# ANNALES

# ANNALES

**Anali za istrske in mediteranske študije**
**Annali di Studi istriani e mediterranei**
**Annals for Istrian and Mediterranean Studies**

**Series Historia et Sociologia, 30, 2020, 3**

KOPER 2020

OPEN ACCESS

# VSEBINA / *INDICE GENERALE / CONTENTS*

Anali za istrske in mediteranske študije - Annali di Studi istriani e mediterranei - Annals for Istrian and Mediterranean Studies

# THE REALM OF ABSTRACT WORSHIP – HEGEL'S INTERPRETATION OF ISLAM

*Rok SVETLIČ*
Science and Research Centre Koper, Institute for Philosophical Studies, Garibaldijeva 1, 6000 Koper, Slovenia
e-mail: rok.svetlic@guest.arnes.si

## ABSTRACT

*The article thematises Hegel's account on Islam as found in his Lectures on the Philosophy of History. The discussion primarily examines the relationship between man, God/Absolute and the world in Islam, which, as Hegel demonstrates, is marked by irreducible abstractness. Two things emerge from abstractness, both the remarkable creativity of Islam (e.g. Poetry) and its inclination to violence, including its inability to build a solid political structure. To shed light on these limitations, the discussion refers on Hegel's Science of Logic, where the condition for mutual interdependence of man, God/Absolute and the world are developed. In religious language, this interdependence articulates the concept of trinity, which makes it possible to overcome the shortcomings of the abstract approach.*

**Keywords:** Islam, philosophy of law, violence, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

# IL REGNO DELL'ADORAZIONE ASTRATTA – L'INTERPRETAZIONE DI HEGEL DELL'ISLAM

## SINTESI

*L'articolo tematizza il racconto di Hegel sull'Islam come si trova nelle sue lezioni Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte. La discussione esamina principalmente il rapporto tra l'uomo, Dio / Assoluto e il mondo nell'Islam, che, come dimostra Hegel, è segnato da un'astrattezza irriducibile. Dall'astrattezza emergono due cose, sia la straordinaria creatività dell'Islam (ad esempio la poesia) come anche la sua inclinazione alla violenza, inclusa la sua incapacità di costruire una solida struttura politica. Per far luce su questi limiti, la discussione fa riferimento alla Wissenschaft der Logik di Hegel, dove si sviluppano le condizioni per la reciproca interdipendenza tra uomo, Dio / Assoluto e mondo. Nel linguaggio religioso, questa interdipendenza articola il concetto di trinità, che consente di superare le carenze dell'approccio astratto.*

**Parole chiave:** Islam, filosofia del diritto, violenza, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

## INTRODUCTION[1]

Understanding Islam has become one of the most important tasks of philosophy. Probably the most elusive theme within it is establishing a connection between Islam and violence. This demanding analysis is, however, often additionally burdened by the informal imperative of political correctness, that suggests either to avoid the subjects of violence completely or to remain on level of distanced generalized judgments, stating that all religions can be violent as well as peaceful, destructive as well as sublime.

The aim of this article is to shed light on the characteristics of Islam in its relation to violence and to compare this relation with the attitude towards violence of the Western tradition. As a philosophical framework for the discussion, we will take Hegel's analysis of Islam, which he develops in chapter *Mohammedanism* from the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* (Hegel, 1914). We will only briefly address the issue of his positioning Islam within the context of world history, which is otherwise the basic role of the aforementioned chapter.[2] We have chosen this chapter since on this place Hegel explicitly thematizes the relationship between man, God/Absolute and the world in Islam. The dialectic of these three elements is crucial for the purpose of this article, as it determines the *ethos* of man within the Whole of a being and, consequently, the status of violence as a medium of relationship with the world.

Since the task of the chapter 'Mohammedanism' is not an exhaustive analysis of those relations, we will underpin it by the reference on Hegel's work *The Science of Logic*, more precisely, by the chapter *Absolute Relation*. This chapter explains much more comprehensively the characteristics of two *different* constellations between substance and accidences (in our case: between God/Absolute and world). Hegel sees the shortcoming of this constellation in Islam in its abstractness. Abstractness is an indicator of the imperfection of logical relationship in general, which (in our case) results in the inclination to mere *negation* as a medium of communication with the world, and in the incapability of the immanent development of this relationship.

