

Inhabiting (CC.) 'Religion' in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* to Develop an Ambedkarite Critique of the Blasphemous Nucleus of Upanishadic Wisdom

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Abstract: This paper begins with several opening passages from the most esoteric writings in Hinduism's vast, ancient religious-philosophical heritage, namely the Upanishads. The aim is to reveal certain essential connections between the primordial relation between self and sacrifice while exploring uncanny paradoxes of eternity and time, immortals and mortals and their secret linkages. The work is entirely philosophical in its intent and does not aspire to defend a faith-perspective. The horizon for this exposition follows the spirit of Ambedkar's critique of Brahmanic superiority inherent in this entire system of religious thought: we must expose what lies in the heart of modern Hinduism to reveal its inner-contradictory entanglements, which are not exactly innocuous. A phenomenological-deconstructive inspiration motivates our own critical theoretical-philosophical conceptualizations beyond Ambedkar's basic attestation to liberate India from Hinduism. The enterprise derives from a speculative appropriation and extension of the depths of (CC.) 'Religion,' the penultimate chapter of Hegel's indomitable *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807). The aim of the paper is to advance new philosophical theses in an unrelenting metaphysical critique of Hinduism—beyond Ambedkar's writings—but also in a manner that is irreducible to the Western philosophical cosmos within which the nineteenth-century Hegel inhabited. The paper argues that the internal contradictions and aporias of mortality, immortality, self, bodyhood, time, and eternity in the Hindu Upanishads can be contrasted with Hegel's speculative Western-Christological propositions to expose a greater metaphysical complexity that escapes Eastern and Western religious and philosophical traditions alike. Therefore, the paper falls within the scope of comparative philosophies of religion.

Keywords: Hegel, Ambedkar, Heidegger, Hinduism, philosophy of religion.

'I want to attain greatness' – when a man entertains such a wish, he should do the following. To begin with he should perform the preparatory rites for twelve days. Then, on an auspicious day falling within a fortnight of the waxing moon during the northern movement of the sun, he should collect every type of herb and fruit in a fig-wood dish or metal bowl. After sweeping around the place of the sacred fire and smearing it with cow dung, he should kindle the fire, spread the sacrificial grass, prepare the ghee according to the usual procedure, make the

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mixture under a male constellation, and pour an offering of ghee into the fire... (Upanishads 1996, 84; Brhadāranyaka Upanishad 6.3.1)

‘That does not age

as this body grows old

That is not killed

when this body is slain –

That is the real fort of *brahman*,

In it are contained all desires’ (Upanishads 1996, 167; Chāndogya Upanishad 8.1.4)

‘So, those here in this world who depart without having discovered the self and these real desires do not obtain complete freedom of movement in any of these worlds, whereas those here in this world who depart after discovering the self and these real desires obtain complete freedom in all the worlds.’ (Upanishads 1996, 167; Chāndogya Upanishad 8.1.4)

‘This deeply serene one who, after he rises up from this body and reaches the highest light, emerges in his own true appearance – that is the self,’ he said, ‘that is the immortal; that is the one free from fear; that is *brahman*.’ (Upanishads 1996, 169; Chāndogya Upanishad 8.3.4)

Now, the name of this *brahman* is ‘Real’ (*satyam*). This word has three syllables – *sa*, *ti*, and *yam*. Of these, *sat* is the immortal, and *ti* is the mortal, while the syllable *yam* is what joins those two together. Because these two are joined together (*yam*) by it, it is called *yam*. Anyone who knows this goes to the heavenly world every single day. (Upanishads 1996, 169; Chāndogya Upanishad 8.3.4-5)

all that Vedanta teaches is that self is different from the body and outlive the body. Such a knowledge is not enough. The self must have the aspiration to go to heaven. But it can’t go to heaven unless it performs Vedic sacrifices. (Moon 2014, 67)¹

But the time has come when the Hindu mind must be freed from the hold* which the silly ideas propagated by the Brahmins have on them. Without this liberation India has no future. I have undertaken this task knowing full well what risk* it involves. I am not afraid of the consequences. I shall be happy if I succeed in stirring the masses. (Moon 2014, 9)²

Introduction

We must begin with great caution and proceed slowly in trying to encounter these opening quotes from the *Upanishads*. On the surface, Ambedkar’s brief

¹ Riddle No. 9 in *Riddles of Hinduism: An Exposition to Enlighten the Masses*.

² *Introduction to Riddles of Hinduism: An Exposition to Enlighten the Masses*.

crystallization of the core of Hindu wisdom and his intention to liberate the Indian masses from Brahmanic deception in the heart of Hinduism seems easy to comprehend. But before one engages his critical spirit, we must remain for awhile, just tarry along, temporalize this in-between, a delay from what is supposed to arrive in terms of meaning, signification, or representation of objects in the Upanishadic passages, and what fails to appear at first glance when trying to inhabit those passages: being-there (Dasein) requires a phenomenological reduction of the most strenuous and strangest kind.

But this is no ordinary reduction or bracketing that evacuates all initial intuitions and impressions (sensory, conceptual, perceptive, or imaginative) when one reads the passages for the first time. The text itself as an author-less phenomenon is quite frightening and uncanny. Rather than superficial mastery, we must/will postpone, defer, and delay any manifestation of an 'object' that should appear in an intending set of actional reflections on the essential nature of what consciousness experiences when encountering the passages.³ Long story

³ As Husserl states in Section 3 of the Introduction to Volume 2 of the *Logical Investigations*: "The difficulties of clearing up the basic concepts of logic are a natural consequence of the extraordinary difficulties of strict phenomenological analysis. These are in the main the same whether our immanent analysis aims at the pure essence of experiences (all empirical facticity and individuation being excluded) or treats experiences from an empirical, psychological standpoint. Psychologists usually discuss such difficulties when they consider introspection as a source of our detailed psychological knowledge, not properly however, but in order to draw a false antithesis between introspection and 'outer' perception. The source of all such difficulties lies in the unnatural direction of intuition and thought which phenomenological analysis requires. Instead of becoming lost in the performance of acts built intricately on one another, and instead of (as it were) naively positing the existence of the objects intended in their sense and then going on to characterize them, or of assuming such objects hypothetically, of drawing conclusions from all this etc., we must rather practise 'reflection,' i.e. make these acts themselves, and their immanent meaning-content, our objects. When objects are intuited, thought of, theoretically pondered on, and thereby given to us as actualities in certain ontic modalities, we must direct our theoretical interest away from such objects, not posit them as realities as they appear or hold in the intentions of our acts. These acts, contrariwise, though hitherto not objective, must now be made objects of apprehension and of theoretical assertion. We must deal with them in new acts of intuition and thinking, we must analyse and describe them in their essence..." (2001, 170) The section from which this long passage is taken is titled - "The difficulties of pure phenomenological analysis.' For us, the 'difficulty' so to speak is not simply the 'unnatural direction of intuition and thought which phenomenological analysis requires' or avoidance of 'naively positing the existence of objects intended in their sense' in order to 'practice reflection.' In addition to converting the 'acts of reflection' and their 'immanent meaning-content' into 'objects,' we must, in a counter-movement, desist in this tendency of object-making due to what we see as an intrinsic horror built into these passages. But this is not a psychological horror based on past, real, trauma. Behind the passages is an omni-temporal complexity that presupposes a grotesque social system, namely hierarchical differences of purity and impurity, which makes the passages seem a-contextual, transcendent, and rich in esoteric or mystical wisdom. The passages seem morally innocent as if they do not intend evil. In other words, we must guard against any kind of excitability that may ensue when trying to phenomenologically encounter the passages.

short, we will not assume any 'thing' in terms of the final meaning or conceptualization of what these passages contain as if it were merely a secret that must be revealed. There is no internal, apperceptive faith at work in the encounter; nor an outward-bound explicative power that can conceptualize an actual external reality even when something as natural as 'fire' is being described. The fire may well turn out to be entirely unnatural and not the natural passing itself off as the supernatural. But even this could be an overhasty move of false exegesis. We will not even entertain the infinite regression of a secret within the secret to the point of an impossible singularity where even a secret cannot be maintained, and not because a final revelation has been achieved. The secret does not dissolve as the revelation. Even the erasure of the secret that fails to reveal a hidden content in the secret is not equivalent to the idea of a trace of the secret that remains after the secret itself fails to take hold of us as a mystery. When the secret cannibalizes itself, it does not even reveal its remains.

The caution-likened to Heidegger's *Sorge* (Dread, Concern, Alarm) in *Being and Time*⁴ (1963, 225) – come from a different realm. This exercise is neither from the human sciences (sociology, anthropology, history, secular religious studies), philosophical existentialisms of modern human beings in their anxiety and hopelessness or sense of meaninglessness, nor revelatory theology as an antidote to that existential malaise of finite human beings who never know why they have to die and why death even came about. The origin of death may be worse than death itself. Even asking the question – innocently or not – 'what is death?' is shown to be irrelevant.

We do not presuppose *the question of the meaning of existence* and whether the question is answerable or not. Whether 'care' or 'concernfulness,' needless to say, we are concerned with the bracketed sense of 'caution': one that is distinct from any simple human registers, such as being 'cautious' and looking both ways before crossing a street so one can avoid being hit by a car and risking physical-biological death. Rather, the caution involved in encountering the Other is not a fear of misunderstanding or misrepresentation, but the real threat of being swallowed whole into a realm that is boundless; hence psychoanalytic fears of castration do not hold here either. The seemingly infinite expanse of the ritual sacrifice's duration is not a matter of negation or deprivation but rather an instantiation of excessive difference and superiority bordering on the sociopathic.

