,” or one could say, simply, that *essential mediation is unconscious*.

Here we get an unlikely perspectival shift on Nietzsche’s famous and well-known axiom that “God is Dead” with the idea that “God is Unconscious” (proposed by psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan in Seminar 11). When Nietzsche suggests that “God is Dead,” what he is referring to is that God as an “external being” is dead. Nietzsche’s doctrine is all about lifting ordinary consciousness out of the spontaneous ideology of Being qua Being, that human beings should not live their lives in relation to the idea of God as an external being. Why? It is very clear, for Nietzsche, why: *God as an external being blocks the gap or the abyssal negativity of essence which needs to be integrated in order to mediate essence itself* (what Nietzsche will frequently reference as “godliness”). Nietzsche’s view of ordinary consciousness is very clear: they believe in God but they have no real connection to essential godliness.

Throughout *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, if we are to translate it into Hegelian terms, we are basically dealing with the aforementioned mediation of essence for the concept. Here “the concept” could be described as the “overman” in the precise sense that “the concept” is the overcoming of (finite-mortal) human “being” for the (truly infinite) self-concept through essential mediation. In the character of Zarathustra, we see not only his methodology for addressing ordinary consciousness with the abyssal risk or gamble involved in essential mediation, but also his own

inner private self-mediation of abyssal essence, in his constant struggles to become a leader capable of self-sacrifice (basically sacrificing his being for his concept).<sup>345</sup>

This mediation involves the essential reflective shine of being: Nietzsche through Zarathustra opens the text with a mediation of the essential reflective shine of being via the shining star above as a metaphor for what inner shine is without the other (First Part, I – Prologue):

“You great star! What would your happiness be if you had not those for whom you shine?”

Moreover, Zarathustra clearly opens with a critical view of the “Priest function,” claiming that they love a “dead God” (external being), and have not cultivated essence to shine/love others (human beings). Here Zarathustra’s central message directly mirrors the central message of Hegel’s *Science of Logic* in Book 2, Section 2: “the abyss for finite reason is at the same time the positive ground for emergence of the concrete concept.”

From this opening, we find Zarathustra delivering a message to the “unconscious rabble” before undergoing a series of metamorphoses in the abyss (for finite reason) toward the positivisation of the concrete as the truly infinite. The key terms in these spiritual metamorphoses for Nietzsche include heaviness (of the Spirit of Gravity – a feature of being) to flight (of the Overman – a feature of concept), and camel (carrying being) to child (birth of concept).

Here the ultimate consequence of Nietzschean essential mediation involves:

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<sup>345</sup> For more, see Chapter 1.

- (a) deeper questioning of disembodied rationality,
- (b) the cultivation of the courage and risk involved in a radical affirmation in life of perpetual self-questioning to the status of one's own personal becoming,
- (c) in relation to the highest possible ideality in secular terms (the overcoming of human *being*)

The concrete results of the Nietzschean program have expressed themselves for long enough in real historical terms, that we can speculate on their essential features for human beings. What we tend to get is a meta-tension between (a) higher-order creativity and (b) distrust of institutionalisation (especially religious institutionalisation). This tension is the *essential paradox* of Death of God theology.

It makes sense here if we “meta-psychoanalyse” the results of Nietzschean mediation with the appearance of the “institution” which can be perceived to most closely embody the attempt to mediate essence in the real: *psychoanalysis itself*. Psychoanalysis emerges in the work of its founding father, Sigmund Freud, who recognised that human essence was *riddled by negativities*. He referred to these negativities as *neuroses*, which could split into two forms: obsession and hysteria, which took on a *sexuated quality*, i.e. obsession was linked to masculine essence, and hysteria was linked to feminine essence (an idea that mirrors the superstitious beliefs of the ancient Greeks). Here, what was so revolutionary in Freud's idea in relation to classical psychology, is that it *perverted normativity*, i.e. for classical psychology there was such a thing as a “normal psyche,” whereas, for Freud, there was no such thing as a “normal psyche,” there was rather the establishment of *neurosis as norm*, i.e. all humans were to

some degree neurotic, and those who required analysis, were those at the extremes of the norm.

