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## David Lindsay's *The Violet Apple*

### Abstract

Applies the philosophy of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel to *The Violet Apple*, a posthumously published novel by David Lindsay, whose *A Voyage to Arcturus* is frequently cited as an influence on Lewis's *Out of the Silent Planet*.

### Additional Keywords

David Lindsay; Violet Apple; Hegel; Arcturus



## DAVID LINDSAY'S *The Violet Apple*

ERIC WILLS

DAVID LINDSAY'S FIRST BOOK, *A VOYAGE TO ARCTURUS*, has recently passed its centenary. It sold poorly on publication in 1920, and the stories Lindsay wrote after this were no more successful in terms of sales. In the case of *The Violet Apple*, this survived as an unpublished manuscript until J.B. Pick and Colin Wilson pursued its publication in the 1970s. They were early champions of his work, but there is scope for further study and critical evaluation of Lindsay's writings, even regarding fundamental questions of what he intended in the stories. It is evident that the broadly supernatural elements are employed towards a singular theme, which Lindsay repeatedly indicates as making visible the invisible. This is variously reimagined but centers each time on a revelation or insight experienced by his characters as a supernatural intrusion into their ordinary and otherwise unremarkable romantic entanglements. With this repetition it seems that something of particular significance is at stake, but Lindsay declines to put it in any definite or clearer terms.

Lindsay uses imagery that has a mythic character or origin, but there are also a number of simpler, mundane images which recur in the books. So, for example, in *Devil's Tor*, a meteoric stone is associated with a goddess figure which appears in visions and signals the destiny of the main female character. The myth of Cybele is implicit here, but employed in the context of what seems much more a personal mythology of Lindsay's own. Or, in *The Haunted Woman*, an ante-room and three adjoining rooms are accessible only when a staircase supernaturally materializes. The first of these rooms contains just an oval wall mirror, and a heavy red curtain conceals the exit. The second has a wooden couch. And the third looks out onto an unreal landscape. Latter-day readers might be reminded of the "waiting room" in David Lynch's mythopoeic work of imagination: the television series, *Twin Peaks*. And similarly, it is the repeated symbolism throughout Lindsay's stories that establishes the vocabulary, as it were, of his own myth-making.

What, then, did Lindsay intend in writing his distinctively strange stories? With regard to his philosophical standpoint, he is often treated as asserting a broadly Gnostic vision, according to which the world in all its suffering and disappointment is a work of evil design. C.S. Lewis, for example, having read *A Voyage to Arcturus*, declared that "[Lindsay's] spiritual outlook is detestable, almost diabolist" (Lewis, *Collected Letters II* 630). But this line of

interpretation is problematic. It imposes a particular philosophical stricture on Lindsay's intentions, insisting on a two-worlds ontology of the real and the fake, and on a battle of powers of good and evil which does little justice to the depth of his theological and philosophical concerns, or to how these connect with the imagery and symbolism he uses. The two editions of *The Violet Apple* published in the 1970s are obtainable only as rarities, and the book continues out of print. This is a pity, because *The Violet Apple* is, on the face of it, a very straightforward story and offers the prospect of a more focused appreciation of Lindsay's mythopoeism and how it is tied to his philosophical interests.

For *The Violet Apple*, Lindsay drew on the Biblical story of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise. The leading character, Anthony Kerr, inherits a fragile glass ornament, shaped as a serpent, coiled and with its head about to strike, and which contains a seed. This is a family heirloom, and the seed is reputed to be from the original Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden. When the glass is accidentally smashed, Anthony decides he will plant the seed and test its reputation. As the story proceeds, so the seed germinates and grows into a diminutive tree, which then bears two violet-colored fruits like miniature apples, all in a matter of days while still in its planting pot. Along the way, Anthony announces his engagement to Grace but is pursued by Haidee Croyland, who wants to break from her fiancé, Jim Lytham, who is Grace's brother. When Haidee, and subsequently Anthony, eat the fruit, they each have a revelatory experience. The story ends with them affirming their feelings for each other and agreeing to marry, though this is now in the context of their return to the everyday world of disappointment and compromise.