It must be stressed out that Hegel is an ambivalent author when it comes to criticizing the violence. It is enough to mention his programmatical rejection of pacifism not only as unrealistic, but

in the first place as unethical idea. Only the war, he argues, can bring oxygen into the sluggish water of selfishness and individualist degeneration: '*For war should not be regarded as an absolute evil and as a purely external contingency.* [...] *Whatever is by nature contingent is subject to contingencies, and this fate is therefore itself a necessity.*' (Hegel, 1991, 324). History as a 'slaughter-bench' is not a place of happiness and personal fulfillment, but rather the process of individuals' sacrifice for the interests of the world spirit. Hegel is, furthermore, famous also for his reservation to the concept of human rights, that stand in '*a fixed position – for example, as cosmopolitanism – in opposition to the concrete life*' (Hegel, 1991, 209), and are, therefore, destructive for state's organism.

Hegel is, on the other hand, from today's point of view, a valuable author, as his critique of Islam does not slip into naïve advocacy of Western superiority over Islam. He stresses out, that Islam is not merely capable of being sublime, it can achieve such richness in its creativity that the West often seeks inspiration in the Islamic tradition.[3] However, he sees the limits of Islam in its abstractness of the relationship between man, God/Absolute and the world, which implies inherent connection to violence, that is more tenacious than within Christianity. Thus, regarding its inclination to violence, Islam's Western pendant is not to be sought in Christianity, but in the French revolution. It is not without reason that I. Almond calls Islam '*incomplete and abstract enlightenment*' (Almond, 2010, 117).

## ABSTRACT ONE VS. CONCRETE MAN AND WORLD

Hegel's approach to the discussion on Islam is marked by certain discomfort. The impression he gives is that the emergence of Islam was an inconvenient remnant of a (generally) perfect structure in the development of the world spirit. This is clearly indicated by the fact that he included the chapter *Mohammedanism* within the section, titled *The German World*. Judaism supposedly performed its task on the global level by giving birth to Christianity and should have retreated into historic nullity. However, it did not, for it led to the emergence of Islam. Hegel tried to dispose of these unease by placing Islam onto a *second* level of dialectics, as an 'anti-thesis' to the first chapter (*The Elements of*

---

1   This article is the result of research work within the program group P6-0400 Social Contract in the 21st Century, funded by ARRS.
2   Nonetheless, these are issues that cannot be completely avoided, especially the question as to whether Islam has truly withdrawn from global history and whether its role for understanding the events on the global level has truly been eliminated, as Hegel concluded.
3   Hegel mentions Goethe's work *West–Eastern Divan* as a classic example.

*the Christian German World*), which can be found at the beginning of the section *The German World* (and is concluded by the chapter *The Empire of Charlemagne)*. Thus, he placed Islam in opposition to the barbarian Europe of the time.

Hegel described this Europe as a world of the particular, contingent, and complex Many, within which the *'world of free reality'* (Hegel, 1914, 369) is being painfully constructed. However, this construction will take time, certainly more than a thousand years. In opposition to this stands a phenomenon that Hegel announced through confident rhetoric of necessity (that is otherwise characteristic for his philosophy of history): *'while the West began to shelter itself in a political edifice of chance, entanglement and particularity, the very opposite direction necessarily made its appearance in the world, to produce the balance of the totality of spiritual manifestation.'* (Hegel, 1914, 369) This *'very opposite direction'* was Islam. In the construction of Hegel's system this is of key importance: he believed Islam was capable of producing Totality at a time during which Europe was dazed by mass migrations and characterised by impenetrable dispersion. He believed Islam was capable of removing the particularity, purifying the spirit and connecting many peoples through a single principle.