⁴ The English translation turns *Sorge* into 'Care' but the main point is that we are not talking about any psychological examination of anxiety that humans have about being finite or sick because Heidegger's project is entirely 'ontological.' For how Heidegger separates his project of fundamental ontology through the *Dasein* – analytic from all human sciences and theology (as irreducible to purely human-founded forms of knowledge), see the Introduction to *Being and Time*. To this we shall return over and over again.

Returning to the initial passages quoted at the beginning, at first glance, we see an aggrandizement of 'self' through the performance of a ritualistic sequence of acts, 'preparatory rites' as the Upanishad text states, which will then anticipate in awaiting an 'auspicious day': this will then commence the actual gathering of elements 'herbs, fruits' in a container ('dish' or 'bowl') whose surrounding space must be cleansed with 'smeared cow dung' before the sacrifice begins. Animal excretion exceeds the fetishization of every single commodity-material like the natural resource of fertilizer or spiritual like the Eucharistic consecration of the host.⁵ Once the 'sacred fire' is kindled, the 'sacrificial grass is spread' and then the Hindu 'ghee' is prepared through a habitual 'mixture.' The threshold of the sacrifice-event is then the 'offering of the ghee into the fire' with a simultaneous chant. How the 'self' fills itself up, aggrandizes itself, in the totality of this experience is unfathomable for all those who do not engage in this sacrificial event. The event englobes and ensnares the self so that no simple predicate of what is actually happening as self or to the self can be articulated in human terminology.

One can hypothesize at the moment that the sacrifice is underway, a type of event-duration, which is not exactly linear, by which the 'pouring of the offering (ghee) into fire' is co-present with the speech act of the chant. As we shall see, perhaps even the notion of co-presence, simultaneity, or monistic oneness becomes problematic. An ecstatic occurrence begins to encase any intuitive idea of simultaneity or succession when we take a look at the fire-sacrifice-chant passage. Any simple narrative of a sequence of events, even as the one just mentioned in this paragraph comes under question. Furthermore, the status of the brahman priest undertaking such a fire sacrifice is by no means

⁵ This is not meant to be an overhasty comparison of how different world religions apperceive the 'holy' within the material and how they construct theologies of transubstantiation and consubstantiation that somehow unify matter and spiritual substance. For example, in a caustic and sarcastic moment in his younger years in southern Germany, Hegel wanted to explore what Catholicism was all about. Allegedly he questioned the divine substance of the Eucharist and asked irreverently what would happen in the following hypothetical scenario: say if a rat happened to leap out of nowhere right when the priest just finished consecrating the bread for communion, eats it, runs away, and then later excretes it. How does that affect the Catholic believer who considers consumption of the same material, namely the consecrated bread, as the apex of Catholic mass in terms of spiritual renewal? In Catholic faith, consuming the bread (and wine) is not simply an historical memorialization of consuming Jesus's body and drinking his blood as he asked during the Last Supper when he was alive: it is the literal divine mystery of making present Christ's body and blood in which Jesus the man (who died and was resurrected) as alive in and for the believer and wholly present every time communion is had. Hegel of course upends any sense of reverence for Catholic faith in this mystery by equating the bread with the rat's excreta and then asking us to consider whether the supernatural occurs therein. For this brief anecdote, see Stepelevich (1992, 679). For a general philosophical biography of Hegel, see Pinkard (2000).

detached from questions of power and sovereignty as great comparative mythologists of the twentieth century have noted.⁶

Despite all outward appearances of an ascetic life, there is something embryonic in this structural occurrence which has an elemental, ineradicable quality as to why such sacrifices and rites persist in their raw materiality. The sacrifice grows in its own cathartic self-conception by obliterating any ordinary human conception of selfhood. The self becomes the sacrifice, matter, it dissipates in gaining recognition in a transcendental sphere that would defy all distinctions between self, 'soul,' or matter. The 'self' arises in the burning of matter and hence a type of trans-matter but definitely not of the order of any binary like self or matter: self-immolation or actual burning of a body in an act of self-sacrifice or martyrdom will not help us in our thinking.⁷ Neither can the Western philosophical record beginning with the Pre-Socratics, Plato, and

⁶ We can pay homage to the great twentieth century French comparative mythologist, Georges Dumézil. His works from the first half of the twentieth century would have an enormous influence on future generations of thinkers in France across many fields. In his classic *Mitra-Varuna: An Essay on Two Indo-European Representations of Sovereignty* (1948), Dumézil draws an interesting set of correspondences not only between ancient civilizations, in this case Rome and India, but between sovereignty and ritual priesthood. He states: "I attempted to establish what the structure of this interdependence was during those very early times, why the raj wished to maintain within his household a personage to whom he yielded precedence. Evidence from ritual and legend led me to believe that this brahman 'joined' to the king was originally his substitute in human sacrifices of purification or expiation in which royal blood itself had once flowed. The simulated human sacrifices still performed in the purificatory ceremony of the Argei in Rome, and the major role played in that ceremony by the flaminica, with her display of mourning and grief, seemed to me to confirm this interpretation of the Indian evidence. However, all that is distant prehistory. By the time Indian society becomes observable, the brahman is already far from that probable starting point. It is not with his sacrificial death that he serves the rajan but with his life, each moment of which is devoted to the administration and 'readjustment' of magic forces." See Dumézil (1988, 23). In other words, separating questions of power, authority, and sovereignty from ritual sacrifice is not just pertinent for understanding ancient civilizations and how they drew sustenance from their mythic structures; they have everything to do with our genealogical possibilities today for how we understand ourselves. But this deep understanding is not based on the obvious and visible nature of our modern subjectivities and political-economic structures of democracy, capitalism, the secular state, and the privatization of religion. We have to uncover a deeper reality beneath our historical present. Needless to say, we will foreground this context because they will be absolutely essential in order to understand the relation between the Hindu metaphysics of the Brahman as 'Real' and the incorrigible nature of the social system of caste and its intrinsic inhumanity. This means new constructions and deductions that Dumézil did not excavate. His brilliance was in comparative mythologies and linguistics. We wish to remain strictly within the realm of comparative phenomenology, deconstruction, and metaphysics.

⁷ Think of Buddhist monks engaging in self-immolation in protest of Chinese dominion over Tibet and foreclosing their chances for true autonomy and free religious expression.

Aristotle rescue us here.⁸ We are stuck between *neither* the either-or *nor* the neither-nor. And the in-between is a stretching event that is not reducible to a point in space or time.

Our concern is not what all of this ritualistic preparation means in terms of the actual contexts of Hindu faith and the lived experiences of believers and practitioners. That is for the most religious adherents of Hinduism to describe or explain. But, rather, this phenomenological explication involves a prior clearing so to speak, a clearing of the ground of space so that a proper philosophical reflection can arise when considering an appropriative event: a self-aggrandizement, sequence of ritualistic acts that constitutes an awaiting for an 'auspicious moment,' a strange temporalization, which only when it occurs can everything else follow, namely a gathering, cleansing, kindling, mixture, pouring, and chant. This requires a phenomenological 'bracketing' and 'reduction' and the work of continual excavation and carving so no simple sense descends upon the analytic subject engaged in the inquiry. There is no 'subject' here period, one can venture. Hence the meaning of the suspension of the notion of an existent subject becomes an urgent priority for reflection.

But then all these moments can be reversed too; the totality of the representation of the whole cannot be generated by the imagination within any one moment, let alone some kind of super-synthesis of all the moments. Taken together, a whole Event awaits to be described in its seemingly infinitesimal complexity. In deference to those who claim actual Hindu Brahmanic wisdom of what all this means we will respectfully abjure any scriptural authority. We are not capable nor interested in expositing Hindu faith from the standpoint of a lifelong practitioner or someone whose entire life-world has been enmeshed in the context of everyday Hindu life down to the minutest details that permeates the waking and unconscious states.⁹

Rather we move within the event of a movement that is strange and irreproducible. Our own strictly metaphysical assumption is that a non-linear temporal horizon needs to be articulated, perhaps an ecstatic-movement event that constitutes a set of interrelations between the self-consciousness of a self-aggrandizement, the preparatory rites, the awaiting of the auspicious moment, and the launch of the sequence of events so the fire-offering-chant phenomenon comes into being. The rite is a repetition with an origin or end; it materializes consciousness as an expectation or waiting but there is no thing or object that is intended in the awaiting. This has everything to with a metaphysical conceptualization of time, but not consisting simply of past, present, or future as understood in various philosophical and religious traditions. Therefore, to

⁸ Of course a contrast with the genius of ancient Greek philosophical thinking is always welcomed.