From these basic or foundational “psychological facts” of psychoanalysis, Freud developed his own views on the status of God, and the role of religious institutions in the life of human beings. For Freud, he established the connection between religion and the infantile psyche, i.e. God was the ultimate wish fulfilment for the actual or real father that is painfully absent qua ‘murdered Father.’ Here, in the history and philosophy of psychoanalysis, we encounter frequent references to the Biblical passages of the ‘Jesus on the Cross’ moment: “Father, can’t you see that I am burning?” God here is perceived as a reflection of child-ish (as opposed to a child-like mind),<sup>346</sup> and a logical failure to confront the real of our existential situation. Against Christianity, instead of placing the real in a beyond (after-life), the role of the analytic clinic, for Freud, was to help the subject reconcile itself with the infantile mind (“Father, can’t you see I’m burning”) produced through the constellation of the Oedipus complex (killing Father), and in the process dissolving the egoic symptomatic negativity of obsession and/or hysteria for a more mature or ethical guiding of its own essential being as a positive symptom of the lacking concept.

Here we can not move forward without considering an internal contradiction of psychoanalysis itself, in the radical break between Freud and Freud’s first born: Carl Jung.

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<sup>346</sup> As Dimitri Crooijmans through Hegel perceptively points out at the beginning of his article on the Spirit Child (see: Chapter 7), to become like little children does not mean that one should remain a child. This distinction between child-like and childish is also emphasised by Zarathustra (see: *The Ass Festival*), as well as by Daniel and Michelle Garner of O.G. Rose in our conversation on the family (see: Chapter 22).

Carl Jung broke from his Father,<sup>347</sup> specifically in regards to Freud's reduction of religiosity and the supernatural to the infantile psyche and masculinised or patriarchal side of identification with the Oedipal complex. Jung claimed, in opposition to Freud, that "the Unconscious is God," and that, since the goal of Jungian analysis is to "make the unconscious conscious," that he did not need to believe in God as an external being, but rather, knew God positively. Moreover, religion, for Jung, was perceived as a necessary road to personal individuation. Here God is interpreted as a pantheistic substance (the collective unconscious), which can be mediated to conscious knowing.

What does any of this have to do with Hegel's logic?

The great thing about studying Hegel in detail is that one can "make him come to life,"<sup>348</sup> in the analysis of historical oppositions which he himself could not have studied. The opposition between Freud and Jung is but one opposition where a Hegelian analysis really opens up something interesting. From a Hegelian perspective, the idea is that "God is Unconscious," and in need to essential mediation, but also that a subject must confront this mediation *abyssally*, and not for a total knowledge of God's mind, but rather for a *part-inhabitation* of the becoming of God qua Concept as contradictory becoming. Here religion, for Hegel, holds the perfect picture thought in unconscious substance, whereas science opens us to the abyss of free knowing. Both religion and science play a role, but it is certainly dialectically mediated in a phenomenological

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<sup>347</sup> Was he psychotically burning beyond analysis in mystical immediacy? Here one may benefit from thinking of the relation between mysticism and metaphysics, as outlined by Dr. Peter Sjöstedt-Hughes, which may introduce an interesting methodological connection between classical philosophical metaphysics, and conventional psychoanalytic talk therapy, see: Sjöstedt-Hughes, P. 2023. On the need for metaphysics in psychedelic therapy and research. *Frontiers in Psychology* 14: 1128589.

<sup>348</sup> Resurrect him after death, if you like. As Hegel notes in the Doctrine of the Concept, the concept does indeed "fly high."

process, which is asymmetrically pointing in the direction of religious knowing to scientific knowing (as is clear in the unfolding of the phenomenological journey in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and in particular in the distinction between Religion and Absolute Knowing). But it should also be emphasised that this asymmetrical pointing from religious to scientific knowing is also mirrored in the historicity of Western culture itself, which in many ways, was the whole motivation for the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, i.e. to help ordinary consciousness accommodate itself to this new universe without regressing to religious fundamentalism and/or skipping the phenomenological journey and embodying science before one is truly ready or capable.

