

Insight and the Enlightenment: Why *Einsicht* in Chapter Six of Hegel's  
*Phenomenology of Spirit*?

(Abstract)

Hegel uses the term *Einsicht* ('insight') throughout several key subsections of Chapter Six of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (notably in 'Faith and Pure Insight' and 'The Struggle of the Enlightenment with Superstition'). Nowhere else in his work does the term enjoy such a sustained treatment. Commentators generally accept Hegel's use of the term in the *Phenomenology* as simply referring to the type of counter-religious reasoning found in the French Enlightenment. I show how Hegel derives the term, through the lens of Kant's essay, 'What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?' from the *Pantheismusstreit*, the philosophical debate between Mendelssohn and Jacobi about knowledge of God. The *Aufklärung* provenance of *Einsicht* shows how a deep complicity between faith and reason, in the form of immediate knowing, leads beyond the Terror to a happier outcome in the Morality section. Finally, passing reference to *Einsicht* in the *Vorbegriff* of the *Encyclopaedia Logic* confirms its role in the ethical and political vocation of Hegel's Science.

## Insight and the Enlightenment: Why *Einsicht* in Chapter Six of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*?

Among the different binary oppositions characterizing the figures of self-alienated Culture that Hegel presents in Chapter Six of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, I have always found the subchapter on 'Faith and Pure Insight' (*PhG*: 527/391)<sup>1</sup> particularly intriguing. While the story that it appears to tell, of the conflict between religion and reason, is hardly out of place in the *Lumières* context where it is found, framed by references to Diderot and the French Revolution, Hegel's use of the term *Einsicht* ('insight') itself has always struck me as peculiar. Why does Hegel choose the term here to describe Enlightenment reason? Why not simply use 'reason' (*Vernunft*), a term that certainly fits in with the surrounding references to Deism, Encyclopaedism, French utilitarianism, Jacobinism etc., and which Hegel does, in fact, refer to occasionally in the subchapter that I am discussing?<sup>2</sup> Why does Hegel favour the term *Einsicht* here, I wondered. What is so specific about this form of mental activity that it finds its way into Chapter Six of the *Phenomenology* and nowhere else, in the same sustained manner, in the entire oeuvre? Indeed, the index to the *Werke* only lists one other occurrence of the term (*Werke Register*: 139), in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, which I will visit below.

Perhaps, one might suppose, Hegel uses the term in order to describe a specific type of subjective mental activity appropriate to the form of individual human consciousness that arises in the Culture chapter. In that case, *Einsicht* could have a precise psychological meaning, definable against the historical backdrop where it appears in the *Phenomenology*. If indeed

*Einsicht* were such a feature, I further reasoned, then we might possibly find some reference to the term in the Psychology section of Hegel's *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*, in his *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences*. This is not the case. 'Insight' is not presented among the psychological elements of mind (*Geist*) examined in *Subjective Spirit*: we find intelligence, intuition, imagination, *Phantasie*, thinking (*das Denken*), memory, feeling but no *Einsicht*. With neither a clear psychological definition nor a convincing historical-cultural reference, I found myself again left with the question, why *Einsicht*?

In fact, commentators on this section of the *Phenomenology* tend to simply take the term at face value, as a type of thinking that consciousness happens to engage in at this point in the book's narrative.<sup>3</sup> The problem with this approach is that when we take the use of *Einsicht* in a strictly punctual sense, as meaningful in this one context alone, it tends to lose any broader significance, leaving it largely indistinguishable from reasoning or thinking in general. In a less systematic and rigorous thinker, one might not find this issue particularly interesting. However, in Hegel, it is hard to believe that the specific usage of the term throughout a crucial section of one of his major works could simply be idiosyncratic. To be clear, I am not saying that Hegel never uses the word elsewhere in his work. On the contrary, the everydayness of the German word *Einsicht* ensures its use in a variety of often unexceptional contexts. Indeed, one might say that it is the 'common usage' quality of the word itself that makes its promotion, in the *Phenomenology*, particularly noteworthy.

Investigating the provenance of *Einsicht* in the Enlightenment setting where it appears, I thought, might help better define the specific meaning that Hegel attaches to it in Chapter Six. Historically contextualizing the term in this way might thus contribute to a clearer understanding of how the *Phenomenology*'s 'Faith and Pure Insight' section is to be read. Further, since

reference to *reine Einsicht* carries through the subsequent sections on the Enlightenment (*PhG*: ¶¶538–581), a better grasp of its meaning might shed new light there as well, and perhaps even beyond, in other Hegelian settings where the word is found and where the reader may choose to assay my interpretation.

My investigations have led me to conclude that Hegel derives his use of *Einsicht* from its use in the German Enlightenment and specifically from its appearance within the *Aufklärung*'s famous *Pantheismusstreit* (Pantheism Quarrel) between Moses Mendelssohn and Friedrich Jacobi, as well as in Kant's article, 'What Does it Mean to Orient Oneself in Thought'. The present paper seeks to support this conclusion and comprehend 'insight' in a way that is pertinent to our reading of the relevant sections in the *Phenomenology* and hopefully also to Hegel's Scientific (systematic) project generally.

In order to make my argument clear for the reader, I have laid it out in the following steps. In section I ('*Einsicht* and knowledge of God'), I will show that the other, rare technical occurrences of *Einsicht* (outside the *Phenomenology*) also take place in a religious context, where the knowledge of God is again at stake; I will then show how this religious/epistemological issue forms the substance of the epochal *Pantheismusstreit* between Mendelssohn and Jacobi, which Hegel certainly had in mind. In section II (Kant's Moral Application of *Einsicht* to Mendelssohn's Metaphysics), I discuss how Kant, in a well-known essay of the time, assigns the term *Einsicht* to the foundational intuition underlying Mendelssohn's metaphysical reasoning, in a way that anticipates the rational faith postulated by his own (i.e. Kant's) moral philosophy. In section III (*Einsicht* in Jacobi, as Faith and Foundational Intuition), I then discover the use of *Einsicht* in Jacobi, in his surprisingly celebratory reference to Spinoza's idea of the intellectual love of God, thereby stretching his own

(i.e. Jacobi's) definition of faith to mean a foundational metaphysical intuition. In section IV, (The Hegelian Lesson: *Einsicht* as Immediate Knowing and the Dangers of Exclusivity), I show how seeing—*Einsicht* as a foundational intuition, in both Mendelssohn and Jacobi, allows Hegel to understand it as a form of Immediate Knowing common to both Enlightenment authors and to his own (i.e. Hegel's) Scientific project. This is expressed in the *Vorbegriff* (Preliminary Concept) to his *Encyclopaedia Logic*. In section V (A *Pantheismusstreit*-informed Exegesis of Faith and Pure Insight), I provide a brief exegesis of how the *Aufklärung* references within the 'Faith and Pure Insight' section enable us to comprehend Hegel's proposed reconciliation of the two terms, and how this provides a passage beyond Revolutionary Terror, to the subsequent section on Morality. The *Conclusion* affirms the relevance of reference to the *Pantheismusstreit* in comprehending the dialectical movement of 'Faith and Pure Insight' and the crucial importance of *Einsicht*, as Immediate Knowing in the ethical and political project of (Hegelian) Science.