⁹ For one, as stated in previous published articles, the author makes no claim to being an expert in Hinduism, South Asian studies, and most certainly no familiarity with Sanskrit or Sanskrit studies.

reiterate, so our purpose is eminently clear, explicating the intricate religious, philosophical, or anthropological complexity of this moment in the Upanishads is not our objective. To illuminate and foster tenets of Hinduism for potential believers and adherents is the vocation of others.¹⁰

Our own phenomenological explication of a primordial self-sacrifice relation will come into play when we enter into the other passages from the Upanishads that reflect on the nature of the 'Brahman' and the 'Real.'¹¹ There we

¹⁰ A separate endeavor could utilize complex speculative meditative constructions in German Idealism to try to enter into this non-Western, non-Judeo-Christian, Eastern space of the Upanishads, but with Western philosophical tools. For the latter are irreducibly distinct. Schelling's *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* offers tantalizingly interesting possibilities for criteria to establish modalities of exegetical interpretation of these moments/criteria to establish various modalities of hermeneutically creative interpretations of the Upanishads. However, here, too, we must take some precautions because in this 1809 work by Schelling, although the title suggests that 'human freedom' is being discussed, this is by no means a simple view of an empirical human existence, i.e. an individual or real living human being. Rather, the mystery of finitude in relation to the Godhead (not necessarily defined as dogmatically Christian) requires a prior series of non-dialectical reflections on the relations of ground and freedom, which reaches a peak of speculative philosophical frenzy. No simple dichotomy between human and God exists, but neither can a Christological substance of the human-God incarnation called Jesus Christ of Christianity be named. For example, Schelling states right within the first few pages that opens his treatise: "This entails the dependence of all beings in the world on God, and that even their continued existence is only an ever-renewed creation in which the finite being is produced not as an undefined generality but rather as this definite, individual being with such and such thoughts, strivings, actions and no others. It explains nothing to say that God holds his omnipotence in reserve so that man can act or that he permits freedom: if God were to withhold his omnipotence for a moment, man would cease to be. Is there any other way out of this argument than to save personal freedom within the divine being itself, since it is unthinkable in opposition to omnipotence; to say that man is not outside of, but rather in, God and that his activity itself belongs to the life of God?" See Schelling (2006, 12). All of this is compounded by the fact that this last published work by Schelling (i.e. published in his life-time) followed on the heels and in direct contrast to the appearance of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which appeared just two years before in 1807. As we shall Hegel's 'absolute knowing' attempts to 'aufheben' the section before in 'revealed religion.' The latter is Hegel's own unique speculative metaphysical construction of the Christian Trinitarian God, which in many respects utterly dismantles the dogmatic theological conception by exposing a complex set of interrelations that threatens the stability of a simple notion of faith. In other words, for Hegel, the awesome phenomenological movement of Spirit becoming conscious of itself cannot stop with the Trinity and the earthly Church's continued repetition through memory of the God-man's death and resurrection from 2000 years ago. Spirit has to take on yet another shape, which Hegel attempts to articulate in the last and most mysterious section of the *Phenomenology*, namely 'absolute knowing.' Let us foreground a direct reading of this text with resources such as Martin Heidegger's 1936 lecture, *Schelling's Treatise on Human Freedom*. This can be yet another endeavor at philosophically-motivated phenomenological deconstruction of the Upanishads with a view to an ultimate critique of Hindu metaphysical theology.

¹¹ At some point, we may have to take a detour in to the Lacanian psychoanalytic framework that describes the tripartite structure of the 'imaginary,' 'symbolic,' and the 'real' but with

encounter some crucial distinctions between self, body-hood, immortality, mortality, time, eternity and the linkage at the heart of the Real: this is in which Brahmanic superiority asserts its transcendental will to a realm accessible only

some qualifications. The idea is not to theorize about these novel conceptual structures that explain the unconscious in terms analogous to the structures of language. That is part of Lacan's midway point between twentieth century French structuralism and poststructuralism given the legacy of turn of the century Saussurean linguistics. For more on this historical context, see Alan D. Schrift, *Twentieth-Century French Philosophy*. The entire legacy of Freudian psychoanalysis on infantile sexuality, neurosis, castration, psychopathology, the figures of 'mother' and 'father' has to be bracketed and evacuated. We are not interested in linking these to eminently metaphysical questions of self, sacrifice, Brahman, 'Real' with psychoanalytic issues of repression, the unconscious, the id, ego, superego of instinctual drives, the pleasure principle, libido, and the death-drive even when transferred beyond the individual to macro-levels of society and culture. Instead, we have an appropriation in mind. Rather than the psychology of human mind or behavior per se, we are intrigued by the interpenetrating relationships between the 'imaginary, symbolic, and real' when taken out of their psychoanalytic context and applied to large-scale mythic, religious, philosophical, and metaphysical phenomena such as those encountered in the Upanishads. In responding to the great twentieth century French Benedictine philosophical interpreter of Hegel, namely Hyppolite, Lacan states in his "Response to Jean Hyppolite's Commentary on Freud's Verneinung": "For that is how we must understand 'Einbeziehung ins Ich,' taking into the subject, and 'Ausstossung aus dem Ich,' expelling from the subject. The latter constitutes the real insofar as it is the domain of that which subsists outside of symbolization. This is why castration – which is excised by the subject here from the very limits of what is possible, but which is also thereby withdrawn from the possibilities of speech – appears in the real, erratically. In other words, it appears in relations of resistance without transference – to extend the metaphor I used earlier, I would say, like a punctuation without a text. For the real does not wait [attend], especially not for the subject, since it expects [attend] nothing from speech. But it is there, identical to his existence, a noise in which one can hear anything and everything, ready to submerge with its roar what the 'reality principle' constructs there that goes by the name of the 'outside world.' For if the judgment of existence truly functions as we have understood it in Freud's myth, it is clearly at the expense of a world from which the cunning [ruse] of reason has twice collected its share [part]." See Lacan (2007, 324). Obviously there is a lot more to say about how in Lacan the 'real as that which subsists outside of symbolization' and lived speech/presence goes beyond the subject itself precisely when trying to interpret through Hyppolite's Hegelian lens the difficult terms of 'Bejahung,' 'Verneinung,' and 'Ausstossung' in Freud. For now, we keep these terms untranslated because we have our own views independent of Lacan and Hyppolite. We are not trying to be evasive here but wish to pre-contextualize these massive issues before engaging in our phenomenological deconstruction of the Upanishad texts. For sure, this 'Real' in the Upanishad passages has nothing to do with ordinary empirical human subjectivity and psychology, even in the self-delusion of going beyond oneself into some Godly, ethereal realm where no human beings exist. This is not about mysticism or negative theology either- whether in relation to the legacy of Hegel or Freud or not. And our intention is not to smuggle in psychoanalytic theory, whether of the Freudian or Lacanian kind, into our analysis. The French poststructuralist proclamation of the 'death of the subject' or 'author as fiction' no longer fascinates us. There is much to develop through phenomenology, deconstruction, and metaphysics in the buried dialectical and non-dialectical relations of terms hidden in the signifier 'Real.' Hegel will be our inspiration but Hegelian scholarship is not our end goal.

to those born with Brahmanical status. Yet this caste status accorded at birth and its seemingly eternal truth is what is being obliterated in the Ambedkarite spirit. Birth and death (as end points or the negation of end points in an idea of motion that befuddled Plato and Aristotle alike) have to be rethought in that regard. But we shall return to this.

Reading the Upanishad Passages from a Phenomenological-Deconstructive Orientation

The Upanishad passages we offered – from the Brhadāranyaka and Chāndogya – speak of a self-aggrandizement ('I want to attain greatness'), sacrifice-offering-chant, the mortals and immortals, the self, the brahman, and the Real ('satyam'). At an initial glance, we can assume that some kind of primordial distinction is being established even if we do not detect the actual four varnas of the caste-Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra – let alone the Dalit/Untouchables or outsider caste to the four-fold.¹² One does not have to speak of a 'caste system' in these passages.¹³ The eventual socially stratified system that would emerge has persisted to this day, even after ancient Buddhist rule (third century BCE), Muslim-Mughal rule of the pre-modern era (1526-1720), British colonialism (eighteenth century to 1947), and post-colonial independent India, i.e. from 1948 to the present.¹⁴ Initially, in this analysis, we are not going to analyze this fourfold and the outsider/Dalit caste relation. In fact the much deeper problem of a cosmo-metaphysical body of a fourfold in relation to a fifth outside that is wholly irreducible to it must be bracketed. Rather, we want to stay with the letter of these Upanishad texts, which are among the earliest in all of Hinduism's vastly, sprawled out literature.¹⁵

By focusing on the historical present, from where India's present may derive, rather than the actual historical, empirical time period of antiquity when the Upanishads were conceived orally or in writing, we can make explicit some assumptions. We are unabashed in our assertion that we are working out a speculative philosophy of history. In the spirit of Ambedkarite critique, this philosophy is not intended to win acceptance or be consecrated by Hindu faith

¹² Ambedkar argues in his posthumous, incomplete manuscript, *Philosophy of Hinduism*, that after the Vedas and Upanishads, the four-fold caste hierarchical system makes its real appearance and permanent justification in the much later Manusmirithi or Manu's law codes, which are millennia after the Vedas and centuries after the Upanishad. They appear roughly anywhere between the second century BCE to third century CE. For the manuscript, *Philosophy of Hinduism*, see Moon (2014).

¹³ For a theoretical exposition of caste, see Louis Dummont's classic, *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and its Implications*.

¹⁴ This historical periodization is to orient readers unfamiliar with the long historical trajectory of various forms of imperial rule in South Asia. It is not essential for this philosophical work. For the historical survey, see Diana L Eck, *India: A Sacred Geography*.