Lindsay makes the central character Anthony Kerr an author, and is careful to explain that while Anthony writes for a popular audience, he also encodes certain mystical sentiments into his work. Accordingly, we might anticipate Lindsay's own "message" is similarly understated. Built around the myth of the Fall, his story is itself an iteration of that myth, just as it was reproduced in various forms in other cultures. In chapter three, Haidee's younger brother, the scholarly Silvester, cites *The Garden of the Hesperides* as a variation on it, and Lindsay indicates his own concern with the myth's "core" meaning when Silvester is asked for his view on how these kinds of story can be reconciled with our scientific knowledge of the world. In reply, Silvester ignores the question of what value these stories have in a modern, technological age, and focuses instead on how they must be different branches of an originating "trunk." This "factual" trunk is apparent in what is common to the different branches, and he goes on to examine some specific details. Silvester need not be taken at his word here, as if it is a matter only of identifying what is "true" in the myth. Rather, Lindsay is hinting at his own interest in its core meaning, in its particular significance.

I shall argue that Lindsay is primarily influenced by the philosophy of G.W.F. Hegel, and that in *The Violet Apple* he employs the myth of the Fall in the way that it is treated by Hegel. In this respect, the significance Hegel attaches to such “picture-thinking” is a way into assessing the visionary and supernatural episodes in Lindsay’s stories, and establishing that Lindsay is articulating Hegelian themes in this symbolic form. In *The Violet Apple*, Hegel’s interpretation of the Biblical account of the Fall is then essential to unravelling the part it plays in Lindsay’s own narrative, which is, as it were, a vehicle for Hegelian philosophy, and on the very terms that Hegel acknowledges. I shall offer evidence of Lindsay’s debt to Hegel, starting from Hegel’s comments on the Fall in paragraphs 775 and 776 of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. It is also evident that *The Violet Apple* addresses Hegel’s remarks on marriage, and his understanding of freedom. I also address why Lindsay sets the story during Easter, and the significance of the landscape painting owned by Anthony, in which trees by a pond are painted in such a way that the gap of sky between them presents an image of the Cross. At the end of the book, Anthony succeeds in finding the place which is the subject of this painting. Again, the Christian imagery here indicates Lindsay’s adherence to Hegel, where Hegel interprets Christianity as the religious expression closest to the concerns spelled out in his own philosophy. Overall, I aim to show that Lindsay specifically sets out in *The Violet Apple* to dramatize Hegel’s philosophy, in which freedom is identified with *Spirit* being “purely at home with itself” (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia Logic* 58).

#### THE MYTH OF THE FALL

At the beginning of *The Violet Apple*, when Anthony Kerr receives the family heirloom, he decides to look up the Genesis passage in his Bible, making a mental note “to go into the question of that Tree of Knowledge with himself” (31). It is the supernatural aspect of the Bible stories which engages him, in their “metaphysical grandeur” given in the thought that, as he puts it, “the world was not for itself, but was full of cracks admitting the weird and solemn light of the Unseen” (30). Anthony also has his own “creed.” We are told he regards mankind as

no more than a petty heap of blind, wriggling, three-dimensioned insect-like beings, surrounded by terrific unseen forces, not only the slightest abnormal variation of which would suffice completely to annihilate the human race and its memory, but which also, historically and actually, had been, and still were, responsible for the major changes of civilization. When a new ideal, a new disposition, or a new fact entered the world, it sprang neither from development nor from inspiration, but it was *imposed*. The half-perception of the existence of those forces, he believed, was supplied by such authentic supernatural phenomena as knockings,

the sound of falling masonry, appearances at the moment of death, and so forth. We were separated from a whole active universe by an opaque wall of senselessness. (14)

The landscape painting of the tree-framed cross is taken by Anthony as his own personal intimation of what is at stake here. Importantly, when Haidee reflects on her attraction to him and what singles him out as different in nature from other people, it is his seeming "mission from the unseen" (69). Again, this is Lindsay signalling his own "mission" in the book.