### I. *Einsicht* and the knowledge of God

I began my investigation by searching for other significant references to *Einsicht* within the Hegelian oeuvre, besides what is found in the *Phenomenology*, in the hope that they may provide a clue to the question of provenance, i.e. how Hegel came to inherit the term. The first instance that I approached (using the above-mentioned *W Register*) is found in the *Lectures on Religion*. I will return to a brief discussion of one other reference to *Einsicht*, found in the *Vorbegriff* [Preliminary Concept] of the *EL*, which opens onto the term's broader Scientific (systematic) relevance in Hegel.

Revealingly, the religious context of the first extra-*Phenomenological* reference is consistent with Hegel's statement at the beginning of the 'Faith and Pure Insight' section (*PhG*:

528/392): ‘Religion—for it is obviously religion that we are talking about ...’ Significantly, however, what the reference to *Einsicht* within the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* shows is that the issue that it is associated with is not predominantly one of reason’s liberation from dogmatic, positive religion, as we generally find in the *philosophes* of the French Enlightenment, but rather the conflicting claims between reason and faith as exclusive means of knowing God. In the *LR*, the religious stakes involved with *Einsicht* are clearly those of the *Pantheismusstreit* between Mendelssohn and Jacobi and their conflicting views regarding the absolute pretensions of traditional, pre-Kantian (pre-critical) metaphysics (Mendelssohn’s position) versus the knowledge claims of religious faith (Jacobi). In polemical terms, Jacobi qualified all metaphysical reasoning as reducible to Spinozism and thus reducible to deterministic, materialistic nihilism, while Mendelssohn implied that Jacobi’s reliance on faith was an expression of unreason and thus a nascent form of religious fanaticism (*Schwärmerei*).<sup>4</sup>

In comprehending the Pantheism Quarrel as taking place between two forms of *knowing*, as Hegel points out when he recognizes in ‘Faith and Pure Insight’ that the activity of thought is a ‘cardinal factor in the nature of faith, which is usually overlooked’ (*PhG*: ¶529), we see how the religious issue, where *Einsicht* is evoked, is fundamentally epistemological. The debate is not first and foremost between *atheistic* reason and religious faith, but rather between the rival approaches of thought in its quest to *know* God as the truth. It is the shared, absolute object of each approach (pre-critical metaphysics and faith) that makes their rivalry all the more devastating, for religion but also, as we will see, for the ethical and political vocation of philosophy qua systematic Science.

The religious dimension of the term *Einsicht* in the *Phenomenology* is consequently reinforced by its appearance in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* (*LR*: 56), where the

issue at stake is again clearly the knowledge of God. In the *Lectures* text, ‘insight’ represents metaphysical reasoning (Descartes, Leibniz, Spinoza, Wolff and, above all, Mendelssohn), as practised before Kant’s critique of the synthetical limits of a priori reason came to be generally accepted. Hegel’s point in the *LR*, however, is not to reiterate Kant’s criticism of metaphysics but rather to emphasize the dangers of relying exclusively on faith and the agency of divine Revelation in a way that simply casts aside metaphysical reasoning. It is the very exclusivity of the faith-based position that carries the risk of falling into the excesses of religious feeling and fanaticism (*Schwärmerei*): ‘...[I]n this divergent state of affairs, man casts aside the demands of insight and wants to return to naïve religious feeling’, remarks Hegel.

Reference to the dilemma posed by the *Pantheismusstreit* throws into relief the danger of allowing the discord between faith and reason (as ‘insight’) to persist, a danger further emphasized in the second reference to *Einsicht* that I found in the *LR*: ‘If discord arises between insight and religion, it must be removed by cognition or it will lead to despair and drive out reconciliation. This despair is the consequence of one-sided reconciliation. One rejects one side and holds fast to the other, but no true peace is obtained thereby’ (*LR* 1984: 107–8 n. 69).<sup>5</sup>

Making the dilemma of the Pantheism Quarrel central to Hegel’s presentation of the Enlightenment, in the *Phenomenology*, allows us to see what is, for him, first and foremost at stake in the (German) *Aufklärung*: man’s knowing relation to God, which can only be realized when religious faith is truly reconciled with thinking reason. Only such a reconciliation can save humanity from ‘despair’. The mission of systematic (Hegelian) *Wissenschaft* (Science) is consequently to overcome the recalcitrant exclusivity of the apparently opposed epistemological positions represented in faith and reason.<sup>6</sup>

Systematic Science's conciliatory mission is clearly outlined in the other significant occurrence of *Einsicht* in Hegel, which I mentioned above, namely in the Immediate Knowing section of the *Vorbestimmung* to the *EL*, roughly contemporaneous with the *Religion Lectures* (1820s). In the *Vorbestimmung*, Hegel presents the dangers that epistemological unilaterality presents for Science and how such dangers cut two ways. The single-minded reliance on the 'insight' of metaphysical reasoning is just as pernicious as the exclusivity of faith, not only to Science viewed as a holistic endeavour but to the world in which such knowing is meant to take place. I will return to this reference toward the end of the paper and show how it reinforces an important lesson regarding the ethical and political reach of *Einsicht* in Chapter Six of the *Phenomenology*.

## II. Kant's moral application of *Einsicht* to Mendelssohn's metaphysics

Since Hegel's use of the term *Einsicht*, in the *Phenomenology*, in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* and in the *Vorbestimmung*, seems to make clear reference to the type of metaphysical reasoning championed by Mendelssohn over against Jacobi's appeal to faith, we might expect to find the term itself, as a term of art, in Mendelssohn's philosophical writings, particularly in the texts of his actual debate/correspondence with his philosophical adversary.<sup>7</sup> However, this is not the case. Mendelssohn himself does not use the term in any significant way. Where we do find the term associated with Mendelssohn's thought, however, is in an important commentary on the *Pantheismusstreit*: in Kant's short but well-known essay of the time, entitled 'What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?' This is where I believe Hegel discovered the term *Einsicht* associated with the reasoning of classical metaphysics, as promoted by Mendelssohn. In other words, it is Kant's use of the term in his 'Orienting' essay that allows us to place it in the context of the *Pantheismusstreit* and the late *Aufklärung*, and to understand its crucial role in the deployment of Chapter Six of Hegel's *Phenomenology*.



Kant wrote his short essay, which appeared in 1786 in the *Berlinische Monatschrift*, in response to those seeking his arbitration in the *Pantheismusstreit*, a quarrel which, one might say, he had already ‘resolved’ in his first *Critique* (first edition, 1781) with its prefiguring of his conception of rational faith as articulated in his later *Postulatilehre*.<sup>8</sup> Given Kant’s stature, but also given the apparently ambiguous compromise that his *Critique* presented between reason and faith, where each is fundamentally justified in moral science, it is not surprising that both Mendelssohn’s and Jacobi’s camps sought his partisanship in their adversarial struggle. If Jacobi himself expected Kant’s position to support his own notion of rational faith (which conflated religious faith with the axiomatic positing of empirical reality), he must have been very disappointed. While Kant’s essay does condemn Mendelssohn’s overarching use of uncritical, ‘speculative’ reasoning, Kant applauds Jacobi’s adversary for his unreserved promotion of reason itself, particularly in the face of contemporary expressions of ‘fanaticism’ (*Schwärmerei*), ‘genius’ and ultimately, ‘superstition’ (*Aberglaube*) (OT: 17/145),<sup>9</sup> all positions where Jacobi might well have felt himself (unjustly) targeted.<sup>10</sup> Above all, Kant’s essay concludes with a poignant plea for reason as the guarantor of freedom of thought against impending (with the death of the Enlightenment emperor Frederick the Great) censorship, and against those (like Jacobi?) who would assail reason’s universal human vocation.