The result of a Hegelian analysis of Freud and Jung is more or less clear: Freud attempts to institutionalise the abyss of essential mediation (with the analyst functioning as a vanishing mediator for the abyss itself), and Jung (perhaps psychotically), attempts to fill in the gap of the abyss in essential mediation with a figure of total substantial knowing: the Unconscious is God (and this Unconscious can be made conscious for a totalising mystical identification on the level of the understanding). It is only from this position that we can understand Lacan's intervention or sublation of the psychoanalytic field caught in the paradoxes of Freudian institutionalisation of the abyssal essential mediation, and the Jungian mystification qua totalising knowledge of the Unconscious God. For Lacan: *God is unconscious* (Lacan, Seminars, Book 11, p. 59):

“The true formula for atheism is not *God is Dead* – even by basing the origin of the function of the father upon his murder, Freud protects the father – the true formula for atheism is *God is unconscious*. The

awakening shows us the waking state of the subject's unconscious in the representation of what has happened – the unfortunate accident in reality: *Father, can't you see I'm burning?*"

What does this mean? Here Lacan departed from both Freud's reduction and Jung's pantheist substance with the interpretation "God is unconscious." Lacan here suggests that not only is human being's essence unconscious (there is no big Other), but God, as the structure of language (logos), is unconscious ("there is no Other of the Other"). In other words, "God is unconscious" is a universalisation of the essential lack in the other: not only do we lack (the Other), but God as the Other, also lacks. Here Hegel's absolute knowing is not a Jungian full substantialization of the Other, but rather the affirmation of this lack itself as an essential self-emptying for the concept (qua concept). We also see this in the narrative of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, where Zarathustra's own essential mediation ends with an ultimate self-emptying into a cloud of love: he becomes an embodiment of the empty child.<sup>349</sup>

It is here where we can revisit the unlikely unity between Nietzsche and Hegel's project in relation to Kant's opening of the modern project with a subjective idealism: whereas Hegel accuses Kant of jumping to the absolute concept without first mediating essence, Nietzsche affirms the abyss of essential mediation itself due to a lack of the absolute concept. It is in this difference where, we can again bring Hegel back to life, and think of the difference between Nietzsche-in-the-real and Nietzsche-in-the-fantasy (of Zarathustra), as an important lesson, warning, and

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<sup>349</sup> As Dimitri Crooijmans notes in his article on the Spirit Child (see again: Chapter 7), Hegel and Nietzsche ultimately have a similar end game, and as Alex Ebert notes in his article on Excess/Absence (see: Chapter 8), path to the child is a terrible monstrosity upon meaning, moving as death upon identity.



perhaps, insight, into why Kant would jump to the absolute concept, like an intuitive “shot out of a pistol,” instead of confronting the abyssal mediation of essence. Nietzsche, the actual man, was an insanely creative, yet socially dysfunctional individual, who ended in madness.<sup>350</sup> While all of his works are worth deep reading and reflection, his final work, *Ecce Homo*, functions as a psychotic attempt to fill the lack in the Other with his own self-identity (as noted by Slavoj Žižek): “Why am I so wise? Why am I so bright? Why I am destiny” (i.e. dramatic self-aggrandisement).<sup>351</sup>

Here Lacan’s work on psychosis, which represents a split internal to the original psychoanalytic split (the obsessional/hysterical neuroses), i.e. psychoses are not neuroses; suggesting that such a psychotic state is caused by the “foreclosure” of the “Name-of-the-Father” (i.e. Death of God leads to libidinal investment in the fantasmatic ego). Can we not say that Jung’s Nietzsche, developed after his own psychotic break from the Freudian neurotic paradigm, is the Nietzsche of *Ecce Homo*? Is not Jung’s Nietzsche the Nietzsche of psychotic breakdown/affirmation of one’s own unconscious as the true God substance known beyond belief? Is not Jung’s affirmation a total abandonment of real psychoanalysis in the embodiment of an un-analysable symptom? Or is Jung the mystical truth of Freud and the limitation of psychoanalysis?<sup>352</sup>

Whatever the truth, I argue we should pay attention to the real of Nietzsche’s fantasy, as opposed to the real of

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<sup>350</sup> A lesson which one Thomas Hamelryck demands we learn well. It is for this reason precisely that Hamelryck would have us think Nietzsche, who yearns for sacrifice, transgression, and intoxication, in dialectic with anthropologist René Girard, who rather pleads for prohibition, asceticism, and renunciation (see: Chapter 4).

<sup>351</sup> Žižek, S. 1991. *For They Know Not What They Do*. Verso Books. p. xxxix. (I am indebted to Michael Downs for bringing the importance of this text to my attention).