¹⁵ The Brhadāranyaka and Chāndogya are among the earliest, which are pre-Buddhist or pre-sixth century CE. See Wendy Doniger, *The Hindus: An Alternative History*.

and those who live and practice it. There seems to be a difference between Brahmins and the lower castes but a difference or differences that are not easily discernable. Again, this is not the social category of caste assigned at birth, say someone who is born to a Brahminic heritage today. Rather, we should say there is a difference (which we still have to articulate in phenomenological-deconstructive terms) between the state of Brahmin and that of the non-Brahmin. The states are what are in question, and not the objects known as 'Brahmin' and 'non-Brahmin.' The states conceal a deeper set of relations by which human existence conceals a mystery. As we shall see later in our appropriation and expansion of propositions in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, against Hegel's Western Judeo-Christian philosophical intentions, there is an internal difference between Brahmin's self-consciousness in relation to another; it must attempt to negate and occlude the threshold of its own constant incoherence as an isolated unity. The relation inside that proposition is what must be expanded in speculative philosophical terms. The difference has its own temporalization-movement-event like quality. To repeat the first Upanishadic passage we analyzed:

That does not age

as this body grows old

That is not killed

when this body is slain –

That is the real form of *brahman*,

In it are contained all desires' (Upanishads 1996, 167; Chāndogya Upanishad 8.1.4)

'So, those here in this world who depart without having discovered the self and these real desires do not obtain complete freedom of movement in any of these worlds, whereas those here in this world who depart after discovering the self and these real desires obtain complete freedom in all the worlds.' (Upanishads 1996, 167; Chāndogya Upanishad 8.1.4)

We shudder in front of these passages, not so much from fear and trembling of a faith limit we cannot cross: for example, the forbidden or transgression whereby non-brahmins attempt to speak as or on behalf of brahmins, as in taking the place of brahminic speech. Or a non-Brahmin trying to pass himself off as Brahmin to occlude public shame of being outed as a non-Brahmin, and therefore suffer the indignity of public segregation and chastisement. Such a deracination of the lived speech by speaking as its interior, one that does not show up in the vocalized speech or the text, would be a sleight-of-hand, at least for the Brahmin. Speech's priority remains unassailable, it would seem. For Hindus, these texts are holy; to speak on their behalf with the attempt to subvert them would be sacrilegious. Yet this is not what makes us cringe in horror in the encounter with the text, which has a Frankenstein-quality

to it. Rather, an anxious accretion builds, an intense gravitational force of something bulging from within, attempting to give birth in a seemingly ceaseless 'labor of negation,' and all for the singular and unrepeatable purpose of articulating a monstrous philosophical complexity. The question of time is what is at issue, but not linear, circular, or rectilinear time. Even the three known axes of 'past, present, and future' will not suffice in this endeavor.

The excess that comes from nowhere, and certainly not the text, haunts. A horizon tries to enrapture and ensnare consciousness on the self-reflection of its temporalization, the self-consciousness of temporalization itself, but it remains elusive. The passages promise great depth in terms of an incalculable, infinitely rich wisdom for which Western philosophical categories of analysis, say from the Pre-Socratics (Heraclitus) to Heidegger to Derrida simply evaporate. But we must venture the phenomenological deconstruction in light of the critique of caste in the historical present. This is something Ambedkar himself did not venture, for this paper presupposes philosophical developments that took place in the continental European context after the 1950s, therefore after Ambedkar. The great figure of twentieth century Indian history died in 1956.¹⁶ We are trying to develop new critical theoretical tools to carry on his task of 'annihilating caste' by destroying the philosophical and religious basis for its perpetuation, namely the 'philosophy of Hinduism.'

We do not want to jump to any immediate distinctions between self and body, as in the self 'that does not age' and the 'body that grows old and dies.' Aging and growth-movement-decay-death are overdetermined with too many philosophical, religious, and cultural signifiers across traditions that we must

¹⁶ Our project presupposes knowledge of French and German philosophers and philosophically-motivated original thinkers throughout the twentieth century with whom Ambedkar most likely did not read. In the first half of the twentieth century, we are thinking primarily of Bergson, Durkheim, Dumézil, Bataille, Klossowski, Levinas, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, Lévi-Strauss and Hyppolite. In the second half of the twentieth century, which Ambedkar could not read especially after 1956, we are thinking of Lacan, Dumont, Althusser, Ricoeur, Foucault, Derrida, Blanchot, Deleuze, Clastres, and Lyotard. In Germany, we are thinking of Husserl and Heidegger, and outside of philosophy proper, Freud and Weber. In the second half of the century, we are thinking of Habermas, Blumenberg, and Koselleck. The point is not to prove what Ambedkar may have or may not have read, as that belongs to the domain of intellectual history. In this piece we will not reflect on Ambedkar's educational roots in the U.S., particularly the influence of John Dewey, or those he may have been exposed to in England when he studied economics and law. We will not be turning to his works in sociology, anthropology, law, and economics even though they interpenetrate all of his writings one can say, even his explicitly stated works on the philosophy of Hinduism and the philosophy of religion in general, such as the *Philosophy of Hinduism*. Again, this is not a work on Ambedkar scholarship but an attempt to continue his critique by other means: *our* direct engagement with the ancient Hindu texts of the *Upanishads* while leveraging resources from twentieth century continental European philosophy. For more on twentieth century continental European philosophy, see Kearney (2003). For secondary works on Ambedkar and his intellectual genealogy, see Teltumbde and Yengde (2018).

suspend any intuitive descent that tries to crash this scene. Perhaps aging has nothing do with lived experience of passing time and the body and whatever one feels in inhabiting a body has nothing to do with physical matter at all, like feeling pain when one touches a hot stove. Furthermore, we do not want to assume that the self accumulates time, is stretched between in the internal accumulation of time and the unfolding of chronological time, as the whole experience as time itself gets stretched: one pole is transcending the body while the body is again within itself and through the course of chronological, linear time flowing. Internal time in relation to flowing time has a deeper ground, by which any relation between self and internal or external time intuited or perceived becomes possible. One is reminded of the novel distinctions Heidegger makes in Division Two of *Being and Time* between 'toden' (to die) and 'sterben' (to perish).¹⁷

¹⁷ If space permitted, we would read Division Two of *Being and Time* because for Dasein, death is not an 'event' (like any other in perceptible, visible, noticeable flowing time) whether one's own death or one's death witnessed by others who 'survive' or live on in chronological time. This is not about the witness who survives and attests to the death of the other. In its primordial temporalization ['ecstatic temporalizing of time as coming towards-having been-making present' in section 65 of Division Two as the ground of the very Being of Dasein – as 'Care, Concern, Dread and Alarm' – and Dasein's resolute drive (running ahead of itself in eager anticipation of what it will be in terms of its meaning as wholly complete in relation to Being since Dasein 'is' its *relation* of Being – from the Introduction) while coming back to drag itself along ('stretchedness' and 'self-stretching' in section 72 of Division Two)], we no doubt have a complex event: that is in a nutshell the whole of *Being and Time*. The problem is that this can never be reduced to anything spatially present – either as internal apperception by self and its relation to time – or externalized physical, social, psychological, or anthropological time and definitely not the chronological time of calendars (seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, years) in recorded world history. Neither time, anything within-in-it, as in death in time, or the temporalization of death, or the relation between death and time can be spatialized as an object of sense, intuition, imagination, or philosophical reason. Leaving it up to theology in terms of the complexity of the world's faiths, for example Christianity, will not help either. Belief is not disclosed truth. This whole entity – Dasein – is never present like any other being (be it empirical, noumenal, or phenomenological). Leaving aside questions of authenticity or inauthenticity in terms of Dasein's thrownness as being-in-the-world, the 'basic state' of Dasein (section 52 in Division One), it is hard enough to understand primordial ecstatic-temporalizing of time, being-towards-death, motion/motility in Division Two without relapsing back into everything that has ever been said in the Western philosophical tradition from the Pre-Socratics to Hegel up to Heidegger's present when *Being and Time* was composed right before 1927. To proliferate possibilities in Division Two is indeed a joyous task but one that cannot be accomplished here. It does serve as a horizon, however, as we multiply our distinctions in the phenomenological encounter with the *Upanishads* where we fructify differences between the temporalization of a motion event and aging/dying whereby passage and transition is not simply one of negation or absence of physical, mental, or existential life. As for Heidegger in isolation, we respect various attempts to think through the depths on time and death in Heidegger's thought, such as Derrida's *Aporias* (1993) and Iain Thomson, "Death and Demise in *Being and Time*" in Wrathall (2013, 260-290).

We must try to understand these fine distinctions as we think about the ground that ‘contains all desires’ and therefore the ontological constitution of that entity– Brahman – before any sense-meaning content fills up in these distinctions that jump at us, for example ‘that does not age’ and the ‘body that grows old and dies/is slain.’ Inhabiting the world itself and what that means in terms of raw possibilities to be as a stretched out projection of past, present, and future, even the relation between being, world, and time (in terms of any relation of past, present, future), should not be taken for granted in terms of any pre-given sense. And we should not jump too fastidiously with Western philosophers like Heidegger and Derrida (and before them Kierkegaard and Nietzsche) to rescue us from this encounter with an-Other tradition, namely the *Upanishads*. For example, age contains the time of a period but the aging of that period, the aging of an epoch itself is not the transpiration of time in an epoch or the shift of epochs in time.¹⁸ The twentieth century philosophical critiques of the history of metaphysics on the how the non-spatialized *relations* between time and being and being and time have been configured are telling: they have been very effective in destroying our natural intuition of time as a spatialized flow of now-points, and in different ways.¹⁹

Beyond the relation – within the difference between the two single-quote phrases in the Chāndogya Upanishad – is not just a multiplicity of playful differences waiting to be articulated and hence delayed, if one thinks of the Derridean *différance*, trace, or supplement.²⁰ But rather, perhaps, we should think of the temporalization of being and the being of temporalization in the differences that escape Western metaphysical dichotomies of time and eternity/timelessness, living/dying and what is beyond them with respect to bodies that are imagined to be bounded and self-enclosed. For example, imagine four or more terms hiding beneath these distinctions and the so-called unities of the terms that are presumably opposed. This does not mean ignoring Hegel, Heidegger, and Derrida but facing them head-on, all of them in isolation and in terms of an impossible simultaneity.²¹

We are not concerned with the speculative-metaphysical conceptualization of that which appears on one side of the dichotomy – ‘that which does not age or is killed,’ which in the Upanishad is asserted as the brahman – the ‘container of all desires.’ We cannot ascribe a complex subjectivity

¹⁸ Philosophers of history such as Blumenberg and Koselleck have offered many insights into these matters. See Blumenberg (1993) and Koselleck (2004).