It is the sense of something concealed that strikes Anthony about the myth of the Fall. Reflecting on the Bible story, he is struck by what he marks, initially, as the *mystery* of Adam and Eve's shame, their *fear* of nakedness. Later on, his insight has its basis directly in Hegel's treatment of the myth. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, in paragraph 775 (467–68), Hegel addresses mankind's separation from a merely sensory or animalistic experience of the natural world. An animal's experience is continuous with Nature, or Creation, whereas mankind is distinguished by self-consciousness, in Thought. This is not a matter just of knowing things, but rather that Nature itself is known as something *Other*. In Hegel's philosophy, the Absolute, or Spirit (*Geist*), is turned from bare existence to Thought through the developmental stages of its self-realization in Creation. As such, its realization in Nature, in animal consciousness, is a condition of its further expression in mankind's self-conscious thinking. It is the universal character of thinking at stake here, marking what is common to different individuals' self-conscious thinking, just as animality is the universal character of individual animals and their different kinds.

Hegel allows that *Geist's* self-realization in Thought has a pre-rational, metaphorical treatment in "picture-thinking." The argument in paragraph 775 is that we have, as individuals, a sensory consciousness of things, as part of our animal nature, but that this is not yet to distinguish ourselves as *Other*, which is to say, as self-consciously aware of ourselves in separation from nature. The initial state is characterised by Hegel as "innocence," and the development of *Spirit* knowing itself as *Other* was pictured in the myth of the Fall:

Man is pictorially thought of in this way: that it once *happened*, without any necessity, that he lost the form of being at one with himself through plucking the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil, and was expelled from the state of innocence, from Nature which yielded its fruits without toil, and from Paradise, from the garden with its creatures. (*Phenomenology* 468)

Hegel says that Evil is tied to this sense of mankind's separation from his natural place, as *Geist* attains this inwardly-turned consciousness in Othering itself, and

that because this opposition of Good and Evil is unresolved, the development of self-consciousness appears as evil opposed by good. In a further piece of picture-thinking, it is the fall of Lucifer, the first-born Son of Light, projected back before Creation, the meaning of which is again taken by Hegel to be the inward-turning of existence into Thought, through its own separation as Other.

This, in adherence to Hegel, is the character of the myth as symbol, and supplies its core meaning. Anthony echoes it in chapter 10, when in the course of his revelatory experience on eating the apple, he turns again to his Bible and comments on the story of the Garden of Eden:

The eating of the apple has been taken as an eternal symbol of the first marriage, but the people who say so have not themselves eaten of the Tree of Knowledge. It is an eternal symbol of the first resurrection from the dead—of the first rising of man and woman from a world of unconscious animals, of which hitherto they were but the chief, by reason of their greater dexterity and material intelligence. (193)

This is his identification of the story's original significance, rejecting the Bible's emphasis on Adam and Eve being ashamed at their physical nakedness. At the close of *The Violet Apple*, when Anthony and Haidee decide to go forward together and marry, Anthony says he does not want to sin twice. This is not a concession to the Biblical sense of shame, and there is no indication that he anticipates salvation in the way that, for example, St. Augustine held we might regain Paradise only through the grace of God. Nor do Anthony and Haidee claim a vision of Paradise in a traditional sense. On eating the apples, they experience a state of "nakedness" which is drawn on seeing behind people's egoistic selves. I examine the significance of this revelation below. But Lindsay is unconcerned with the Augustinian sense of God's grace, just as Anthony rejects it in name when, in his visionary state, he identifies his fiancé Grace as dispiritingly lifeless. For St. Augustine, the insufficiency of a person's own will was the legacy of Adam and Eve's original sin, and requires that mankind must depend on God. But Lindsay's couple will rely on their own efforts, and are reconciled to imperfection and disappointment. In all of this, the underlying idea that Lindsay takes from Hegel, that the Fall sets in motion a returning ascent to the divine through its own self-realization in Thought, is clearly at odds with looking outside the world for salvation.