<sup>352</sup> As Nietzsche through Zarathustra states: “What is silent in the father learns to speak in the son; and often I found the son to be the father’s exposed secret.” (see: *On the Tarantulas*).

Nietzsche's bodily fate. Zarathustra, as Nietzsche's fantasmatic mediation of essence, does not find an end in psychotic breakdown and self-aggrandisement, but rather, as mentioned, his self disappears into a cloud of love, leading him to deeper self-questioning (directly opposed to self-aggrandisement). This would be a good symbol for the joyful open-questioning of the child: here we should see Nietzsche's fantasy pointing towards the immanent necessity of essential mediation in the abyss, while Nietzsche's real warns us of the risks of psychotic breakdown in that same abyss (Death of God as external being).

This all has extreme practical relevance to the contemporary philosophical field of consciousness studies (which very rarely engages the mysteries of consciousness in terms of embodied spiritual development in figures like Nietzsche). The philosophical field of consciousness studies tends to revolve around the question of the reality of qualia or subjective experience of consciousness. The term qualia was first introduced by semiotician David Peirce as the qualitative characteristics of the given which must be (1) distinguished from the properties of objects, and (2) necessary for theories of essence as the foundation of both intuition and subjectivity.<sup>353</sup> In contemporary analytic philosophy, there is a dominant trend which attempts to resolve these problems in terms of "explanation." Consider here philosopher Daniel Dennett's classic text *Explaining Consciousness* which basically forwards the idea that the subjective experience of consciousness, or the qualia of consciousness, are not real and do not exist because they are only "appearances" escaping physical descriptions of being, i.e. qualia have no being, they are only abyssal appearances.<sup>354</sup>

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<sup>353</sup> Peirce, C.S. 1982 (1866). *Writings of Charles S. Peirce: 1857-1866* (Vol. 1). Indiana University Press. p. 477-478.

<sup>354</sup> Dennett, D. 1991. *Consciousness Explained*. Little Brown and Co.

From this idea, Dennett philosophically de-centers David Chalmers “hard problem of consciousness” as the attempt to describe the “what-it-is-like” characteristic of qualia.<sup>355</sup> For Chalmers, the hard problem of consciousness raises the problem of “zombieland,” trying to imagine an alternative world where everything is physically identical or indistinguishable from our world, except that “nobody is home,” in the sense of subjective experience qua qualia. This thought experiment attempts to isolate the “hard problem,” explaining what “it” is that separates our world from “zombieland”? For Dennett, this thought experiment is misleading and logically incoherent since something like the qualitative experience of pain, for example, is not something that can be stripped from a being’s mental life without there being a noticeable behavioural (external) change. Dennett’s basic suggestion is that, far from needing a zombieland thought experiment to compare or contrast with our world, where we can only assume the subjective experience of other human beings, is the idea that *our world is already zombieland*, i.e. in explaining consciousness, we can basically explain away consciousness as illusory. We think we are conscious, we think we think, we think we experience pain, but we may be wrong in ways we can never know.

Here Dennett’s operation can be translated in Hegelian terms as the move of reducing essence (qualia, or the what-it-is-like aspect of the appearances of concrete existence), to being (where we can all share a common scientific understanding of the way the brain is involved in producing experience). Our task here is not to simply negate Dennett, but rather to suggest that he is making a category error on the level of the most sophisticated metaphysics: *instead of reducing essence to being, what is*

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<sup>355</sup> Chalmers, D. 1995. Facing up to the problem of consciousness. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 2(3): 200-219.

*required, called for, necessary, is the mediation of essence towards the concept.* In this sense, we may oppose Dennett's physicalist reduction of qualia to being with Hegel's paradoxical insistence that principle of concrete existence is appearance, and that appearance is not to be understood as a "sensible being," but rather as a "suprasensible appearance qua appearance," i.e. the abyssal mediation of the appearance of one's own essence to oneself. For Hegel, in other words, even if "consciousness is illusory" (our experience, thinking, pain, etc.), this illusion (or appearance qua appearance) has effects in the real, and its mediation is necessary to overcome being for concept. From this perspective, we need less "explaining (away)" of consciousness and more "addressing" of consciousness (as a vanishing mediation of consciousness itself).<sup>356</sup>

But does not Nietzsche's Zarathustra do precisely this? What would analytic philosophy's approach to the mystery of consciousness look like if it took such a fantasmatic object seriously?