Hegel called this phenomenon *'the revolution of the East'* (Hegel, 1914, 370), which is a further indicator of his difficulties at placing Islam within the horizon of world history. Such a description is unusual, because Hegel himself drew attention to the *differentia specifica* of Islam in relation to the Orient, i.e. *'East'*. The characteristic of the latter can be found in its immersion of the spirit into nature, which is nothing less than its slavery. The limit of the Orient is illustrated by the Egyptian sphinx, in which we can sensate the irremediable attachment of the spirit to nature. Similar to Judaism (which Hegel places into the Orient), Islam surpasses nature clearly. Its principle is the One, still understood as pure abstraction, which, however, has been liberated of the attachment to the chosen nation. Islam differs from the Orient also in another key element: the man is understood as the subject. In opposition to India, for example, where the individual sinks into the Absolute through his disappearance, the *'subjectivity is here living and unlimited, an energy'* (*370*). Especially the latter justifies the notion of *'revolution'*, as subjectivity starts negating the world as soon as it confronts it.

A characteristic of Islam, relevant to philosophy can be analysed by the criteria that it sets for itself: to establish the connection between man, God/Absolute and the world. Creating this connection takes place within the medium of worshiping the abstract One, as the realm of abstract worship. This One is the absolute object, totally transparent, without any inner divisions. Islam accepts the *Old Testament* command that *'thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image'* (Exodus 20: 2) with utter consistency. The subject that stands opposite to the Absolute, has the obligation to focus completely on this object, which demands the rejection of all of its particular interests. Thus *'the worship of the One remains the only bond by which the whole is capable of uniting'* (Hegel, 1914, 372). Or, if we use the words of R. Daghistani, *'The consciousness of Allah, God and his worship, remains the only bond that holds together the inner and external micro and macro cosmos and joins everything in general'* (Daghistani, 2012).

However, this connection has its limits. The relationship between One and the many, the eternal and transitory, substance and accidence, cannot be reconciled within an *abstract* medium. A number of issues emerge from the abstractness of these relations. Firstly, subjectivity is not fulfilled, for man does not recognise himself in the One. Subjectivity is merely trapped in the fanaticism of fulfilling its purity and universality: *'In this spiritual universality, in this unlimited and indefinite purity and simplicity of conception, human personality has no other aim than the realization of this universality and simplicity'* (Hegel, 1914, 370). It thus exists merely as self-dissolution, without any affirmation.

The difficulties of abstract bond between man and One are spottable in the incapacity to consistently perform the intended *'purity'* within the religious relation. The remnant is presented by the image of Eden, marked by an explicitly hedonistic note, which enters the relation between the believer and One through the back door. Thus, the believer is trapped between the imperative of purity, in the name of which he must be willing to die if necessary, and the (promised) eternal sensual pleasure. This is a typical consequence of the so-called *first* negation, which fails to control the negated entity; on the contrary, it gives it demonic attraction and vast mobilisation power.[4]

---

4   Hegel draws attention to the paradoxical result of celibacy in a similar way. The sphere of sexuality did not disappear with it, on the contrary, it gained in power: *'It is a further abstraction if the divine and* substantial *is separated from its existence in such a way that feeling and the consciousness of spiritual unity are categorised as what is falsely called Platonic love; this separation is associated with the monastic attitude which defines the moment of natural life as utterly negative and, by this very separation, endows it with infinite importance in itself'* (Hegel, 1991, 163).

It is impossible for the abstract One to develop an affirmative relation towards the world. Since it is empty, it cannot *pass over into its own opposite*, which is why it instantly forms an excluding attitude toward the concreteness and diversity of the world: the world is understood merely as *not*-One. Because One is the supreme object, the only possible relation to the world lies in its subjugation, in non-spiritual hierarchy: '*subjectivity has this worship for the sole occupation of its activity, combined with the design to subjugate secular existence to the One*' (Hegel, 1914, 370). This is the spot where the connection of Islam and the violence can be clarified. The restlessness that can be noticed in contact of One with man and the world derives from the very structure of Islam, from its emptiness of the supreme object. This is manifested in the destructive fanatism of subjectivity '*which enters into secular life with a purely negative purpose. And as such it exists*' (Hegel, 1914, 370). Subjectivity exists, according to Hegel, merely as a negation-of-the-world.