Despite Kant’s reservations regarding Mendelssohn’s over-extension of reason’s claims in the area of theoretical knowledge, Kant recognizes shades of his own idea of reason in Mendelssohn’s promotion of the universality of sound common sense. Mendelssohn’s error, according to Kant, was failing to understand that the fundamental universality of reason cannot be limited to the particular expressions of common sense but is rather to be found in reason’s legislative vocation, which must orient it toward the *summum bonum*. In other words, the

vocation of reason, for Kant, is ultimately practical (moral) and as such undergirds the possibility of human freedom that the Enlightenment promises.

The problem for Mendelssohn, according to Kant, was therefore that he ‘misunderstood’ his own idea about reason being oriented by sound common sense, or, as Kant calls it, by ‘sound human reason’ (OT: 13/140). Thus, while Mendelssohn is correct in making reason the final arbiter in all judgments, through the guiding principle of ‘rational insight [*Einsicht*]’ (OT: 13/141), he fails to recognize the moral vocation of such insight. On Kant’s reading, Mendelssohn’s guiding principle remains one of theoretical reason which he mistakenly promotes in place of Kant’s idea of rational faith, i.e. self-legislating (universalizing) moral reason whose vocation lies beyond the theoretical realm. As Kant puts it: ‘By contrast, rational faith, which rests on a need of reason’s use with a practical intent, could be called a postulate of reason – not as if it were an insight which did justice to all the logical demands for certainty...’ (OT: 14/141).

In spite of his criticism of Mendelssohn’s metaphysical use of theoretical reason, Kant nonetheless cannot help but salute him for his uncompromising promotion of reason itself, even though this takes the abstract form of rational insight underlying common sense. On the other hand, the danger that Jacobi’s faith, qua *Schwärmerei*, represents, according to Kant, is that even if it is directed solely against rational insight in its purely theoretical employment, it cannot help but bring harm to (moral) reason itself. This is because Jacobi does not recognize the Kantian notion of rational faith as expressed in his *Postulatslehre*. Further, Jacobi’s position strikes Kant as particularly pernicious since reason is, in its self-legislative vocation, the quintessential expression of human freedom. Injury to reason is consequently an assault on self-legislation, heralding a state of ‘declared lawlessness in thinking’ (OT: 17/145). Indeed, religious fanaticism

is ‘another kind of faith where everyone can do for himself as he likes’ (OT: 15/143). Such a state of anarchic lawlessness will necessarily bring down upon itself the heteronomy of political repression and censorship.

While it is not my aim here to explore all the possible links between Kant’s OT and the sections that I am discussing from Chapter Six of the *Phenomenology*, it is remarkable that the Kant text anticipates Hegel’s move from ‘Faith and Pure Insight’ to ‘the Struggle of Enlightenment with Superstition’, and then to the state of lawlessness and repression we see portrayed in the ‘Absolute Freedom and the Terror’ section. Perhaps most remarkably, we might note that the transition, again in Chapter Six, from the theoretical issues involved in the *Pantheismusstreit* (i.e. the question of the knowledge of God through reason or through faith) to the ethical concerns in the Morality section, replays Kant’s argument about the ultimately moral orientation of Reason itself. My point for now is that, within this broader context, Kant presents *Einsicht* as a kind of axiomatic intuition that is involved in both speculation and common sense (i.e. healthy human reason), which grounds Mendelssohn’s promotion of pre-critical, theoretical reason over against the counter-claims of religious faith, as played out in the *Pantheismusstreit*.

As Allan Arkush notes, Kant in his OT essay probably derives his notion of a Mendelssohnian *Einsicht* (in common sense) from the ‘Allegorical Dream’ section in Chapter Ten of Mendelssohn’s *Morning Hours* (Arkush 1994: 85). Indeed, a look at that chapter shows that ‘orientation’ is the predominant theme of the Dream itself. Travellers in the Swiss Alps are given two (orienting) guides, one, a rustic simple youth who represents common sense, and the other, a fantastical female ‘with a deeply introspective look and a visionary physiognomy’, (*MH* 59) including a wing-like fixture on the back of her head! In the dream, finding the way involves seeking ‘to orient myself’ with reference to these two characters, i.e. either by common sense or

by ‘speculation’. Significantly, and what must surely have pushed Kant into Mendelssohn’s camp, the dream’s arbiter, and the true guide, appears in the form of an ‘elderly matron approaching [...] with measured steps’, who identifies herself as ‘reason’ and who shows the travellers how common sense should be used *together* with speculative insight when the latter leads the thinker astray. The allegory teaches us that insight (qua speculation or contemplation) is in fact the wiser of the two guides, but only when it allows ‘herself’ to be nuanced by common sense. On the other hand, common sense on its own is often too stubborn and dull to yield when ‘she [insight] is in the right’ (*MH* 59). Mendelssohn’s allegory thus teaches us that a deeper sense of reason is the true guide when its insights are grounded in common sense. We might say that Mendelssohn’s allegory shows reason as mediating between common sense and speculation, a claim Kant would certainly be comfortable with, if we take ‘common sense’ for *Verstand* and ‘speculation’ for the regulative function of ideas, although of course Mendelssohn’s use of ‘reason’ does not articulate the moral vocation that grounds Kant’s idea of ‘orienting’.<sup>11</sup>

If Hegel, in the ‘Faith and Pure Insight’ section, indeed derives the term *Einsicht* from Kant’s presentation of Mendelssohn’s position over against Jacobian faith, then we may already note that insight is more than the type of pre-critical, metaphysical reasoning normally associated with the Enlightenment. In a way, we might say that what Kant takes away from Mendelssohn’s allegorical dream is the trace of his own idea of reason, of a foundational orientation that is deeper than ratiocinating reasoning itself, an orienting which Kant refers to as *Einsicht*. In adopting the term, therefore, Hegel has already taken on its intuitional aspect, one which will thus prove related to the notion that it initially appeared opposed to: Jacobi’s faith. For the dialectical lesson that Hegel teaches in Chapter Six consists in showing how the opposition between faith and insight is an erroneous one, to the extent that each pole can be shown to

contain its other within itself. Failure to recognize this fact through the maintaining of each position as strictly opposed to the other (expressed in the next subchapter, ‘The Struggle of the Enlightenment with Superstition’) brings about the unhappy state of affairs presented in ‘Absolute Freedom and the Terror’. If Hegel is right about insight, that its intuitional aspect actually incorporates the supposedly opposed position of its other, then we might expect to find reference to the term in Jacobi’s texts from the *Pantheismusstreit*.

### III) *Einsicht* in Jacobi as Faith and Foundational Intuition

In fact, Jacobi does use the term *Einsicht* in his *Pantheismusstreit* writings. Fittingly, he does so in a way that is itself highly ambiguous, through reference to Spinoza. Recall that Spinoza is ostensibly what the whole quarrel was about: whether Jacobi was correct in reporting the great Lessing’s ‘death bed’ conversion to Spinozism, and thus to pantheistic atheism, which was how Spinoza’s philosophy was generally viewed at the time. Jacobi clearly shares this view, since he frankly states, in his ‘Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza’, that all metaphysical arguments, when coherently pushed to their conceptual limits, end up determining all of reality as finitude which is fully conditioned by material causation. Such a terminal state of affairs is exemplified, for Jacobi, in Spinoza’s completely determined Substance.<sup>12</sup> The issue of Lessing’s supposed Spinozism was particularly important to Lessing’s closest friend and confidant, Mendelssohn.