For Nietzsche's Zarathustra, qualia are appearances without physical being (following Dennett), but it is possible to engage (abyssal) phenomenal mediation of essence in a mode that seems a lot like a suprasensible appearance qua appearance (following Hegel). Here perhaps we can suggest, if God is Unconscious, and the subject is "burning" as a result, that qualia can be "cooked" or the "burn" can be "worked with." This asks us to consider Zarathustra as a "cook" who mixes in his metaphorical pot, all human qualia, or *what-it-is-like to be a human being*, in a type of essential mediation designed to *surpass human being itself*. How

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<sup>356</sup> Here one should look to projects like Tim Adalin's Voicecraft as the future of "consciousness studies," and also for a form of psychedelic-informed philosophy that can move beyond the tired old divides of analytic and continental traditions, and perhaps even Freudian and Jungian psychoanalytic traditions.

real are qualia? How real are raw feelings like pleasure and pain? Do pleasure and pain exist? Whether or not they are real for science, in psychoanalysis, it is recognised that, for the subject, there is no (physical) Other to hold these qualia. In other words, it is not that these qualia are real, but rather they are “answers to the real” as the lacking Other. If qualia are “answers to the real,” then it is not about explaining (away) consciousness, but rather attempting to “address” consciousness’s own impossibility to be itself. In Hegelese, it is about addressing consciousness's own abyssal essential mediation to the concept. In this process, we must always remember, there is a constitutive risk of madness (as embodied in the real-actual life of Nietzsche). Perhaps it is this very risk of madness that leads analytic philosophy to relegate the idea of zombieland to thought experiments and/or attempts to resolve zombieland by explaining it away?

Let’s go a bit deeper down the rabbit hole of contemporary philosophy. In the 20th century, analytic philosophy asked itself: “What is it like to be a bat?”<sup>357</sup> First introduced by the philosopher Thomas Nagel, he invites us to think, not about just an external description of being (i.e. translating qualia into being), but rather *what-it-is-like-for-that-organism*. In this opening, Nagel has reflected at length about the possibility that we will not be able to think of a physical description or explanation of the mind until we better understand the distinction between, or the general problem of the difference/distinction between subjective and objective. Of course, thinking this very distinction could undermine the whole idea of a physical description of mind itself, since the mind is always-already required or involved in the very process of describing the mind physically. In any case, if we are thinking from this tradition, perhaps the question that 20th century continental philosophy asked

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<sup>357</sup> Nagel, T. 1974. What is it like to be a bat? *The Philosophical Review*, 83(4): p. 435-450.

itself was (following Nietzsche's Zarathustra): "What is it like to be the overman?"

To confront the problem of *what-it-is-like* to be the overman, we have to think of Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as an object. Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* details not only the doctrine of the overman (essential overcoming of human being), but also describes the qualia of experience of the overman, i.e. the fantasmatic window into the *what-it-is-like-for-the-overman*. What we clearly see here is the subject as its own impossible object. Zarathustra tries to mediate essence as its own impossibility to be a leader, to sacrifice himself for other beings as a bridge to the future. In this impossibility, Zarathustra constantly confronts paradoxes of both failure and mistakes via the qualia of *pleasure-in-pain*, as well as success and triumph in the qualia of *pain-in-pleasure*, as a bridge to the future involving the affirmation of one's own death. Here the paradoxical qualia of *pleasure-in-pain/pain-in-pleasure* disorients ordinary consciousness, and functions as a contradictory block to the mediation of essence, and the traversal of being for the concept. In this sense, *what-it-is-like-for-the-overman* is to affirm the paradox of *pleasure-in-pain* and *pain-in-pleasure* that characterises the abyssal mediation of essence.<sup>358</sup>

All this is directly relevant to emerging 21st century philosophy which is in desperate search for a new approach to consciousness. While philosophical discussions of Chalmers's zombieland thought experiment have dissipated, the idea that we are already in zombieland has intensified. Consider cognitive scientist John

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<sup>358</sup> Would it not be much easier, and more convenient, if all we needed to do was "explain consciousness" via reduction of essence to being? The problem is not one relevant to the intellect of a disembodied rational abstraction, but rather the way in which that very intellect mediates its own self-appearance qua concrete existence, to an understanding of the self-concept as a free speculative cognition.