¹⁹ One only has to return to Derrida’s “Ousia and Grammê: A Note on a Note from *Being and Time*” in *Margins of Philosophy* (1982). There he takes on Heidegger and Hegel simultaneously in response to Aristotle.

²⁰ For example, these motifs derive from his awe-inspiring *Of Grammatology* (1973) and works prior to it.

²¹ To take on one of these giants is hard enough, two is gargantuan, but three stretches the ability of any thinker. But it must be ventured.

to these desires, and then expand phenomenologically on a theory of self-consciousness about that subjectivity's own self-reflection beyond body-hood. Time incarnate passed death without a body is not akin to our presumptive intuitions of an 'afterlife' – say approaching a light when a self leaves a dead body to some unbounded space of infinite love.²² And we do not want to move too quickly about the previous passage on the self-sacrifice motion of preparatory rites, auspicious day, gathering and cleansing, fire-offering-chant threshold (which appears linear but is not because these are not separate events) and simply link that to some mysterious ontological whole called 'brahman' – 'container of desires.'

Rather, we are concerned with what follows the statement of the dichotomies that lead up to this assertion of brahman, namely the passage that draws the sharp distinction between those who depart from this world without knowing the self, who then lack freedom in 'these worlds' and those who do not depart in self-ignorance and therefore gain freedom in 'all worlds.' There, in that tiny, barely noticeable space, we will mediate for a while knowing full-well that an implicit hierarchy, a perverse theodicy that justifies haves and have-nots becomes encrusted in a temporalized knot: that Gordian bind is the event of passage and reincarnation, and that brahman as the state which eclipses all distinctions including life, passage, reincarnation in the cycle of selves will be instantiated as the highest of all Hindu values. One person's freedom is another's enslavement, and dialectics collapse within the complexity. Time fills it-self up and expires in a dispersion that oozes out in all directions by which any sequence between origin, end, other than origin, and other than end fail to cohere. This is true of the source of time itself which is not localized in one place – internally or externally – beginning here or there, or ending here or there.

For something like birth (from a previous death and hence a rebirth) is a point of time, the stretching of life, and then death as a negation point in time, which then catalyzes another birth (hence rebirth) ad infinitum. So it would seem. Every birth would be a non-original, non-present split between a death and rebirth contained within it even though those are not two points in a disambiguated relation. We need to be reluctant and desist from entertaining spatialized thought. Nor do we want to go down the path of playfully creating ever new distinctions between origin, non-origin, other than origin, other than non-origin to conceive of this event of passage – birth – death/rebirth, etc. The spatial-temporalization of all this must be questioned. Hence these values of 'transmigration and reincarnation' (spatialized ontic entities or picture-representations to use the Heideggerean and Hegelian registers for ordinary,

²² One can think of Western conceptions of the 'afterlife' and 'near-death' experiences, whether religious or scientific in description. For example see the highly cited work of Raymond Moody, *Life After Life* (2015). Personally, this is not the kind of literature we would analyze in scholarly academic philosophical inquiry. It is just an example of what exists in the popular imagination regarding 'life after death.'

inauthentic thinking) must be 'transvaluated' just as Nietzsche did in his unrelenting critique of Christian morality.²³ Something bizarre is at work here, which has massive repercussions for caste stratification, oppression, and inequality that englobes the entire social whole of the Hindu mind and society. And internal adherents within Hinduism claim it is the oldest living continuous religious tradition, as if antiquity makes it the wisest, in that it predates the birth of the monotheistic Abrahamic faiths – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – and the eventual 'offshoot' of Hinduism, namely Buddhism, which made its appearance centuries before Christianity.²⁴

Let us develop some of the distinctions. The interrelations of relations and differences and non-interrelations of those relations and differences in the heart of the Upanishadic passage is what will consume us like the fire-chant. We are trying to conceive of a much larger macro-Event that connects while differentiating the question of self-sacrifice with the problem of the distinctions being made between departing the world without knowledge of self and loss of freedom with departing the world with knowledge of self to gain all freedom, not to mention the ontological meaning of 'freedom in many worlds.' And then the problem of the *relation* of freedom and movement emerges.

Being-in-*this-world* presupposes a self that knows itself to be in a world but it really doesn't know itself. It may not know its relation to the world or whether what it knows about being-in-the-world is real or not. And this is not the skeptical question of knowing whether a world or other worlds exist or not.

²³ See in particular his *On The Genealogy of Morals* in Kaufmann (2000). Nietzsche states in the preface to his greatest work: "What was at stake was the *value* of morality – and over this I had to come to terms almost exclusively with my great teacher Schopenhauer, to whom that book of mine, the passion and the concealed contradiction of that book, addressed itself as if to a contemporary (– for that book, too, was 'polemic'). What was especially at stake was the value of the 'unegoistic,' the instincts of pity, self-abnegation, self-sacrifice, which Schopenhauer had gilded, deified, and projected into a beyond for so long that at last they became for him 'value-in-itself,' on the basis of which he *said No* to life and to himself. But it was against precisely *these* instincts that there spoke from me an ever more fundamental mistrust, an ever more corrosive skepticism! It was precisely here that I saw the *great* danger to mankind, its sublimest enticement and seduction – but to what? to nothingness?" See Kaufmann (2000, 455). One should not jump to a quick superficial comparison or conflation of Nietzsche's critique of Western morality from its Greco-Roman roots through Christianity to his nineteenth century present with our attempts to 'transvaluate' the self-sacrifice fire-offering chant and the question of time, eternity, self, body, the Brahman and the 'real.' We should be cautious, extremely self-reflective, and willing to divide within our presentation new assumptions about why and how the 'transvaluation' of the values espoused in the Upanishads differs and delays any simple comparison and contrast with Nietzsche's critique of his own Western Christian moral heritage. We will resume this work in a future paper.

²⁴ Ambedkar questions this notion of Hindu anteriority with regard to Buddhism. In historical fact, what today exists as Brahmanic Hinduism descends from elements whereby Buddhism may have been the original architect of central ideas minus the oppressive caste system. See his *The Triumph of Brahmanism: Regicide or the Birth of Counter-Revolution* (2010).

It may cling to an illusory conception of how somehow its birth, death, and presence in the world are ordered in a certain way that gives it a sense of actually existing. This is not a question of a self or soul that lives in a body or a body that seems to live out itself with or without the self or soul. It is not a question of being-inhabited as in the body lives out its habitation in a sphere beyond itself because the whole notion of an interior-exterior with regard to the lived experience of body (and not subjective consciousness in the body) has to be analyzed.²⁵ Lastly, we are not considering body as an extended world, whereby world is an extension of body.

One can be born, live, and die not knowing who they truly are (let alone the unity of being birth, body, death as an entity beyond the empirical, chronologized human being), and for this Upanishad, this is the peak of a tumultuous un-freedom. Perhaps one cannot control internally the possibility of transition and hence the conscious experience of being reincarnated in the next life. Freedom has a higher sense of self that can encase birth, living, death and incarnation into a higher transcendental horizon of time, which is not simply that of lining up birth with past, present with life, and death with the future. This is not the freedom of a living agency, someone who is free to choose to eat something or not for example, i.e. enacting a fast in an act of martyrdom unto physical death.

Furthermore, for these selves that do not know themselves and lack 'self-consciousness,' to use a superficial appropriation of the Hegelian term, have 'desires.' But these wants or longings do not allow it to acquire 'complete freedom of movement in any of the worlds.' Perhaps this refers to past worlds (past selves) or future worlds (future reincarnated selves). Or may be that distinction that equates past with self and reincarnation with future is false because obviously every self is reincarnated from a past and as a present self is on its way to becoming a future reincarnated self of a past present. What is strange about this temporalization is that you have a double ejection of two

²⁵ The later Merleau-Ponty works would be instructive here, particularly his notion of the 'The Intertwining-The Chiasm.' See his *Visible and the Invisible* (1968). The editor of this incomplete manuscript (at the time of Merleau-Ponty's premature death) offers this text in a footnote, which are Merleau-Ponty's own words: "it is that the look is itself incorporation of the seer into the visible, quest for itself, which is of it, within the visible – it is that the visible of the world is not an envelope of quale, but what is between the qualia, a connective tissue of exterior and interior horizons – it is as flesh offered to flesh that the visible has its aseity, and that it is mine – The flesh as Sichtigkeit and generality. -> whence vision is question and response... . The openness through flesh: the two leaves of my body and the leaves of the visible world. ... It is between these intercalated leaves that there is visibility... . My body model of the things and the things model of my body: the body bound to the world through all its parts, up against it -> all this means: the world, the flesh not as fact or sum of facts, but as the locus of an inscription of truth: the false crossed out, not nullified." See Merleau-Ponty (1968, 131). We will have to return to these uncanny reflections as we ponder the mystery of mortals, immortals, body-hood, self, and the Real in the Upanishads.

infinite regresses in to the past and future multiplying past and future presents whereby the present is hollowed out. Presence has not even been traced, erased, and therefore defying any dialectical antinomies of presence and absence, their differences, relations, sublations, or something other to all these possibilities. This means there is neither a present present nor any present period. The present has finally disappeared, but even every element of that proposition does not make sense, let alone its supposed totality. And yet that is the basis of the conscious self, whether it recalls the past self that was reincarnated or the future self that will be a reincarnation of the present. Let us pause here before moving to the other side of the dichotomy (those who do know themselves before departing the world), let alone the minute relations and differences within the dichotomy. Let us engage in the phenomenological deconstruction of what we have seen so far.