What is surprising, however, is that Jacobi, in his own reported response to Mendelssohn, actually seems to recognize in Spinoza himself a kind of *Einsicht* that is very much akin to his own definition of faith, i.e. understood as a fundamental intuition guaranteeing the reality of objective finitude and the possibility of our knowing it. Jacobi writes (to Mendelssohn), ‘You go further than Spinoza; for him insight was above everything’ (CS: 190). And further on, ‘For Spinoza, insight is the best part in all finite natures, for it is the part through which each finite

nature reaches beyond its finitude'.<sup>13</sup> The ambiguity of such a promotion of insight in Spinoza, where it becomes something akin to intellectual intuition or, indeed, faith as Jacobi himself understands it, is that it clearly flies in the face of Jacobi's ultimate statement of his 'positions in the clearest terms'. His six lapidary propositions begin with, 'Spinozism is atheism', and include: 'Every avenue of demonstration ends up in fatalism [i.e. materialistic determinism]' (CS: 233–4). However, on another level, Jacobi's promotion of insight in Spinoza is very much in keeping with the rhetorical device that he employs when he writes, rather unctuously, 'My dear Mendelssohn, we are all born in faith and must remain in faith ...' (CS: 230). For what Jacobi is claiming here is that faith grounds the possibility of all knowledge, including the empirical. Through the audacious conflation of axiomatic intuition and religious faith, Jacobi seeks to show that since they rely on intuitional insight even such Jewish metaphysicians as Spinoza and Mendelssohn are already living as Christians, whether they recognize it or not. Conversion is therefore not such a big step!<sup>14</sup>

Consequently, while in associating *Einsicht* with Spinoza's philosophy it may seem that Jacobi is indeed associating it with atheistic rationalism, in fact, what Jacobi implies by the term is something altogether removed from rationalistic 'demonstration'. Rather, insight now appears as the universal intuition that underlies the Spinozistic system, as found in the *Ethics*' seminal Definitions, and again in the ultimate expression of the intellectual love of God, with which that work ends, and which the definitional beginning actually presupposes. Briefly, for Jacobi, all that distinguishes insight from faith is simply the latter's clear recognition of its godly (Christian) source.

IV) The Hegelian Lesson: *Einsicht* as Immediate Knowing and the Dangers of Exclusivity

By now, I have perhaps confused my reader about where in the Pantheism Quarrel ‘insight’ actually falls. Through Kant’s OT essay, we encountered *Einsicht*, in Mendelssohn’s *Morning Hours*, as the guiding principle of speculative reason, when working together with common sense; on the other hand, in Jacobi, the term is associated with Spinoza’s foundational intuition, in such a way as to resemble Jacobi’s own idea of faith! In fact, I am trying to show that this ambiguity is precisely the point that Hegel is making in the ‘Faith and Pure Insight’ section: faith and insight present themselves erroneously as exclusive epistemological positions whereas *in truth*, as Hegel is fond of saying, they enjoy an *essential* degree of reciprocity.<sup>15</sup> This discovery is best understood with reference to the German Enlightenment and its *Pantheismusstreit*.

What Hegel might well have taken away from Jacobi is the idea that faith is to be comprehended as a form of intuitional knowing, the same axiomatic ‘insight’ that Jacobi celebrates in Spinoza (albeit from which the latter’s subsequent metaphysical demonstrations distance him). Further, in accepting faith as such insight, Hegel can associate it with the meaning that Kant ascribes to the term in Mendelssohn, where it refers to a guiding principle. In all these cases, expressions of insight can be understood as instances of foundational intuition. Further still, Kant’s OT essay allows Hegel to conceive of the reconciliation between faith and knowing as not merely theoretical but as actually carried out through the moral vocation of Reason itself, i.e. through the universal insight that orients humanity toward the *summum bonum*. Still following Kant’s argument, the unilateral positions expressed in the Pantheism Quarrel are dangerous because their exclusivity is injurious to (practical) Reason and, consequently, to the actuality of human freedom, a cautionary point that Hegel seems to adopt in the ‘Struggle of the Enlightenment with Superstition’ section and ultimately, in ‘Absolute Freedom and the Terror’.

Against this bloody outcome stands the Kantian elenchus, as sketched in the ‘Orienting’ essay, where the Enlightenment’s fundamental opposition is reconciled in moral truth, a position taken on by Hegel in the concluding Morality section of Chapter Six, a chapter whose whole point might be said to show how the German Enlightenment (through Kant) has succeeded where the French version so disastrously failed!<sup>16</sup>

Following the narrative arc of the Culture chapter (Chapter Six) of the *Phenomenology*, in light of our findings regarding the provenance of *Einsicht*, we see how the danger posed by the Enlightenment resides in the inability to resolve the issues at stake in the Pantheism Quarrel, leaving two unreconciled, unilateral and dogmatically opposed attitudes between reason and religious fanaticism. The exclusivity of these positions leads to the evacuation of essential reality, the ground upon which real freedom must take place, leaving only vacuous Deism with ‘its empty Absolute Being’, on one hand, and material utilitarianism, ‘the lack of selfhood in the thing that is useful’ (*PhG*: 573/423–4) on the other. The section on ‘Absolute Freedom and the Terror’ represents the adequate expression of this etiolated reality, one where the world ‘cannot achieve anything positive, either universal works of language or of reality [...] of laws and general institutions of conscious freedom’ (*PhG*: 588/434–5), where ‘the actual destruction of the actual organization of the world’ (*PhG*: 590/436) has been completed. If the opposition between faith and knowing is to be overcome, this must first happen in the context of actual ethical agency, in the conclusion of Chapter Six, where the unilateral oppositions of Culture become lively and enlivening differences within the ethical community. Only through such an ethical outcome do we find, ‘God manifested in the midst of those who know themselves in the form of pure knowledge’ (*PhG*: 671/493). In other words, the ethical community is the politically embodied reconciliation of faith and knowing. The religious issue at stake in the



Pantheism Quarrel shows us that the epistemological question of absolute knowledge is a moral and political one as well.<sup>17</sup>

For Hegel, the key to reconciling the opposition between faith and reason lies in the fact that both are forms of immediate knowing called ‘insight’, but whose erroneous exclusivity threatens any real, ethical and hence political mediation. The same theme is reiterated in the final sections of the *EL*’s *Vorbeginn* (Preliminary Concept), where Hegel deals with forms of immediate knowing in their relation to systematic Science. I would like to turn briefly to this text, which I mentioned at the outset, in order to further support my argument that Hegel derives his notion of *Einsicht* from the *Pantheismusstreit*, involving positions put forward by Jacobi and Mendelssohn, through reference to Kant’s OT essay. Reference to the *EL*’s *Vorbeginn* also supports my point that Hegel discovers a reciprocal commonality in the adversarial claims between pure insight and faith, in that *both* are forms of immediate knowing. Such commonality anticipates the vocation of Hegelian Science and its mission of overcoming fixed positions which are one-sided from an epistemological point of view, and carry real ethical and political dangers.