Vervaeke's "Zombies in Western Culture,"<sup>359</sup> which argues that the frequent depiction of the zombie-figure in pop culture reflects a "meaning crisis" in Western Culture itself, as essential figures of the zombie (e.g. mindlessness, ugliness, homelessness), increasingly reflect the essence of many disconnected and alienated from the symbolism of the Christian worldview (which trained the mind on God, opened spaces of beauty, provided a sense of home-in-the-world-but-not-of-the-world).<sup>360</sup>

Vervaeke's basic program to approach this problem, grounded in a mixture of reinvented cognitive science and revived ancient wisdom practices oriented around a neo-Platonist worldview, involves constructing "something-like" a religion to avoid falling deeper into anxiety and disenfranchisement. We could say that Vervaeke, in contrast to Dennett, takes seriously the problem of actual zombieland. Furthermore, he is ready to both mobilise a reinvented cognitive science (4E: embodied, embedded, enacted, extended) in order to ground an "ecology of practices" that attempts to mediate essence instead of reducing essence to being. He is also trying to ground an ethos of "dialogos" in order to address consciousness, as opposed to explaining it (away). How does Hegel's essence and Nietzsche Zarathustra feature in this?

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<sup>359</sup> Vervaeke, J., Mastropietro, C., & Miscevic, F. 2017. *Zombies in Western Culture: A Twenty-First Century Crisis*. Open Book Publishers.

<sup>360</sup> This specific problem of real human Zombies in a post-Christian world, according to Daniel Garner of O.G. Rose, forces us to re-frame the issue of the meaning crisis as the problem of "belonging." Whereas, one could argue there is a literal explosion of meaning in our contemporary world, what is missing is the "root system" for "meaningful meaning," i.e. *we are missing belonging in a neoliberal digital social landscape which has abandoned traditional culture and yet cannot reassert givens-that-work*. Can we think of common belonging in cultural pluralism? Can we think of belonging for the commons? For Daniel Garner, this is the whole reason why we should bother obsessively working through thinkers like Hegel and Nietzsche and Deleuze, see: Rose. O.G. 2023. *Belonging Again Part 1: An Explanation*. Bowker.

The first point is that these problems seem to reflect the meta-modernist tension between Kant and Hegel.<sup>361</sup> For Kant, there is the establishment of a divide between being in-itself and the concept for-itself. Consequently, we cannot know being in-itself (its noumenal objects), we only have access to the appearances of being (absolute concept without essential mediation). Here we must think of analytic philosophy's attempt to reduce qualia to being as the subject's own impossible object (or hard problem), which is itself operating in a pre-Kantian universe that (perhaps unconsciously) strives for a type of Spinozan pantheist substance without subject. However, for Hegel, being-in-itself and the concept for-itself is united. Consequently, knowledge of being in-itself is reflected in appearances for-us, i.e. appearance qua appearance is the true in-itself that requires essential mediation. Perhaps it will take the universalisation of "zombieland" before we take this distinction to heart, and think deeply about what it will take to move from human being to concept?

Nietzsche's Zarathustra had specific recommendations for essential mediation, which, while challenging, offers us a type of methodology that may be important for 21st century philosophy and science. These methods point towards the mediation of essence and addressing of consciousness as opposed to reducing essence and explaining consciousness (away), both of which, in Freud-Lacanian terms, could be described as an unconscious death drive. Nietzsche's methods help us to think through the essential relation at work in the abyssal mediation of essence itself. In Hegelese, the unconscious God must be thought in-between the tension of whole and part, or the concrete world and its appearance to the subject.

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<sup>361</sup> Which should be distinguished from "metamodernism" as a self-standing paradigm.