Hegel's writings are notoriously opaque. His terminology and its varying translations in English is an obstacle, and there are, inevitably, a range of interpretations of his work. If David Lindsay's stories are grounded in a fundamentally Hegelian worldview, then it is still a matter of interpretation what position he takes. But it is not a problem if he treats the Absolute as loosely equivalent to something like a world-soul, or God. For example, Raymond Plant,

in his book on Hegel, points out a passage at the beginning of the second volume of Hegel's *Encyclopaedia of the Sciences*, where Hegel says: "The divine Idea is just this: to disclose itself, to posit the Other outside itself and to take it back again into itself in order to be subjectivity and Spirit" (qtd. in Plant 132). Hegel allows here that the "Idea" is equivalent to God still in the sense that God is self-realized through Nature, or Creation, in mankind. The return to an intelligible unity proceeds as *Geist* positing its own opposition, reflecting this back into itself and then overcoming it, into the next stage. Plant cites a passage from another work in which Hegel explains: "The Absolute ever plays with itself a moral tragedy in which it ever gives birth in the objective world, then in this form gives itself over to suffering and death and raises itself to glory from its ashes" (qtd. in Plant 133). Away from the technicalities of interpreting Hegel, my purpose here is to emphasise that while it has to be a matter of Lindsay's own reception of Hegel's thought, his affinities with it are clearly evident, even if he may, after all, have taken such passages in the way that his character Anthony Kerr approaches the Bible: in their "metaphysical grandeur." In the aesthetic terms of Lindsay's literary ambition, this would sustain his sense of the Sublime, but it is also clear that Lindsay engages in some detail with Hegel's philosophy. Lindsay cited Boehme as an influence, and Hegel's account of the divine realized in Creation is drawn on Boehme's theology. Hegel himself labels Boehme a picture-thinker, and it is central to my interpretation of Lindsay's work that he deals in his own pictured versions of Hegel's philosophy of *Spirit*.

There is a suggestive passage in the third volume of the *Encyclopaedia of the Sciences*, in *The Philosophy of Mind*, where Hegel addresses the question of the origin of evil in terms of our feelings towards pleasure and pain. As individuals, our self-consciousness already distinguishes us as free and independent of things that cause us pain or pleasure, in our devising strategies to pursue or avoid them. But there is a self-opposition in these feelings being part of our nature, even as they are opposed to it, as, for example, in our feelings towards death. In this way, the bad and evil are tied to our egoistic selfhood. And at this point, Hegel refers to Boehme and his view that our individuality is "pain and torment": "Jacob Böhme viewed egoity (selfhood) as pain and torment, and as the fountain of nature and of spirit" (*Philosophy of Mind* 234).<sup>1</sup> Again, away from the complexities of Hegel's discussion, my point here is to establish the basis of Lindsay's own pessimism, notably signalled, for example, in the destination in *A Voyage to Arcturus*: its orbiting planet, Tormance.

In relation specifically to the myth of the Fall, the Hegelian basis of its use by Lindsay in *The Violet Apple* lies in its standing for the self-realization of

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<sup>1</sup> I have quoted from the Wallace translation as this is an English edition available in Lindsay's lifetime, though the contents of his personal library are not known.