The term *Einsicht* reappears in section 74 of the *EL*’s *Vorbeginn*, more than two decades after its first significant usage in the *Phenomenology*. Appropriately, ‘insight’ is again found in a passage that deals with the religious question of the knowledge of God. The *Vorbeginn* makes the point that such absolute knowledge cannot be arrived at immediately but must instead involve the real content that is supplied throughout the *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences* and particularly through its *Philosophies of Nature* and *Spirit*. Immediate knowing can only claim *that* God is, whereas true knowledge of God must reveal to us *what* God is. Immediate knowing intends to avoid the particular, finite manifestations of its infinite object, and thus remains a pure form of knowing that can never reach beyond self-reflection. The critique of

immediate knowing applies just as well to Cartesian, Leibnizian, Mendelssohnian metaphysics as to Jacobi's espousal of unconditioned faith. As Hegel puts it, 'abstract thought (the form of reflective metaphysics) and abstract intuition (the form of immediate knowing) are one and the same' (*EL*: 74). It is this 'one and the same' form of immediate, abstract thinking that he refers to, in the *Vorbericht*, as 'diese Einsicht' (*EL*: 74).

I believe that Hegel's point, in the dense and convoluted text of *EL*: 74, is that insight, as immediate knowledge of God (qua the Absolute), is always in contradiction with itself and thus never true or complete in itself; it is this very contradiction that brings about mediation. When insight is taken as a priori metaphysical thought, as the pure self-reflective *form* of knowing per se, then, precisely as form, it *must* be open to particular, conditioned content in order to be fulfilled. Pure insight, as immediate knowing, cannot help but determine otherness, i.e. finite, particular content; the demonstration of this vocation for the determination of particular otherness is carried out in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* itself.<sup>18</sup> Briefly, insight, as pure thought, cannot help but determine content and thus cannot remain pure.

Equally contradictory is immediate knowing in the form of faith, i.e. in the position maintained by Jacobi contra Mendelssohn. Namely, when faith claims to divorce itself from metaphysical reasoning, and consequently, from the over-conditioned finitude of Spinozistic materialism, it cannot help but make itself into a similarly metaphysical form of knowing or axiom, i.e. an insight whereby it becomes the grounding condition of all that is 'finite and untrue' (Jacobi's position).<sup>19</sup>

Hegel's point in the *Vorbericht* is thus that, from a systematic (Scientific) point of view, the two exclusive positions of immediate knowing, anchored in the 'either/or' of the understanding, cannot help but mediate one another, thereby surrendering their immediacy. The

use of *Einsicht* again shows how each position is, in fact, reciprocally complicit with the other. Reflective thinking (form) requires conditioned content and conditioned content is only such because it is formally conditioned by thought.<sup>20</sup>

The problem is that when removed from this dialectical, Scientific development, insight's formal purity renders it dangerously arbitrary, leaving itself receptive to any content at all, even content that is 'ungodly or immoral' (*EL*: 74). Such an outcome can perhaps be seen as the dying echo of the earlier *Phenomenological* ending in 'Absolute Freedom and the Terror'. In both cases, the epistemological failure in knowledge of God spills over into the ethical/political domain.<sup>21</sup>

As always in Hegel, the danger here is one of fixation, where the polarity of unilateral positions is not dissolved into the fluidity of dialectical movement and Science. This is the danger that *Einsicht* represents when it is *not* taken as the third and final position of the *Vorbegriff*, qua immediate knowing, a position pre-supposed by Science itself. As immediate knowing, insight can be comprehended as the axiomatic intuition of the Absolute, already anticipating its logical unfolding into actual knowledge. On the other hand, as a unilateral, recalcitrant expression of the understanding (*Verstand*) (*EL*: 76), insight appears as an 'exclusion of mediation', in the dogmatic oppositions of the 'either-or' form of thinking (*EL*: 65) paradigmatically expressed in the *Pantheismusstreit*.<sup>22</sup> In the *exclusive* positions of *Einsicht*, 'knowing, believing, thinking, intuiting' are all the same. There is no difference between 'common sense, healthy human reason' (cf. Mendelssohn), 'faith in the existence of sensuous things' (Cf. Jacobi, *EL*: 63) or the ontological deduction of the existence of God (Mendelssohn et al, *EL*: 64). In all of these cases, we are indeed dealing with forms of immediate knowing but in their adherence to the either/or dilemmas of the understanding (*Verstand*, *EL*: 76); these are the

same sort of dilemmas that underlie all the oppositional dualities of the Culture chapter of the *Phenomenology*.

V) A *Pantheismusstreit*-informed exegesis of ‘Faith and Pure Insight’

I would like to now provide a summary reading of ‘Faith and Pure Insight’ (*PhG*: 527–37), and the subsequent, related sections on the Enlightenment, taking into account my presentation of *Einsicht* in the *Pantheismusstreit*, its Kantian elenchus and Hegel’s incorporation of it as immediate knowing. I will also occasionally call attention to how this reading stands in relation to a ‘standard’ *Lumières* interpretation of the section.

At the beginning of the section, both faith and pure insight are presented as forms of self-alienated thought, in that they each have worldly, actual instantiations to which they are at once related and opposed. In the case of faith, the ‘positive’ church, with its doctrines and dogma, appears opposed to the inwardness of religious feeling. In the case of pure insight, the world appears as the object of ‘vain’, self-reflective judgments. For faith, the inwardness of thought is presented as consciousness of the Absolute Other (God). In the case of pure insight, the inwardness of thought is *self*-consciousness (i.e. a pure self-relation or self-reflection).

The immediate nature of both positions (faith and pure insight) means that each appears as immediately ‘conditioned’ by its ‘opposite principle’ but without the reconciliation brought about ‘through the movement of mediation’ whereby each will come to recognize itself in its other. It is important to see that the dialectical necessity of such reconciliation is only *for us*, observing from the Scientific, retrospective point of view, which is not available to the forms of consciousness actually involved in the dialectic. As Hegel clearly puts it, the ‘fact’ that the ‘disrupted consciousness’ presented here ‘is implicitly the self-identity of pure consciousness

[i.e. immediate knowing]’ is ‘known to *us* but not to [the disrupted consciousness] *itself*’ (*PhG*: 527). In other words, if ‘we’ Hegelian philosophers may share the truth, that faith and insight are two forms of immediate knowing that mediate themselves in order to lead to a greater, speculative truth, it is because we are able to look back on how the commonality of *Einsicht* underlies the oppositions present in the Enlightenment.

Having established, although in a rather compressed way, the truth (i.e. the result) of the dialectic, Hegel now presents it as experienced by the forms of consciousness actually involved, a juxtaposition of points of view witnessed throughout the *Phenomenology*. First, pure insight, as ‘self-conscious Reason’ or infinite self-reflection, cannot help but universalize itself. Reprising his definition of Reason from the beginning of the eponymous chapter (Five) of the *Phenomenology* (*PhG*: 231/179), Hegel now writes, ‘pure insight is not only the certainty of self-conscious Reason that it is all truth: it knows that it is’ (*PhG*: 536). As reason, pure insight is ‘thus the spirit that calls to every consciousness: be for yourselves what you are in yourselves – reasonable’ (*PhG*: 537).