1. First, the God-Whole is a self-subsistent constitution or a world existing in-and-for-itself which is equal to the Subject-Parts as an immediate concrete existence which has the world of appearance (this is a good formula for the traditional notion of the God-Subject relation)
2. Second, there is a fundamental contradiction between the God-Whole, which exists only in-and-as the appearance of its parts, and Subject-Parts as direct embodiment of the Whole as Other within (this is a good formula for the appearance in the modern world of the free political subject)
3. Finally, God-Whole/Subject-Parts resolve themselves in the affirmation of essence as negative force, where the external concrete world is identical to the appearance of the world (this is a good formula for the appearance of Hegelian-Nietzschean logic of self-overcoming or essential mediation)

As stated above, in this resolution of essence, we do not get a total knowledge of God's mind, but rather a *part-inhabitation* of the becoming of God qua Concept as contradictory becoming. The question for Vervaeke's project would be: can a reinvented cognitive science and revived neo-Platonism engage and contain a processing of abyssal essential mediation on the level of Nietzsche's Zarathustra? Or is there contained within his project, the risk of regression to traditional religious institutionalisation? In Hegelian terms: Nietzsche's Zarathustra is attempting to *address the human being to confront abyssal essence* as a true force, to detach from God as an external being (i.e.

God is Dead), to embody godliness of essential mediation (i.e. God is Unconscious), to the concept itself (i.e. God as Concept qua Concept).<sup>362</sup> *This* is the over-man's being.

What would be the “ecology of practices” and “ethos of dialogos” *for the overman*? Does it really necessitate the re-emergence of “something-like” religion? What we learn from Zarathustra is that there is a positive result to the mediation of abyssal essence which may give birth to a new world, but what we learn from Nietzsche is that there are inherent dangers of madness that will necessarily appear on this path. It is precisely in this gap, between the possibilities of a positive result in the concept, and the risk of total failure in the abyss, that we must install an “ecology of practice” and uphold “dialogos” that is capable of *addressing consciousness* as opposed to merely *explaining it away*. If the “ecology of practice” and the emphasis on “dialogos” miss this dialectical relation, i.e. not just the in-itself of address, but also the for-itself: “*for the overman*,” then the entire practice loses its connection to abyssal essential mediation for the concept. To explain consciousness away is to not even approach the concept, but rather to disappear back into pre-subjective substance or traditionalist worldviews (which will be an ever-present threat to the human being traversing abyssal essence). To address consciousness, is to hold out a hope, that in the abyss, we may come out on the other side, with a security that is not an external being (reified in institutions), but rather the truth of what we are in-and-for-ourselves: knowledge of the concept, the birth of the spirit child, that is the light and the way into the future, where the one becomes the other, i.e. where the one *is* the other becoming.

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<sup>362</sup> Note that while this move can in principle include a historical interpretation of specific religious denominations, this move cannot be reduced to any particular religious denomination (Christian or otherwise).

This ultimately requires that we rethink the relation between Hegel and Nietzsche (an opportunity that seems to have been missed, or better, misrepresented, throughout 20th century philosophy). When Hegel affirms that the principle of concrete existence is appearance, he does this to work with a precise contradiction, where the mediation of appearance qua concrete existence leads to the emergence of an actual subject, defined in terms of its free notional mediation. Does this motion, first the recognition of the emptiness of appearances of concrete existence, and second, the recognition of the necessity of the mediation of the emptiness of the appearances of concrete existence, specifically for the emergence of an actual subject defined in terms of its free notional mediation, not reflect the very narrative of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*? In this sense, should we not make a distinction between Zarathustra's opening affirmation of God's Death, and Zarathustra's final metamorphosis (bombarDED from above by a cloud of love after a long essential mediation), as pointing towards the truth *God is Unconscious*? What is God in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*? Is not God the very mediation of appearances of concrete existence by the part-subject Zarathustra (his "godliness"), where, first: Zarathustra embodies the Whole as a part-subject (reflecting the sun), and second: Zarathustra, after affirming the negative force in the spiritual metamorphoses, encounters a direct overlap between externality and internality (in his final metamorphosis)? Is this not the birth of the subject, the free notion, or in Nietzschean terms: the birth of the spirit child? Moving from "God is Dead" to "God is Unconscious," by way of Zarathustra as a model for Hegel's Essence will help us in essential mediation of the abyss. What is still needed is an in-depth analysis of the "concept as such," which may force us to consider "God as

Syllogism.” But that will have to wait for another time and its proper place.<sup>363</sup>

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<sup>363</sup> The germs of this idea are found in the Philosophy Portal *Science of Logic* course.