*Geist* through its Othering in Creation. This self-opposition is drawn as Good and Evil, and in separation from the animals, mankind is separated from Nature as good from evil. Importantly, this excludes the kind of Gnostic reading in which the Creator is distinguished from the 'true god,' and the Creation regarded as a kind of prison. Nor is the significance of eating from the Tree of Knowledge simply the possibility of coming to realize this. Rather, Lindsay must be read in the context of Hegel's philosophy of *Spirit*. Hegel addresses both religion and art as, in effect, stages along the way of *Geist's* return into itself. In paragraph 384 of *The Philosophy of Mind*, he summarises his view of Christianity as dealing in the self-realization of Spirit (*Geist*) through the Creation:

*The Absolute is Mind (Spirit)—this is the supreme definition of the Absolute. To find this definition and grasp its meaning and burthen was, we may say, the ultimate purpose of all education and philosophy [...]. The word 'Mind' (Spirit)—and some glimpse of its meaning—was found at an early period: and the spirituality of God is the lesson of Christianity. It remains for philosophy in its own element of intelligible unity to get hold of what was thus given as a mental image, and what implicitly is the ultimate reality; and that problem is not genuinely, and by rational methods, solved so long as liberty and intelligible unity is not the theme and the soul of philosophy. (Philosophy of Mind 164)*

This is a starting point from which to approach Lindsay's use of Christian imagery in *The Violet Apple* and his own talk of the Absolute. It is also crucial to see that a question of freedom is at issue here. I turn next to how this is taken up by Lindsay.

#### **FREEDOM**

In *The Violet Apple*, Anthony Kerr is characterised as valuing his independence. We are told he enjoys a bachelor lifestyle, in command of how he chooses to live, and that as a well-regarded, popular, and successful playwright, he has established a place in the world. The story begins with him in his London apartment, about to travel to Kent, to stay a couple of weeks with his unmarried sisters. The parcel with the glass serpent has arrived in the post, sent by an uncle by marriage with a note explaining it passes to him on the death of his aunt. Anthony is discussing the Bible story of the expulsion from the Garden of Eden with Theodore, the cousin he employs as his assistant, when they are interrupted by an unexpected visit from Jim Lytham. He tells Anthony about his engagement to Haidee, and will join them in Kent. It is Jim who then accidentally smashes the glass. We are informed of Anthony's "creed" in this opening chapter, according to which mankind is subject to "unseen forces," and are told as well that in his plays, he puts in pieces of popular superstition, as, for

example, in his latest he includes a fairy, while his philosophy is translated into "concrete shapes of fun and mockery." Again, it can be suspected Lindsay echoes what he says of Anthony, and conceals his own philosophy in this reference to "unseen forces."

As the story unfolds, it is carefully implied that the heirloom seed exerts an occult power. At a number of points in the story, the characters' proximity to it is immediately associated with some new thought they have, or with some conflict arising between them. They are not themselves aware of this, and do not suspect its influence. But, for example, in the first chapter, just as the glass heirloom is delivered, Anthony receives a telephone call from his friend, Jocelyne Rossiter, the upshot of which is that he finally resolves not to encourage her friendship further. And when Jim is telling him about his engagement to Haidee, and at the same time asking him about the glass, Anthony is surprised to find he is unhappy at the news. We can suppose the "unseen forces" are guiding Anthony's intentions. Similarly, in chapter 3, when the drunken dinner party guests have gone out to the greenhouse to inspect the potted apple seed, and find that it has germinated, so straightaway afterwards, Haidee speaks privately to Anthony to plead with him to meet her the next day at Halse Tower (65). Significantly, the heirloom is itself said to be a war trophy, supposedly brought back by a Crusader ancestor, and Lindsay is referencing another "branch" story here, the Apple of Discord which started the Trojan War.

In any case, the implication is that the characters' thoughts are in some way determined. A reader may receive this simply as an aspect of the story which fits it to a genre, as concerning some occult power, of a piece with other supernatural stories. The revelatory experiences of the characters on eating the apple would then just be a colorful expansion on this theme of supernatural interference. If it prompts more philosophical scrutiny, then this, too, is likely to be colored by readers' anticipations of what is at stake, and it is fair to say that Lindsay is, in any case, testing his readers in this respect. That is to say there are a number of background narratives that could be brought to bear on the story. For example, aside from questions around the applicability of a notion of original sin, it could be supposed that the nature of Anthony and Haidee's revelatory experiences is fitted to ideas about pantheism, or that they indicate some kind of "two-worlds" Platonism of the real and the fake, like that which sustains popular fantasies such as *The Matrix*. Again, Lindsay is often regarded as promoting a kind of Gnosticism. But these varying interpretations of the story then are related to it just as the "branch" stories are to the core meaning of the myth of the Fall. My contention is that there is such a core meaning of *The Violet Apple*, concealed as much in Lindsay's own mythic retelling as it is in the myth of the Fall itself, and which is grounded precisely in Hegel's philosophy of *Spirit*.