The universality of reason is certainly a feature of the French *Lumières*: a self-consciousness, rational ‘I’ that is truly Cartesian. Indeed, pure insight is made into ‘an insight for everyone’ (*PhG*: 539). Individual, infinite judgement (I = I) ‘is resolved into the universal insight’ (*PhG*: 540), a fact witnessed in the missionary zeal of the early *Encyclopédiste* project but which also may be celebrated in Mendelssohn’s unreserved promotion of metaphysical reason. It is crucial to grasp, however, that the universal vocation of Enlightenment reason, as represented by pure insight, is only possible in that it ‘manifests its own peculiar activity in opposing itself to faith’ (*PhG*: 540/399). Or again, ‘the peculiar object against which pure insight directs the power of the Concept is faith’ (*PhG*: 538).

The essential opposition between faith and pure insight (qua Enlightenment reason) is further radicalized in the subsequent section, on the ‘Struggle of the Enlightenment with Superstition’. The spread of pure insight is likened to a pestilential vapour, one which infects the very ‘marrow of spiritual life’, a state of affairs where any ‘struggle against it betrays the fact that infection has occurred’ (*PhG*: 544/402). To the extent that reason, by definition, knows itself to be ‘all truth’, it posits itself as omnipresent. Nonetheless, however, such universal contagion still remains essentially ‘antagonistic to the content of faith’ (*PhG*: 545), a remark accompanied by a reference to Diderot but which, again, could easily describe Mendelssohn’s position against Jacobi’s promotion of axiomatic Christian faith. However, Hegel’s point is that the oppositional nature of the Enlightenment relationship between faith and reason already betrays their *essential* complicity. Each position only makes sense to the extent that it positions itself against its Other.

The unresolved conflict, in the context of the *Lumières*, is expressed in the ethic of utility. The quality of usefulness, which saturates all worldly objectivity, results from the internal contradiction we observed at the beginning of the ‘Faith and Pure Insight’ section (*PhG*: 527), where each position expressed the contradiction between the positive recognition of actuality and the negative (internalized) relation to it. In terms of utility, this means that things are both what they are ‘in-themselves’ and what they are ‘for-another’ (*PhG*: 560/415). For to be essentially (in-itself) for-another is to be useful. On an absolute level, i.e. fully generalized, utility brings about the ‘abomination of the Enlightenment’s negative attitude toward belief’ (*PhG*: 562/416), which posits Absolute Being as the vacuous *Être suprême* (*PhG*: 562, significantly, in French in the text), and the Panglossian (Leibnizian, Mendelssohnian?) position that ‘everything in its immediate existence [is] good’. A wisdom, writes Hegel, ‘particular to the Enlightenment and which seems to faith to be undiluted platitude and the confession of platitude’ (*PhG*: 562).

However, faith itself is distorted by the evacuation of worldly spirit at the hands of Enlightenment reason qua pure insight. ‘Enlightenment distorts all the moments of faith, changing them into something different from what they are in it’ (*PhG*: 563). Specifically, the Enlightenment assault on positive (dogmatic) religion has left faith without objective content. As such, it is relegated to the realm of empty feeling and ‘sheer yearning, its truth an empty beyond’ (*PhG*: 573/423) a position recognizable in Jacobi’s promotion of personal faith as the essence of (Christian) religion, although perhaps also in certain aspects of pre-Revolutionary Jansenism.

The subchapters on insight and faith, which lead up to the apocalyptic vision of ‘Absolute Freedom and the Terror’, offer no reconciliation between the two ways of thinking, no recognition of their common root in pure, unmediated thought. Indeed their recalcitrant, obstinate opposition is qualified by Hegel here as perverse (*verkehrt*): ‘Just as pure insight has failed to recognize itself and has denied itself in belief generally, so too in these moments [faith] will behave in an equally perverse manner’ (*PhG*: 551/408).

It is precisely this reciprocal perversity that collapses into Revolutionary Terror, a moment characterized, above all, as we saw above, by the evacuation of objective reality, by ‘the fury of destruction’ (*PhG*: 589/435), where ‘all social groups or classes which are the spiritual spheres [...] are abolished’ (*PhG*: 585/433). Even here, in the ruins of the *ancien régime*, the vestiges of insight and faith remain stubbornly opposed, like two punch-drunk boxers hanging together in exhausted adversity through the final rounds: ‘pure insight is [now] the gazing of itself into itself [...] the [vain] essence of all actuality’ (*PhG*: 583/431), while, conversely, faith is reduced to ‘the exhalation of a stale gas’ (*PhG*: 586/433).

Briefly, while the French *Lumières* narrative of the antagonism between faith and reason offers a cautionary tale about the dangers of maintaining their unilateral positions unreconciled,

reference to Mendelssohn, Jacobi and Kant, adds a deeper, speculative dimension to the antagonism, one which allows us to discover their common root in immediate knowing and the conceptual necessity of mediation. Of course, while this truth is already presented *for us* at the outset of the ‘Faith and Pure Insight’, it is only realized when the reciprocal opposition is understood as dialectical, i.e. in terms of a progression where each position comes to recognize that it only is what it is through its relation to its opposite.

#### Conclusion: *Einsicht* and Science

Consequently, while throughout these sections of Chapter Six, the unilateral positions of reason and faith may conjure up figures of both the French and German Enlightenments, reference to Mendelssohn and Jacobi provides Hegel with the possibility of seeing each position as the expression of immediate knowing and hence fundamental to the speculative development of Science’s content and form. The struggle against positive (dogmatic) religion is present in Mendelssohn as it is in Voltaire. The promotion of personal faith may be found in Jansenism as it is in Jacobi. What ultimately distinguishes, in Hegel’s eyes, the German from the French dichotomy of faith and reason is Kant’s recognition that *Einsicht* orients us beyond the exclusivity of their opposition.

In the *Phenomenology*, the Enlightenment’s erroneous oppositions are swept away by the overarching negativity of the Terror. In the calmer, *Logical* context of the *Encyclopaedia*, three decades later, such terrible negativity has been re-thought as ‘the dialectical moment... essential to affirmative Science’ (*EL*: 78) but whose work is still to dissolve ‘the abstraction of the understanding’. The dialectical mediation of immediate knowing ensures that *Einsicht* becomes insight *of* something, bringing about the ‘speculative or positively rational’ (*EL*: 79) actuality of systematic Science. Above all, reference to the *Vorbestimmung* reinforces the ethical and political



destiny of *Einsicht*, which we discovered through our investigation into Chapter Six of the *Phenomenology*, and which we now see as the vocation of Hegel's Science itself.

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<sup>1</sup>In the preceding sections of Culture (Chapter Six), Hegel has shown, on my reading, how bipolar contradictions within forms of the *ancien régime*, namely between noble and ignoble, good and bad, sovereign and vassal have collapsed under the weight of their own nullity. The noble depends on the recognition of the ignoble; the sovereign is nourished by the flattery of the vassal; Monarchical state power is dependent upon bourgeois wealth. The truth of these fixed oppositions is the truth of the French Enlightenment itself: the vanity of everything substantial, leaving, on one hand, the eviscerated world of material utilitarianism and, on the other, the vacuous divinity of Deism; essence has taken the form of a *deus absconditus*. It is the evacuation of all substantial reality that is conclusively expressed in the subsequent section on Absolute Freedom and the Terror. In this paper, I use the following abbreviations:  
*PhG* = Hegel, *Philosophy of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977) followed by the paragraph number and, when necessary, by the page number in the Suhrkamp edition: *Werke in 20 Bänden* vol. 3, ed. E. Moldenhauer and K. M. Michel (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970).  
*Werke* = the above-mentioned edition followed by the volume and page number.  
*EL* = Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic*, trans. T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting and H. S. Harris (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991) followed by the section number, and to *Werke* vol. 8.  
*LR* = Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion* vol. 1, *Werke* 16.