It is obvious the parallelism with other abstract (philosophical) concepts, all of which are inclined towards violence. In § 5 of the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel analyses the moment of abstract will:

*The will contains (ά) the element of pure indeterminateness, i.e., the pure doubling of the I back in thought upon itself. In this process every limit or content, present though it be directly by way of nature, as in want, appetite or impulse, or given in any specific way, is dissolved. Thus we have the limitless infinitude of absolute abstraction, or universality, the pure thought of itself* (Hegel, 1991, 5).

This description is analogous to the demand for purity of subjectivity in Islam. As soon as this concept becomes, however, active, it

*assumes both in politics and religion the form of a fanaticism, which would destroy the established social order, remove all individuals suspected of desiring any kind of order, and demolish any organisation which then sought to rise out of the ruins. Only in devastation does the negative will feel that it has reality. It intends, indeed, to bring to pass some positive social condition, such as universal equality or universal religious life. But in fact, it does not will the positive reality of any such condition, since that would carry in its train a system, and introduce a separation by way of institutions and between individuals. But classification and objective system attain self-consciousness only by destroying nega-*

*tive freedom. Negative freedom is actuated by a mere solitary idea, whose realisation is nothing but the fury of desolation* (Hegel, 1991, 5).

This Hegel's words refer specifically to the French revolution. He demonstrates that abstract concept exists, i.e. is *actual*, only as long as it is tearing the world apart. Concerning the violence in the name of abstract (religious) concepts, the parallel is summarised by the syntagma *La religion et la terreur* (Hegel, 1914, 370), which Hegel places alongside the experience of the French revolution, *La liberte et la terreur* (Hegel, 1914, 370) as philosophical concept.

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

In the chapter on *Mohammedanism* Hegel summarises the shortcomings of Islam in in this sentence: '*This One has indeed, the quality of Spirit; yet because subjectivity suffers itself to be absorbed in the object* [sich in den Gegenstand aufgehen lässt]*, this One is deprived of every concrete predicate; so that neither does subjectivity become on its part spiritually free, nor on the other hand is the object of its veneration concrete.*' (Hegel, 1914, 370) These shortcomings can be best illustrated by the comparison with the ontology that lays in the fundament of Christianity. In the first place, it is about the teaching of the trinity. Almond wrote: '*For Hegel the doctrine of the Trinity was itself a moment of progress in the development of the World Spirit.* […] *It is in this sense that Islam's rejection of the divinity of Christ as the embodiment of the universal in the particular was both a denial of Christian doctrine and a refusal of this necessary step towards Absolute Knowledge*' (Almond, 2010, 124).

The dialectics of universality (*Allgemeinheit*), particularity (*Besonderheit*) and individuality (*Einzelheit*), which are at the core of the World Spirit, is, according to Hegel, for the first time in the history risen to the level of self-consciousness in the doctrine of trinity. Consequently, in the supreme principle (i.e. in the Absolute) the believer recognises himself as *confirmed*, recognises himself as a moment of dialectics of the absolute object. The absolute is not merely One, but is always *also* particularity, i.e. man. Thus, the Christian does not '*suffers to be absorbed in the object*'. In relation to the absolute he is not (merely) in relation to the (supreme) object, but always also in relation to *himself* (i.e. to humanity, which is a part of the definition of the Absolute). He is confirmed in this relation. On the level of religious language this reflect the rhetoric of love (*agape, caritas*) to

*man*, which substitutes the relationship of abstract hierarchy, i.e. the relation of fear.

An illustrative example of the affirmative position of man in relation to the Absolute can be found in the confident, almost commanding Jesus' words, aimed at God:

> *Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began* (Jn, 17).

The God-*Man* glorified God and now he demands the same of him. One cannot exist without the other.

Structure just described can be demonstrated trough the ontological analysis of the sole object of religion. This is thematised, even though implicitly, in the second part of *The Science of Logic*, in the logic of essence. Hegel discusses the One – as described in the Old Testament – in the chapter *Absolute Relation,* in subsection *A. The Relation of Substantiality*, where he researches the relation between substance and the accidences. As K. Schmidt reminds, this is a chapter with a clear religious note (Schmidt, 1997, 215).