The detachment of self from desires in this world is the pre-condition for running ahead of oneself towards oneself as the event of departure and not the actual future event of death. But this does not occur for unknowing selves in desires that further burrow them into the world precisely when departing. This includes the desire to depart from the world and to imagine what that event would be like, let alone experienced, without being-in-a-world. Something asymmetric is being set up here that somehow forecloses the possibility of a self-conceptualizing movement (through all the worlds) that would then signify an authentic freedom; not the false freedoms of desiring things in this world of objects, peoples, and things. Departing the world without self-knowledge does not mean leaving the world without knowing empirical or factual things about one's life, record of achievements, or the history of the world up to the point of one's own epoch. It does not include knowledge of the date of one's birth or what present in history one is living in. Departure itself is the problem, and this is transition-movement not of any 'thing,' including one's own life, in the passage of time in this world. It is not the event of time passing as image, which is not the passage of things in time.²⁶ We must conceive of the problem in terms of a complex event, one without a unitary-set of spatial boundaries. Spatializing time itself could lead us astray.

²⁶ As interesting as Gilles Deleuze's post-empiricist reflections on the 'movement-image' and 'time-image' are in his *Cinema* volumes, we cannot be drawn into this poststructuralist discourse, which presupposes interpretations of spatialized images in film. This is not to reduce his impressive creativity and philosophical force. Rather, his theorizing-conceptual world and discourse do not apply in the religious-ontological domains we are studying. See in particular Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema, Vol 2: the time-image* (1989). At least this is our assumption about Deleuzian empirical philosophy, others may venture another interpretation.

The Hegelian Detour:

Let us now take a slight detour through Hegel (1977, 410). In the *Phenomenology*, (CC.) Religion follows (BB.) Spirit, the latter of which discusses morality (Hegel 1977, 364). At this juncture, Spirit's consciousness of itself has moved passed this phase of morality. And before Hegel moves to the first of three sub-sections of (CC.) Religion, Hegel offers a slight preface, if you will, as he opens up the whole space of (CC.) Religion.²⁷ Let us read this section slowly in light of the first part of the dichotomy of the Chāndogya Upanishad, namely 'departing the world without having discovered the self, where *real* desires do not capture the freedom of movement in *any* of these worlds.' We are on the tracks of trying to understand what is truly being said here.

In the opening paragraphs of (CC.) Religion, before he proceeds to the sub-sections of A.) 'Natural Religion,' B.) 'Religion in the form of Art,' and C.) 'The Revealed Religion' (Hegel 1977, 453) the latter of which will be Christianity, Hegel gives us quite a bit to appropriate and reformulate in our critical deconstruction of the Hindu *Upanishads*. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel, of course, is speculating about the history of Western philosophy and religion, not Eastern traditions. We are not claiming that there is some buried intention in the *Phenomenology* to cryptically address Eastern religious achievements, which Hegel refuses to make explicit.²⁸ Likewise, we are not concerned with critically analyzing Hegel's Eurocentrism in his own early nineteenth century context. Rather, it is *our* task to appropriate and transform the contents of the *Phenomenology* with a view to deconstructing the inner aporias, contradictions, tensions of the Upanishadic books to expose the fallacies of the caste system and its metaphysical moorings. We also have the benefit of two centuries of thought after Hegel, and the resources of many great thinkers whom Hegel influenced.

As the *Phenomenology of Spirit* crescendos towards its ending sections, Hegel states:

673. Even Consciousness, in so far as it is the Understanding, is consciousness of the *supersensible* or the *inner side* of objective existence. But the supersensible, the eternal, or whatever else it may be called, is devoid of self; it is only, to begin with, the universal, which is a long way yet from being Spirit that knows itself as Spirit. Then there was the self-consciousness that reached its final 'shape' in the *Unhappy* Consciousness, that was only the *pain* of the

²⁷ For a reading of religion in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, see Cyril O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel* (1994); William Desmond, *Hegel's God: A Counterfeit Double?* (2003); and Part "VI. Religion" in the anthology, Steward (1998).

²⁸ For example, it was not until his much later lectures on the *Philosophy of World History* where Hegel addresses India explicitly, including a strenuous critique of the metaphysical foundations of the caste as best he understood it. This is not the place to go into that discussion because we want to stay focused on a critical appropriation of the *Phenomenology* in our critical encounter with the *Upanishads*. For more on Hegel, the philosophy of Hinduism, and caste, see Sampath (2018).

Spirit that wrestled, but without success, to reach out into objectivity. The unity of the *individual* self-consciousness and its changeless *essence*, to which the former attains, remains, therefore, a *beyond* for self-consciousness. The immediate existence of *Reason* which, for us, issued from that pain, and its peculiar shapes, have no religion, because self-consciousness of them knows or seeks *itself* in the *immediate* present. (Hegel 1977, 410)

And then to restate the passage from the Upanishads before we swim back and forth between the two texts and in Western and Eastern realms of thought where they are never contiguous:

So, those here in this world who depart without having discovered the self and these real desires do not obtain complete freedom of movement in any of these worlds, whereas those here in this world who depart after discovering the self and these real desires obtain complete freedom in all the worlds. (Upanisads 1996, 167; Chândogya Upanishad 8.1.4)

These are the passages with which we will remain in the remainder of this essay. A chiasmic intertwining of the positivities and negativities of both Hegel's text and the Upanishads means that relations of difference and margins have to be uncovered in a double movement that is irreducible to a single, unitary event of interpretation. The double entwining movement constitutes a complex event that desires its own self-comprehension so to speak.

The remainder and the trace are important signifiers as we navigate both texts. For the remains point to not just the obvious, for example the presence of absence or the absence of the presence, or the relation and non-relation of presence to absence and vice-versa. To think of an incarnation of the remainder, a crypt that conceals a time frozen within it while we on the outside witness the expiring and passing of time in the stillness of what remains – that is the inspiration. But the 'remains' itself has not been understood in any of these categories. What is retained in the remains has nothing to do with the remains itself, a futural possibility of making death incarnate, a real being, with its own volition and hence 'time.' Death in that case would not be the specter of a past living time, but a living time itself unlike any other. But this is not the remaining of time itself, time as the remains, or time as the ground to understand, intuit, or apperceive not just what remains but the remains itself. But even this 'itself' is misleading. Hence our need to return to Hegel's passage. The content will fill itself up.

The *Upanishads* speak of the 'self' and knowledge of it. Hegel, by contrast, is weary of any stage by which the self has a conception: that is whereby the conception itself is not grounded in Spirit, which can organize any relation between self, self as conscious of itself, and hence self-consciousness as both consciousness of consciousness and consciousness of self. The terms seem to multiply but not aimlessly. The schism between the two realms – consciousness of consciousness as self-consciousness and consciousness of self as self-consciousness – means that some Other is beyond both those possibilities. Why

that Other haunts the distinction between the two, concealing what the actual difference between them really is, and what the difference conceals about 'itself' is part of the problem. The 'self' in general has to be bracketed; it does not signify any simple predicate, including the impossibility or negation of any existence of self or even self as existence. Eventually what becomes the problem of the self-conceptualizing movement is neither consciousness of self nor consciousness of consciousness, in which both are 'subject' and 'object,' but rather a complex event as fully fledged living Notion of Spirit. This is a concrete actualization, not an irreality if we follow Hegel all the way through. But we are running ahead.

These precautionary statements will help us foreground the distinction being made in the *Upanishad* text about a self that knows itself before departing and one that does not. The distinction, differentiation, delaying between them cannot be simply adduced by any interpretation of what the two by themselves could possibly mean, and therefore what their 'contrast' really points to. All we can say is that on one side of the divide, there is being-in-the-world, an event of departure without knowledge of self, an equation of self with 'real' desire, and therefore a lack of 'freedom' of 'movement in any worlds'; and on the other side, there is also being-in-the-world but *this time* an event of departure that does involve knowledge of self, an equation of self with 'real' desire, and thus the acquisition of a 'complete freedom in all worlds.' Freedom has a type of completion (not an enclosed bounded object), and it is something that is acquired. Now with the Hegelian registers, we can expand on what all of this possibly means. And for the thesis we are developing in this analysis, a horrific antinomy of social oppression known as caste finds its metaphysical and theological justification in these Upanishadic texts. The Ambedkarite critiques seeks to thoroughly undermine such justification that goes unquestioned.