LR 1984 = Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* vol. 1, ed. P. C. Hodgson, trans. R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson, J. M. Stewart et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984)

OT = Immanuel Kant's essay, 'What It Means To Orient Oneself in Thinking?' in I. Kant, *Religion and Rational Theology*, ed. and trans. A. W. Wood and G. di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), followed by page reference to *Kants Werke, Akademie Textausgabe* (1902), vol. 8 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1968).

MH = Moses Mendelssohn, *Morning Hours: Lectures on God's Existence*, ed. and trans. D. O. Dahlstrom, C. Dykk, *Studies in German Idealism* 12 (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011).

CS = 'Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza (1785)', ed., trans. G. di Giovanni, *Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, The Main Philosophical Writings and the Novel Allwill* (Montreal, Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994)

<sup>2</sup> Daniel E. Shannon, in his notes, refers exclusively to philosophical, Jansenist and Jesuitical figures of the French Enlightenment, anticipating, historically, the French Revolution that appears at the end of the chapter (Shannon 2001: 68–74). Terry Pinkard, in his book *Hegel's Phenomenology*, takes pure insight as synonymous with the 'unbiased scrutiny' of the French *philosophes* against 'established Christian religion'. However, for Pinkard, this latter takes on two forms: either as orthodoxy or as emotionally immediate faith (a.k.a. Jansenism, pietism, feeling). In this context, 'pure insight' is 'the detached, unbiased observation of things or the exercise of the faculty of reason itself' (Pinkard 1994: 167–8). Alexandre Kojève does not specifically mention *Einsicht*, which does not translate easily into French. Rather, the chapter that deals with it involves two conflicting notions of right, that of the Enlightenment versus the right of faith. The dialectic involved is that of the dead burying the dead: the Enlightenment dies in burying faith. However, both are resurrected in Hegelian philosophy where, as forms of pure thought, they are eternal. *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel* (Kojève 1947: 139). H. S. Harris's commentary refers to a large palette of French inspirations: Pascal, Diderot, Descartes, Rousseau, Voltaire but also Bacon and Lessing. D'Holbach, 'the most outspoken atheist among the philosophes [is] the voice of Pure Insight' (Harris 1997: 346). Finally, neither of two Hegel 'readers', Stewart (1998) and K. Westphal (2009), refers to historical figures outside the French Enlightenment. In the latter work, the chapter, by Jürgen Stolzenberg, entitled, 'Hegel's Critique of the Enlightenment in the Struggle of the Enlightenment with Superstition' (199), the author refers to Voltaire, Robinet, Helvétius, Lamettrie, Rousseau 'and others', as well as to similar conclusions drawn from the work of G.-H. Falke (1996). Jean Hyppolite's reading (Hyppolite 1946: 421–23.) is closest to the one supported by the examination of *Einsicht* in the present article since it emphasizes the reciprocity between insight and faith. For Hyppolite, 'L'intellection pure' (pure insight) finishes by recognizing itself in its adversary (faith), which first presented itself as the absolute other, the irrational. But reason *per se* is incapable of grasping anything that is not itself. Faith is nothing other than the highest form of human self-consciousness (religion). The problem is that pure intellection does not recognize absolute spirit and its agency in religion. This position evacuates the world of all speculative content and will leave only the emptied world of utility and deism, i.e. the world of the Enlightenment. Thus, it is the victory of pure insight that is realized in 'Absolute Freedom and the Terror', the section that follows those on the Enlightenment, in Chapter Six of the *Phenomenology*. My reading of the Insight sections also has some affinity with Robert Solomon's, which recognizes the essential ambiguity of *Einsicht*, stemming from its 'singular flaw... namely that it has not content' (1983: 556). Solomon also refers to some German players as possible references in Hegel's take on

Enlightenment insight, although his point is ultimately that ‘the Enlightenment was many things’ (556).

<sup>3</sup> In his *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, Robert Stern explains ‘insight’ as seeking reconciliation from the alienated state of culture, through a turn inwards. Faith is the turn to an outward ‘beyond’ (Stern 2002: 151). J. Loewenberg, in a much earlier work, sees ‘insight’ as ‘sacrilegious rationalism’ (Loewenberg 1965: 235). Dean Moyar, in ‘Self-completing Alienation’, a chapter in *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, (Moyar and Quante 2008: 165), recognizes that pure insight and faith are forms of pure thought, ‘a retreat from the contingencies of culture to the truth of standards beyond money and power’. For Merold Westphal, in *History and Truth in Hegel’s Phenomenology*, ‘insight’ is simply enlightenment ideology, opposed to that of faith (M. Westphal 1978: 167). Quentin Lauer, in *A Reading of Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, elucidates *Einsicht* through a medieval distinction ‘between intellectus and ratio ... Ratio (discursive reasoning) comes close to Hegel’s Raesonnieren ... Intellectus (intellectual penetration) comes close to Hegel’s *Einsicht*, a function of reason (*Vernunft*) in its profoundest sense, denoting spirit’s plunge into its own depths (Lauer 1976: 199 n. 36)’. Richard Dien Winfield’s analysis of the section does not include any explicit historical references within the Enlightenment, nor does it question Hegel’s use of the term *Einsicht*. Essentially, Winfield sees ‘Faith and Pure Insight’ as replaying and coming to terms with earlier dialectics between consciousness and self-consciousness (Winfield 2013: 265–75). John Russon, in *Reading Hegel’s Phenomenology*, does not examine ‘insight’ with reference to its historical context in the Hegel text, i.e. to the historical forms of culture that occur in the Enlightenment. Another commentary position is to simply forgo discussion of Insight. Neither Dietmar Köhler and Otto Pöggeler’s *Phänomenologie des Geistes* nor Frank-Peter Hansen’s *Hegels Phenomenologie des Geistes* discusses the subchapters on Insight at all.

<sup>4</sup> The term ‘Einsichten’ appears in Hegel’s 1794 manuscript on subjective spirit, in reference to religious enthusiasm and fanaticism (*Schwärmerei*). Under the catalogue of pathological mental conditions, under ‘Schwärmerei und Enthusiasmus’, we find ‘a) Wahre Begeisterung auf helle richtige Einsichten und Empfindungen – Schwärmer, Fanatiker, d.i. religiöse Schwärmer...’ (Hoffmeister 1974: 209)’.

<sup>5</sup> The text from the note is taken from vol. 11 of the second complete *Werke*, edited by Philipp Marheineke and Bruno Bauer (Berlin, 1940). In the *LR 1984*, ‘insight’ appears in the context of the contemporary attitude to the true content of religion, i.e. doctrine. When doctrine (*Lehre*) represents the positivity of religion, the authority of revelation that holds itself out of reach of reason, this is just as pernicious as when reason holds itself completely distinct from doctrine, as something that does not concern it. The indifferent attitude to doctrine is harmful to both religion and reason. They must enter into conflict in order for doctrine to be ‘saved’ when religion becomes the content of Science.

<sup>6</sup> This is of course the theme of one of Hegel’s earliest published writings, the essay *Glauben und Wissen* (1802, *Faith and Knowing*). Examining Hegel’s use of *Einsicht*, as the present article does, shows how the theme is not confined to Hegel’s early interests but rather should be seen as present throughout his philosophical career (*Werke 2*: 283–433).