The *Relation of Substantiality* is the relation between substance and the accidences. From the aspect of logic, this is already a highly sophisticated relation, which appears at the end of the logic of essence and, as the religion in Hegel's system in general, speaks out the truth of the world as a whole.[5] The accidences, their movement, are the embodiment of substance, i.e. of the basis of everything that exists: '*this movement of accidentality is the actuosity of substance as a tranquil coming forth of itself*' (Hegel, 2010, 156). Substance appears as a power, which thus negates the flow of the accidentals, defines their transition between the possibility, actuality and back again: '*The ceasing-to-be of the accident is its return as actuality into itself, as into its in-itself or into its possibility*' (Hegel, 2010, 156).

However, this manifestation of the absolute relation has a shortcoming, which is shared by

the One as known in Islam: the substance is not yet *self*-referring. It exists merely *on*-itself and not yet *for*-itself. The reason for this is that it does not perform the negation in relation to *itself*, it is negative only in relation to the accidental. Thus, it negates merely the difference in the absolute relation, but not also the identity within it. Or, to put it differently, it defines the accidents merely in the *identity* (i.e. it eliminates its being-different) with the substance, but not also in the *difference* with it. It understands this relation merely as disappearance, in our case, as the purification of the human self and the negation of the world. To summarise, it does not consider the differences (i.e. the diversities of the accidental) as *substantial*. And this is where the problem lies: because the differences *are* substantial. The difference between the Absolute and the world is not of secondary importance, it is the essence of the Absolute itself.

This deficiency is solved in next chapter: *B. The Relations of Causality*. In layman's terms, the causality is understood as a relation between something active and something passive. However, we will see that this is not the case. The cause needs to be active towards itself (i.e. to its identity) in a negative manner, it needs to distance itself from itself and create the effect: '*Cause is cause only in so far as it produces an effect*' (Hegel, 2010, 156). Cause and effect are mutually co-dependent, and in the further development they create the relation of total interdependency. Thus, the cause is no longer just power (towards something else), it is also something self-revealing and self-unveiling. This cognition completely changes the relation between One and the many.

Since causality becomes causality only once it produces an effect, the cause does not depend on the effect any less that the effect depends on causality. In other words, substance is actual – it *exists* – only in its effect: '*Substance has actuality, therefore, only as cause.*' (Hegel, 2010, 156) This also implies a correspondence of *contents* between the cause and effect, the Absolute and the world: '*Consequently, an effect contains nothing whatever that the cause does not contain. Conversely, a cause contains nothing that is not in its effect*' (Hegel, 2010, 156). Thus, a world – understood in religious terms – as the creation is now *holy* world, since it is not snatched away from the Absolute/cause. World's multiplicity must no longer be nullified, taken away from the absolute, for '*in the effect the cause is manifested as the whole substance*' (Hegel, 2010, 156).

---

5    Häussler summarizes the emerge of the religion in *Phenomenology of spirit* by this words: '*The acceptance of religion as an object of consciousness is confirmed in the fact that the absoluteness of the spirit has become perceptible, not in the image of the absolutized individual self, in conscience, but in the reciprocity of subjects arising from their voluntary abandonment; the object was hypostazised from representation to object – the object of religious consciousness*' *(Häussler, 2008, 179-180).*

Od this way in next chapter (*C. Reciprocity*) the reconciliation between the Absolute and the world is developed. This reconciliation is possible, when *'in this identity of cause and effect the form distinguishing them respectively, as that which exists in itself and that which is posited, is sublated. The cause is extinguished in its effect and the effect too is thereby extinguished, for it only is the determinateness of the cause'* (Hegel, 2010, 156).[6] These are the steps that lead to constellation, that is described in the religious language as trinity. At the same time the dimension of freedom enters logic, which is thematised in the third part of the *Science of Logic*. It is about ontologically understood freedom which does not contradict to necessity: *'Necessity does not come to be freedom by vanishing but in that its still only inner identity is manifested, and this manifestation is the identical movement immanent to the different sides, the immanent reflection of shine as shine'* (Hegel, 2010, 169).