Within the Hindu context, freedom indeed is predicated on the prevention, inhibition, stripping away of freedom whereby some (lower caste) selves are deemed not to have knowledge of themselves in the event of departure. In Hegel's text, we can exfoliate the following with regard to the mystery of the Upanishadic promise that departure (not understood in any ordinary sense of dying or death) is something that occurs in the world, and not a departure from the world, while the goal is attainment of freedom in all worlds, past, present, and future selves. Death is like a transcendental subject stretched out among all worlds if properly grasped. It is an event, not absence or nothingness. Or it would seem that is the case. Let us test that hypothesis.

For Hegel, 'understanding' or perceptual-conceptual knowledge is not simply a representation of objective existence in its totality in the form of laws that describe an unchanging essence. For example, when one speaks of an immutable fact: 'that is a true statement.' It is a grasping of the 'supersensible,' which one could mistakenly take as a going beyond, above, or soaring outward and beyond any concept of a beyond (say the non-graspable 'outside' the physical universe), when in fact Hegel speaks of the 'inner side' of existence in its

objectivity. It is a living reality within all external reality – whether a dynamic or static reality, for example the universe. One tries to divine the laws – religious or scientific – of this world. One thinks they are grasping in the inner vitality and movement of what makes this world occur as a truth in such self-knowledge. But at this stage in the shapes of Spirit's history phenomenologically construed, there is no self to be found, the universality of organized sets of relations that would comprise the truth of the totality of world is hollow, and Spirit (which is the being of movement) does know itself as Spirit.

Even if one thinks they 'understand' or can generate knowledge of self in some type of unity of consciousness, self being conscious of itself, consciousness being conscious of a self, this is all tantamount to some dry, barren, 'changeless essence.' Self is not founded in and as a totalizing object that could manifest as a concrete notion, even the notion of being. The discovery of the true meaning of the world, which one might attach to some sense of supreme enlightenment or transcendence, mistakes the 'beyond' that dissolves self into its own understanding of what is most vital about objectively true existence – the 'supersensible' or interior world of truth inside an 'objective existence.' Hegel is certainly not thinking about the infinite expanse of the inner-workings of an isolated human subjectivity trying to imagine all that is. But this would become just another 'beyond' – not truly beyond one's superficial understanding of objective reality through representations and picture-thinking of an infinitely rich reality. The 'beyond' is actually submerged into an 'immediate present,' which has no more speculative philosophical value than a truly inert, static object that is in front of one's eyes, say an empty desk with no papers or books on it.

The self is a dead object precisely when it finds itself in the form of representative understanding, for example idealized mathematical language even as non-representative of any physical 'objects.' Whether name or number, self is not really itself. It is certainly not a living event of movement coming to completion of true knowledge being grasped for itself and raised to a higher-level Notion beyond 'Reason' as the cancellation of all previous shapes understood by all prior forms of knowledge (ancient, medieval philosophy, and early modern and modern science). That would be the gathering up of all moments and a congealing into a Notion that takes within itself the negation of all negations in a bursting-forth occurrence. At least, for Hegel, there is no phenomenological comprehension of what 'religion' is in this stage, and not religion's presentation of itself to itself, for example a world religion like Christianity as a religion based on revelation of divine truth as human person. There is indeed something Other to Christianity that the West up to Hegel's time was not able to imagine. And for this reason, consciousness of self remains an 'Unhappy Consciousness' at this stage of truncated development.

Similarly, in the Upanishadic passage, we can say the following in light of the Hegelian distillation, which to remind ourselves is strictly about a Western

trajectory of the history of thought from the ancient Greeks to Hegel's early nineteenth century European present. We are attempting to apply some of Hegel's insights to a context that Hegel did not envision, at least at the time of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.²⁹ In the Upanishad, being-in-the-world means despising both self and knowledge of self as being a body inhabiting the physical world. The self is trapped in the body and desires a departure; but the departure, if it is genuine in self-comprehension, does not mean departure just from the sensorial physical world, even the body as a whole world; it is in fact tied to some kind of desire linked to a 'freedom of movement in all worlds.' Contrary to most opinions, this ascetic self is not the negation of world.

A happy consciousness in this Hindu context would not be trapped with a self who desires the things of this world but looks to link up a super-sensory consciousness that allows past dead selves to commune with future reincarnated selves; but this is lodged with some alleged self-consciousness of the 'self' departing itself. The line and continuum must be transcended in another temporal form that is not geometric in nature. Furthermore, the event of departure becomes an 'object' of self-consciousness, which redoubles as a self-knowing-itself. Transcendence of the cycles of lives from increasing consciousness of self (self = desire) would require a diminishment of bodyhood that translates into an equal commitment to a phantasmagorical imagination of freedom as all worlds. The 'self' consumes the body that was supposed to enclose it just as the sacrificial-fire-chant allows the self to achieve its 'greatness.' The body swallows the whole world precisely as the self gesticulates the body, a kind of perverse self-cannibalism of total annihilation. Everything vanishes into an immaterial ether, which is true self-consciousness of movement as event, not pure negation or nothingness. It *becomes* the very materiality of ritual sacrifice. How would Hegelian phenomenological deconstruction treat some of the assumptions here? Let us venture some propositions.

It would seem that the 'supersensory' knowledge of the 'event' of departure as an 'inner-side' of an objective existence of not only self but knowledge of self is linked to some kind of enjoyment or 'desire.' The desire is like an evanescent explosion in all directions in a maddening delight of total bodily transcendence as ritualistic expulsion; time devours its own shape and becomes other to both flowing time and its negation. Hence the desire is temporalized in a way that does not mimic the flow of moments or instants in linear time. This means the self is not a simple moment with an expanse of eternity. The self longs for its plural selves, past and future, death itself is traced as an erasure in the world because one is not departing the world. There is a stretchedness of all being. These selves meeting each other attempt to leave their bodies behind. Movement would be the non-cyclic 'freedom of all worlds' buried

²⁹ See our footnote 28 on the relation between the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) and *Philosophy of World History* (1830).

in this event of departure. 'Universality' or the 'pain' of succumbing to all the desires in this world of superficial things that a self may be attracted to (say for another human being) can never attain to this 'unified individual self-consciousness' as the composite of all selves knowing themselves and absolving themselves of all acts of false self-knowledge. And, certainly the quest for idols or divine objects will also fail to provide what they ultimately promise, namely some revelation of truth. When past and future chase each other, there is no present to be found.

For a self to truly liberate itself, it must learn to hate itself too, whereby self-loathing becomes a bottomless pursuit of enlightenment, the departure from all concrete desires of the world. For in the structure of caste, any present self is the karmic effect of the actions of a previous self, whereby bad actions catalyzed by false desires leads to a descent in a more oppressed caste, for example the Dalit formerly known as 'untouchable,' and all good actions can promise a higher, happier, ascendant 'Brahmanic' self. This is the type of injustice instantiated in this system of thought-belief. Ironically, however, the love for another (one's family, friends, or even members of one's caste) becomes impossible, a repetition of that false desire. Detachment from the desirous self for another cannot be substituted by yet another false desire for self, and the singularity of being-one-self is an evacuating of all and every being; a hypnotic stance of pure amorality and indifference towards the suffering of everything around oneself. Love becomes impossible, and this however is beyond good and evil in a way that Nietzsche could never imagine. Out of this morose a-morality arises the social-sovereign justification of caste; the latter has to conceal the inner-despotism of a metaphysics that prioritizes the destruction of false desire for self for another self with the promised notion of true transcendence in the event of bodily departure. The 'freedom of movement of all worlds' is indeed an un-holy grail, and everything is at stake in beating everyone else to its treasure.

One can ask about a type of Nietzschean *ressentiment*, or the resentfulness of a false morality deriving from a self-hatred, a will to weakness culminating in nothingness, a complete denial of all life-affirming desires because one has installed transcendence of the world as the highest calling. When in fact one does not know if one is only deepening a falsehood presenting itself as an objective truth. For once a system of morals comes into being, it can also become a system of domination.³⁰ Coming back to the Hegelian lens, we can re-submerge back in the Upanishadic realm. But we have to install an initial contrast with another great philosopher mentioned earlier, namely Heidegger.

Trying to discover a self as an event of departure while being-in-the-world is not quite a Heideggerean 'anticipatory resoluteness,' a 'being-towards-death' in which the greatest possibility for Dasein (being-there) 'to be' is the 'possibility

³⁰ Every great European thinker of the twentieth century acknowledged the debt they owe to Nietzsche, for example all the works of Foucault.

of impossibility,' which is death.³¹ And not to forget, for Heidegger, Dasein – that entity that poses the 'question of the meaning of Being anew' is its 'relation' of Being as 'transcendens' in which the very Being of Dasein is grounded in the 'primordial' mystery of 'finite, ecstatic temporalizing of time.'³² As long as Dasein 'is,' it is incomplete, it's Being or 'is-ness' is never present, which means death is also not a moment in time (for example past or future); but as inherently finite temporalizing-eventful structural 'whole' or totality (which is not a delimited point in space-time) stretched out and self-stretching in 'thrown' existence, Dasein does not live forever in some superficial concept of eternity. There is no Christian afterlife for Dasein.