<sup>7</sup> Particularly, Mendelssohn’s *Morning Hours* and his *To Lessing’s Friends*. For extensive examinations of the Pantheism Quarrel, see Beiser 1987; Altmann 1973; see also Allan Arkush’s important commentary on the secondary literature in *Moses Mendelssohn and the Enlightenment* (Arkush 1994: 69–97). I am particularly indebted to Arkush for his discussion of Mendelssohn in Kant’s essay where we discover Kant’s use of the term *Einsicht* with respect to Mendelssohn’s

idea of common sense in his *Morning Hours*. For other Mendelssohn writings see *Mendelssohn's Philosophical Writings* (Mendelssohn 1997).

<sup>8</sup> Kant's intervention in the debate was much anticipated and given the prominence of the journal in which it appeared, we can safely assume that Hegel read it.

<sup>9</sup> For the 'Orienting' essay see OT: 3–18.

<sup>10</sup> The transition from faith to superstition in the 'Orienting' essay seems to anticipate the same movement in the subsections of Chapter Six of the *Phenomenology*: 'Faith and Pure Insight' to 'The Struggle of the Enlightenment with Superstition'.

<sup>11</sup> Indeed 'common sense' sometimes takes the form, in Mendelssohn's *Morning Hours*, of 'Menschenverstand'. Reinier Munk, in his excellent article 'What is the Bond? The Discussion of Mendelssohn and Kant 1785–1787', sees Mendelssohn's promotion of common sense as a (Kantian) element of reason's empirical self-criticism, which Kant himself did not recognize in spite of his affinity for the popular philosopher's promotion of reason (Munk 2011: 183–202). Significantly, Munk does not consider the 'Allegorical Dream' section of the *Morning Hours*, where Mendelssohn clearly promotes reason as a higher way of knowing, one that involves both common sense and speculation working together. On the different appropriations of Scottish common sense philosophy by Mendelssohn and Jacobi, in their debate, see Paul Frank's article, 'Divided by Common Sense: Mendelssohn and Jacobi on Reason and Inferential Justification' in (Munk 2011: 203–15).

<sup>12</sup> CS: 190. Arkush quotes Beiser in this context, who claims that what Jacobi is ultimately demonstrating is Spinozistic 'nihilism', a term that Jacobi initiated (Arkush 1994: 73), (Beiser 1987: 4). See CS: 519 (Jacobi's letter to Fichte from March 3, 1799, where the term 'nihilism' appears).

<sup>13</sup> CS: 190. In his informative Introduction, di Giovanni writes: 'So far as Spinoza is concerned, the only way to deal with the surd is to move beyond the process of ratiocination through a process of intellectual ascesis that allows the mind to escape from the determination of space, time and logic and see things all at once *sub specie aeternitatis*. Accordingly, insight, not conceptualization, was for Spinoza 'the best part of all finite natures' (CS: 20).

<sup>14</sup> Johann Lavater publicly challenged Mendelssohn to refute the faith-based arguments of the theologian Charles Bonnet or convert to Christianity, a challenge that Mendelssohn compellingly refused in the name of tolerance and the philosophical vocation of the Jewish religion.

<sup>15</sup> Such oppositional exclusivity stems from the fact that both faith and pure insight per se are anchored in the faculty of understanding (*das Verstand*), which presides over all the fixed, mutually exclusive dualities of the Culture chapter.

<sup>16</sup> The 'Allegorical Dream' chapter in Mendelssohn's *Morning Hours* also involves an illustration of how the exclusivity of speculative insight, divorced of common sense, can be seen as dangerous to holistic reason as is fanatical faith. The rude awakening that ends the allegory comes in the form of 'an awful clamor' made by 'a fanatical swarm of locals [who] rallied around the lady, contemplation, and resolved to drive away both common sense and reason'.

<sup>17</sup> Recall that, regarding insight, 'it is obviously religion we are talking about' (*PhG*: 528/392). In OT, Kant pleads: 'Men of intellectual ability and broadminded disposition! I honor your talents and love your feeling for humanity. But have you thought about what you are doing and where your attacks on reason will lead?' Without the need of reason to orient itself via postulates or the reality of rational faith, both dogmatic tendencies (insight and faith) lead to superstition. Finally, the refusal of any limits, the 'maxim of reason's independence of its own need' leads to a state of total 'unbelief of reason'—a state of anarchy that is the 'precarious state of the human

mind, which first takes from moral laws all their force as incentives to the heart and over time all their authority and occasions the way of thinking one calls libertinism, i.e. the principle of recognizing no duty at all. At this point the authorities get mixed up in the game' taking away even the 'freedom to think'. For, 'freedom in thinking finally destroys itself if it tries to proceed in independence of the laws of reason' (OT:17–18).

<sup>18</sup> Immediate knowing thus appears as the ultimate position of thought *prior* to Hegel's scientific demonstration, whereby the formal emptiness of insight is carried over into the first position: the determination of being as the abstract nothingness of pure thought.

<sup>19</sup> Jacobi: 'Through faith we know that we have a body, and that there are other bodies and other thinking beings outside us' (CS: 231). The text from *EL*: 74 reads: '... the insight that the content... is *mediated through an other* reduces the content to its finitude and untruth. [Nonetheless], such insight is a knowing which contains mediation, since content brings mediation with it. The same understanding [i.e. Jacobi] which thinks it has emancipated itself from finite knowing and from the understanding's [reflective] identity, from metaphysics and the Enlightenment, immediately again makes this immediacy, i.e., the abstract self-relation or the abstract identity, into the principle and criterion of truth. Abstract thinking (the form of reflective metaphysics) and abstract intuiting (the form of immediate knowing) are one and the same'.

<sup>20</sup> This reciprocal relationship is comprehended by Kant, in his OT, in terms of Reason and its moral, religious and political vocation. For Hegel, as well, it is Reason that articulates the overcoming of the opposition between faith and knowing, in the form of the ethical community that closes the Morality section of Chapter Six of the *Phenomenology*. However, Reason for Hegel must be comprehended as both theoretical and practical; in other words, in overcoming the oppositional dilemmas of the understanding, such as faith and pure insight, Reason shows itself to be speculative, in the Hegelian sense of the word (the identity of identity and difference).

<sup>21</sup> While I cannot here develop the hypothesis further, it is possible that, in the *Vorbegriff*, written some three decades after the French Revolution, the attendant danger posed by the unreconciled (anti-Scientific) positions of the understanding takes the form of modern irony, which Hegel characterises elsewhere in similar terms to those he uses in the *Vorbegriff*: 'savage arbitrariness', 'arrogance of feeling', opposition to philosophy, and above all, the universal presuppositions of the age: we can only 'know what is finite and contains no Truth' along with the attendant belief that such Truth may only be attained through 'wholly abstract faith' (*EL*: 77). See (Reid 2014: 109–13).

<sup>22</sup> See Jean-Michel Buée's commentary on the *EL*'s *Vorbegriff* and immediate knowing, in *Savoir immédiat et savoir absolu*: 'Clearly what is at stake here is not immediate knowing as such but what the *Encyclopaedia* calls its 'exclusive position', i.e. the claim that it is the only way of apprehending the Truth' [my translation] (Buée 2011: 184).