According to Hegel, on the level of ontology the Christian principle is more developed[7] than the Islamic one. This is not an external view of Islam, as a Europocentric cliché might sound. It is about the criteria that Islam has set for itself: to connect Many into a Whole. This integration has its shortcomings and fails despite subject's willingness to its own supreme sacrifice at its realisation. Thus, Islam has problems at developing its own principle and creating and preserving differences within it. In Islam, neither man, nor world succeed in becoming a part of (what phenomenology calls) the 'holy game of the world'.

THE CREATIVITY OF FANATICISM

Of course, this does not mean that Islam fails to produce anything. It is enough to mention its impressive and rapid expansion already during the time of the prophet Mohammed. However, Islam's creativity emerges from the structure of the abstract, which defines its dynamics as well as its reach: "*For Hegel the philosopher, Islam would forever be this monochrome, amorphous, expansive entity, a monodimensional power whose explosive growth in the Mediterranean lay precisely in the absence of complexity'* (Almond, 2010, 118). The basic shortcoming of such creativity can be found in its (lack of) duration. Even though mighty kingdoms emerge, they fail to sustain. Hegel writes that nothing lasts in the sand (sand being a metaphor for the abstract):

*'nothing is firm on abstract ground'* (Hegel, 1914, 370).

However, Islam's productivity is not fascinating merely in the quantitative sense, in the speed of its expansion, which is incomparable to the Christianity. It is also capable of noble and sublime creativity. This creativity also emerges from the purity of the abstractness. In the Western world is (was) caught within a series of relations, which in turn means that he is clamped to them. On the contrary, in Islam, *'the individual is one passion and that alone; he is superlatively cruel, cunning, bold, or generous. Where the sentiment of love exists, there is an equal abandon — love the most fervid'* (Hegel, 1914, 373). In this case the individual is completely freed of this world and has an impeccably polished interior. Such a soul rises above triviality and narcissism and is capable of astonishing feats.

Hegel believes that Islam's *'glorious poetry'* (Hegel, 1914, 373) represents its pinnacle of creativity. Here, in fantasy, the highest possible freedom is released: *'a noble soul makes itself prominent — like a billow in the surging of the sea — it manifests itself in a majesty of freedom, such that nothing more noble, more generous, more valiant, more devoted was ever witnessed'* (Hegel, 1914, 373). Hegel showed great interest in Persian poetry, especially in the poet Rumi. In his poems the total unification of the soul and God, the highest state of this unity is experienced. However, this unification remains within limits of a poetry. The reconciliation does not raise to the level of a notion and thus never enters the world.

In its abstractness Islam has even achieved traces of perfect (political) equality, that Hegel admired in the brotherly relation between the khalif and the man from the bottom of the social scale, or in the relation between the master and the slave. If he loves him, he glorifies the object of his love by laying all his power at his feet. *'On the other hand, he will sacrifice him just as recklessly'* (Hegel, 1914, 373). The creativity of Islam is marked by extremes, which fall into an uncontrollable oscillation. Everything that is created, *'is only contingent and built on sand; it is today, and tomorrow is not. With all the passionate interest he shows, the Mahometan is really indifferent to this social fabric, and rushes on in the ceaseless whirl of fortune'* (Hegel, 1914, 373). The incapability to *firmly* merge the Many into a Whole is the main shortcoming of Islam.

---

6    A similar message is laid down in Hegel's analysis of the relation between the finite and infinite, which is located in a different systemic position, the logic of Being: *'The answer to the question as to how does infinity become finite, is thus only that there is no infinity which is at first infinite and that would only then become finite, step out to finiteness, but infinity in itself is finite as well as infinite'* (Hegel, 2010, 128).

7    This judgment does not implicate the legal or political superiority of one religion over another, on contrary. As reminds Karasek, only this ontology provides the condition of equality and coexistence of all religion: *'Is precisely a state, built on the Christian-Protestant principle, that is not limited to one specific religion or even confession'* (Karasek, 2008, 77).

## THE LIMITS OF HEGEL'S ANALYSIS OF ISLAM

The task of Islam on the level of spirit is similar to that of Christianity, i.e. to articulate a relation between the Absolute and world. However, the sky refuses to descend to Earth in both cases. However, in Christianity – and this is where Hegel's analysis stands and falls – this relationship is solved on the conceptual level, while in Islam it is caught within the imperfection of the abstract and the void. As a result, it is supposedly also incapable of inner development and achieving stability.