Dasein is after all 'being-in-the-world' without being an extant and extended object in the world, which itself is rooted in some ideal space-time. Nothing in the history of philosophy up to Heidegger's attempt can help explain this 'state' that Dasein finds itself in. Dasein tries to grasp itself as 'whole,' including both its 'ends' ('being-towards-death' and 'being-towards-birth').³³

³¹ This is in reference to Section 50 of Chapter I in Division Two of *Being and Time*. Heidegger states: "Death is a possibility-of-Being which Dasein itself has to take over in every case. With death, Dasein stands before itself in its ownmost potentiality-for-Being. This is a possibility in which the issue is nothing less than Dasein's Being-in-the-world. Its death is the possibility of no-longer being-able-to-be-there. If Dasein stands before itself as this possibility, it has been fully assigned to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being. When it stands before itself in this way, all its relations to any other Dasein have been undone. This ownmost non-relational possibility is at the same time the uttermost one. As potentiality-for-Being, Dasein cannot outstrip the possibility of death. Death is the possibility of the absolute impossibility of Dasein. Thus death reveals itself as that possibility which is one's ownmost, which is non-relational, and which is not to be outstripped [unüberholbare]. As such, death is something distinctively impending." See Heidegger (1963, 294). As mentioned, none of this is meant to be passed over lightly but points to the necessity of sustained philosophical research on Heidegger and the Ambedkarite-inspired critique of the 'philosophy of Hinduism,' starting with its most esoteric philosophical texts, namely the *Upanishads*. Time and death have to be reconceived in entirely new ways, a feat that remains unaccomplished after Heidegger's grandiose attempts at novel philosophical thinking.

³² From section 5 of chapter II of the Introduction of *Being and Time* Heidegger states: "question of the meaning of Being must enable us to show that the central problematic of all ontology is rooted in the phenomenon of time." See Heidegger (1963, 40). And from section 7 of Chapter II of the Introduction: "Being and the structure of Being lie beyond every entity and every possible character which an entity may possess. Being is the transcendens pure and simple. And the transcendence of Dasein's Being is distinctive in that it implies the possibility and the necessity of the most radical individuation. Every disclosure of Being as the transcendens is transcendental knowledge. Phenomenological truth (the disclosedness of Being) is *veritas transcendentalis*." See Heidegger (1963, 62).

³³ This is in reference to section 72 of Chapter V in Division Two of *Being and Time*, in which Heidegger starts to break down, declaring that his whole attempt up to that point could be fatally flawed and that he may not be able to answer the question he set out to answer, namely the 'question of the meaning of Being.' See Heidegger (1963, 424-425). To repeat yet again from the previous footnote, all of the current research is laying the groundwork for a future confrontation with Heidegger's corpus of which *Being and Time* is paramount and cannot be

Therefore finite time (with a birth and death inclusive) comes from a deeper ground that escapes anything any human being – at least for Heidegger – has to had to say in the history of Western metaphysics, theology, and religion. Yet it remains undisclosed, otherwise it risks being derivative and not truly primordial, as in ontologically foundational. And like Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Heidegger's *Being and Time* does not reckon the problem of time, birth, death, and 'rebirth' in the Hindu tradition. After all Hindu reincarnation is not the Christian notion of a one-time occurrence-resurrection promised to all who have faith in the great factual event that took place over two thousand years ago in Roman-occupied Jewish Palestine.

Conclusion

So we return to Hegel one last time in the concluding encounter with the *Upanishad*. Keeping in mind allied problems in Heidegger for future investigations, we can offer some preliminary conclusions. Or rather, this initial Heideggerean horizon will give us some caution about a Hegelian speculative expansion of what truly lies buried in the Upanishadic text and perhaps behind it. We venture into a previously undisclosed realm with Hegel giving us the initial thrust. In the very next paragraph after the one we have been analyzing in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* thus far, Hegel states:

674. On the other hand, in the ethical world we did see a religion, namely, the religion of the *underworld*. It is the belief in the terrible, unknown night of Fate and in the Eumenides of the *departed spirit*; the former is pure negativity in the form of universality, the latter the same negativity in the form of individuality. Absolute Being is, in the latter form, indeed the *self* and *present*, since other than present the self cannot *be*. But the individual self is *this* individual shade which has separated from itself the universality, which Fate is. True, it is a shade, a superseded particular self, and thus a universal self; but the negative significance of the shade has still not changed round into the positive significance of the universal self, and therefore the superseded self still has, at the same time, the immediate significance of this particular essenceless being. But Fate devoid of self remains the unconscious night which does not attain to an immanent differentiation, nor to the clarity of self-knowledge. (Hegel 1977, 410)

If time permitted, we could spend countless pages immersing ourselves in this passage. In this raw moment, Hegel indeed mentions the 'departed' spirit, a spirit to which we must return. He also mentions 'Fate,' which in the Hindu context has a complex relation to karmic cycles, sin, and reincarnation. But it

evaded. What philosopher in the twenty-first century can possibly claim to taking on the philosophical interrogation of the problems of time and death and not deal with Heidegger? That is utterly impossible. Taking it one step further, trying to crossover to an 'other beginning,' which the post-*Being and Time* Heidegger dreamed of, means stepping outside the (gentile) Western Christian-Greco-Roman foundations of metaphysics, and truly engaging a foreign tradition, in this case Hinduism.

would behoove us not to conflate belligerently the philosophical assumptions in Hegel's understanding with the non-Judeo-Christian and non-Greco-Roman ancient context of Hinduism. Whether Calvinistic predestination of Nietzsche's Eternal Return, or anything the ancient Greeks had to say about tragedy, cannot help us in our desperate attempt at liberation from the Hindu cycle of being; and that includes the ontological question of what the very *being* of what birth, death, and rebirth even means. What we can say is this in closing.

'Fate' in Hinduism, at least in the Upanishadic passage we have been dealing with, is not mere repetition of an indefinitely distant self, which is non-original because in the infinite regress it can be derived from a previous self that is first. The origin itself is non-original as Derrida would say, which means there is no origin of the 'trace,' only a trace of an origin that never was. Therefore the trace defies both presence and absence, let alone any simple definition of their difference dialectically understood or otherwise. Linear time as a succession of movements of moments and moments of movement is inadequate in trying to plumb the mysteries of the logocentric metaphysical tradition of the long 'text' known as the West in its 'historical totality.'³⁴

In the Hindu 'text', the further one goes back 'in' time, it is as if the origin of the movement continues to distend itself backwards, like a reverse delay, a stretching indefinitely in a past that is never a stable present, whereby even the event of erasure is itself erased and pushed back further. One is constantly sucked back into an infinitely extended death known as the past that never ends. That is why being-in-the-world as true knowledge of self as desire transcends any simple notion of birth (which can never be divorced from being construed as also an event of death and rebirth). The origin explodes in a million temporal directions while suffocating the 'self' seeking its event of departure. It is not that one cannot escape from death as an inevitable fact of life looking into the future; rather, one cannot escape from death that will not disappear at the origin. It may look like a departure from *this world* – there here and now of the living present that one finds oneself in – but it also cannot be that because right around the other side of the horizon so to speak is the promised 'freedom in all worlds.' One can see the fence that imprisons oneself but one cannot see what lies beyond it. And here we do not speak of anything spatial, for in fact we are considering the metaphysical mystery of time itself, albeit in a new way.

³⁴ See Derrida's magisterial *Of Grammatology*. He states at the very outset of his work in his preface: "It goes without saying that around that axis I have had to respect classical norms, or at least I have attempted to respect them. Although the word 'age' or 'epoch' can be given more than these determinations, I should mention that I have concerned myself with a structural figure as much as a historical totality. I have attempted to relate these two seemingly necessary approaches, thus repeating the question of the text, its historical status, its proper time and space. The age already in the past is in fact constituted in every respect as a text, in a sense of these words that I shall have to establish. As such the age conserves the values of legibility and the efficacy of a model and thus disturbs the time (tense) of the line or the line of time." See Derrida (1973, lxxxix-xc)

To truly get at this desire of a most radical and uncanny transcendence known as the Brahman requires a gross self-aggrandizement, a growth of living, dead, and reliving selves, a mausoleum collection of pure, macabre selfishness because literally no other self, as in another human being's self, must appear. The supreme Self in fact has devoured all selves. Any remainder would be part of the false desire and false knowledge and hence no true freedom. The tragedy is that inflexible distinctions in the stratified social order hypostatizes essential differences of human beings along the order of inferiority and superiority, no different in that regard when it comes to the evil of biological racism. But the supra-Self that gather all selves in all directions of time as an infinite borrowing is always individual (albeit with many selves); to include another human being is to invite what is most impure, to invite the defecation within the delightful sweet that is about to be consumed, namely the event of departure. In this world, one not only dies alone, one cannot admit the possibility of the life and death of the other in a mono-maniacal quest for self-knowledge and self-transcendence.

What we have here in this light of demonic freedom is an ever deeper darkness, the recess and abyss that is also an arising movement like the chant-fire-sacrifice. Leaving this world means departing from the ethical responsibility for life, as in life alive today, whereby past selves and future selves can never be present, otherwise one never really 'departs' from the world. One has to depart from the world of all others in order to depart from this world, which means to gain selfishly and greedily all possible worlds for oneself. In this 'religion of the underworld' and 'night of Fate devoid of self,' as Hegel says, something else occurs, and not the 'clarity of self-knowledge.' Rather, an 'unconscious night,' a night of dreams and nightmares takes over. For the Hindu, the 'self' attached to this world in the event of departure confuses a 'desire' without subjectivity with a 'freedom' without world. The joyous communion is an elusive sequence of infinite jets in two directions of time, all past dead selves imagined as true, and all future reincarnated selves imagined as real. To have self-consciousness of this super-movement, which is the greatest meta-self-consciousness, reflects the peak of Brahman condescension and elite conquest, an Elysian field for which no other caste can strive. In the Brahman, the 'dead truly bury the dead,' but unlike the Hegelian and Christological registers, the dead also consume the living in the eternal totalitarian system known as caste.

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