A separated problem-field is opened by the question as to what extent does Hegel's analysis of Islam fulfil its own standard, i.e. the systematic intention. At the beginning we have mentioned the unease linked to placing Islam into world history. Hegel could not have overlooked the rise of Islam, for it determined the destiny of the Mediterranean from its very beginnings. The problem is, however, that it appeared *after* the spread of Christianity, which supposedly formed the horizon of the completion of the world spirit. We have seen that Hegel solves this 'the remnant' by introducing Islam as a counterpoint to (at the time) barbaric Europe. But this is only formal aspect of the systematic intention.

History is, according to Hegel the history of spirit: a progressive process of the consciousness of freedom. Nothing (relevant) that appears on one stage of history can disappear without a trace. The essence of thinking is a *determinate* negation (*bestimmte Negation*), in which the negated has to remain as a *moment* in the medium which performed the negation. This is the *Aufhebung*-concept, which is in textbooks explained as a triple operation: *negare*, *conservare* and *elevare*. If Islam is introduced in the world history, we are faced with the inevitable question as to where its contribution for the further development of history lies. From today's perspective, the contributions of the Greek and Roman periods to the contemporary Western world are easy to define. The orient, which has brought the rise of the spirit from nature and the gradual formation of the individual, has also undoubtedly contributed to the development of contemporary Europe. If we accept Hegel's thesis that history has needed to *negate* Islam, it should therefore have also to *conserve* it and to *elevate* it to a higher level of perfection. Thus, what would be, according to Hegel's perspective, the contribution of Islam to the world history?

Hegel spoke about the fascination with poetry, which inspired Goethe and his work *Divan*. Further, Islam handed the western (Antique) philosophy back to the West, which was for centuries showed no interested in. The West also supposedly admired the bravery and enthusiasm of Islamic fighters. Islam could indirectly be important also as a threat to Christian Europe, as a result of which the Slavic nations obtain (a marginal) role in world history as the defenders from Islam. If we put the contents to a side and focus merely on the architecture of Hegel's system, the notion of the *Whole* appears to be the systemic contribution of Islam to global history (which stands in opposition to the dispersed particularity of Europe at the time). This Whole should be preserved as a moment in *The Empire of Charlemagne*, as the third chapter in the section is titled. There are no clear answers as regards these questions, which otherwise surpasses the frame of this contribution.

Howsoever, Hegel declared the global historical death of Islam: *'At present, driven back into its Asiatic and African quarters, and tolerated only in one corner of Europe through the jealousy of Christian Powers, Islam has long vanished from the stage of history at large, and has retreated into Oriental ease and repose'* (Hegel, 1914, 374). The reason for this exit can be supposedly found in the conceptual imperfection of Islam and its incapability of inner development that stems from this. The same holds true for Judaism. Both traditions are supposedly incapable of developing a stable constellation between the universality, particularity and individuality: nothing is firm on abstract ground. Similarly, I. Almond recognises *'in the emptiness of Islam a kind of socio-political vacuum in which everything was levelled'* (Almond, 2010, 122).

This conclusion is problematic to say the least. The hesitation is not justified merely from today's perspective, which is summarised by Huntington's placing of the Islamic 'civilisation' back into the heart of global history. Already in Hegel's times it was clear that Islam is capable to produce more than fleeting entities. The Ottoman Empire lasted for five hundred years before Hegel's time and another century after it. Hegel explained its firm existence as exception, referring to its heterogenous element of Janizarism: '*The Osman race at last succeeded in establishing a firm dominion, by forming for themselves a firm centre in the Janizaries*' (Hegel, 1914, 374).

Interpretation of the role of the Ottoman Empire in world history is far from simple. On one hand it seems that it questions Hegel's assumption that nothing firm can emerge from the abstract. On the other hand, the decline of Ottoman Empire as such confirms the thesis that Islam is incapable of inner development and reforms. The end of the Ottoman Empire is marked by Atatürk, who brings a break with the centuries of Islamic tradition and accepts all of the Western standards of a modern state.

Also another problem in Hegel's analysis of Islam could be mentioned: he provided totally different descriptions of different nations that are connected by the same religion. He considered the Arabs to be barbarians and the Turks robbers, in his description of Persia, however, he introduced a totally different register, which was crowned by the admiration of noble Islamic poetry. This places the basic thesis about Islam under question. It seems that Hegel overlooked his own teachings on symbolic geography, in accordance with which the difference between the desert and the Persian hills should influence the formation of different (Islamic) spirits.

We have posed certain questions that need to remain unanswered within this discussion. The same holds true for the analysis of the recent political organisation of Islam in the form of so-called Islamic State, which can once again serve as confirmation or rejection of the thesis that abstract principle cannot produce political entities. Let us conclude with the ascertainment that Hegel's thematization of Islam is marked by irreducible duality. On one hand, it represents unease for Hegel in the systematic (placement of the Orient – which is actually not the Orient – into the Germanic world) as well as in the conceptual sense (the thesis of volatility and the six hundred years of the Ottoman Empire). On the other hand, he offers a convincing analysis of the incapability of stabilising the relations between man, God/Absolute and the world through the abstract One. This was *fil rouge* of this article.

# KRALJESTVO ABSTRAKTNEGA BOGOSLUŽJA – HEGLOVA INTERPRETACIJA ISLAMA

*Rok SVETLIČ*

Znanstveno raziskovalno središče Koper, Inštitut za filozofske študije, Garibaldijeva 1, 6000 Koper, Slovenija

e-mail: rok.svetlic@guest.arnes.si

*POVZETEK*

*V članku je prikazan Heglov pogled na islam, kot ga najdemo v njegovih Predavanjih o filozofiji zgodovine. Razprava v prvi vrsti preiskuje odnos med človekom, Bogom/absolutom in svetom v islamu, ki ga, kot pokaže Hegel, zaznamuje neodpravljiva abstraktnost. Iz abstraktnosti izhaja dvoje, tako izjemna ustvarjalnosti islama kot njegovo nagnjenje k nasilju. Prvo Hegel vidi v pesništvu, drugo v nezmožnosti izgradnje trdne politične strukture. Za osvetlitev teh omejitev razpravo v nadaljevanju opremo na Heglovo Znanost logike, kjer so razviti pogoji za vzajemno povezanost človeka, Boga/absoluta in sveta. V religioznem jeziku to sovpadanje artikulira koncept trinitete, ki omogoča preseganje pomanjkljivosti abstraktnega odnosa med človekom, Bogom/absolutom in svetom.*

**Ključne besede:** islam, pravna filozofija, nasilje, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

SOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

**Almond, I. (2010):** History of Islam in German Thought: From Leibniz to Nietzsche. Routledge, New York.

**Daghistani, R. A. (2012):** Die Stellung des Islam in Hegels System der Weltgeschichte. Available at: http://kud-logos.si/2012/die-stellung-des-islam-in-hegels-system-der-weltgeschichte/ (last access: 27. 11. 2017).

**Hegel, G.W.F. (1991):** Elements of the Philosophy of Right. Cambridge, Cambridge University press.

**Hegel, G. W. F. (2010):** The Science of Logic. Cambridge, Cambridge University press.

**Hegel, G. W. F. (1914):** Lectures on the Philosophy of History. London, Bell and sons.

**Hegel, G. W. F. (2007a):** Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts. Frankfurt am Main

**Hegel, G. W. F. (2007b):** Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte. Frankfurt a.M, Suhrkamp.

**Häussler, M. (2008):** Der Religionsbegriff in Hegels »Phänomenologie des Geistes«. Freiburg/München, Verlag Karl Aber.

**Karasek, J. (2008):** Staat, Religion und Kirche bei Hegel. In: Arndt, A., Iber, C. & G. Kruck (eds.): Staat und Religion in Hegels Rechtsphilosophie. Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 65–82.

**Schmidt, K. (1997):** Wissenschaft der Logik, die Lehre vom Wesen. Schöningh, Paderborn.