The relevant question is what is the relation of Anthony's apparent freedom to the active power of the Unseen. Lindsay starts with Anthony's initial understanding of his own subjective freedom. This conforms to what Hegel marks as negative freedom, whereby individuals regard themselves as free, devising strategies directed on satisfying certain ends, and so on, but which is negative because primarily opposed to things that impose on us. This takes on a moral aspect in so far as individuals stand in relation to other people's activities and goals. Lindsay portrays Anthony in this way, as having arrived at his place in the world. In Hegel, this is ethical freedom, *Sittlichkeit*. Individuals participate in the social conventions and institutions which mark their historical period, but it is the initial sense of opposition, integral to this subjective sense of freedom, that sustains our individuality.

In paragraph 7 of the *Philosophy of Right* (23), Hegel acknowledges we can abstract away from this to entertain some idealized notion of unrestricted freedom, but this is only an abstraction. Hegel's argument is that if there was a purer thought of freedom it would be realized in reflecting its own negation back into itself, as the tension in being part of nature while opposed to it is resolved through the activity of *Spirit* in its socio-historical development. Hegel writes in paragraph 341:

The element in which the universal mind exists in art is intuition and imagery, in religion feeling and representative thinking, in philosophy pure freedom of thought. In world history this element is that actuality of mind in its whole compass of internality and externality alike.  
(*Philosophy of Right* 216)

Inevitably, *Spirit* is realized in the culminative understanding which Hegel himself delivers in his own philosophy. And this is the reality and freedom of *Spirit*.

The important point here is that freedom lies in participation in the life of the community, and this includes institutions such as marriage and the family. In respect of Anthony's intention to marry Haidee, the danger of his sinning twice, as he puts it, would be in returning to the egoistic concerns and interests of a negative freedom. Lindsay provides a comparison in his cousin, Theodore, who is entirely driven by self-interest. This is the pride that Anthony allows is the basis of sin, because it threatens the social conventions and institutions through which *Spirit* comes to know itself. It is not the sin of pride that St. Augustine singled out, and Lindsay is not advocating we depend upon God's grace. We are struck by the pain and suffering tied to the activity of Spirit in its self-realization in Creation, but this does not sustain a position that the world is the work of an evil creator or in some way irredeemably corrupted by Evil.

I show in the next section how Lindsay adheres to Hegel's account of the revelation of *Spirit* in Thought. Hegel allows that revelation is intrinsic to God. He decries theologians who would insist God is unknowable in his perfection (*Philosophy of Mind* 298). As such, he emphasises the revelatory character of the Christian religion, while treating it as a pre-rational anticipation of his own philosophy. The sense of the Divine in play here is wholly metaphysical, as Hegel identifies God with pure thought. In the preface to the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel writes:

To recognise reason as the rose in the cross of the present and thereby to enjoy the present, this is the rational insight that reconciles us to the actual, the reconciliation which philosophy affords to those in whom there has once arisen an inner voice bidding them to comprehend, not only to dwell in what is substantive while still retaining subjective freedom, but also to possess subjective freedom while standing not in anything particular and accidental but in what exists absolutely. (12)

This is the position that Lindsay articulates in his account of Anthony and Haidee's experiences on eating the violet apples, and their subsequent meeting at the place with the tree-framed cross. Lindsay mixes imagery of a pagan goddess figure and the Christian cross, but at issue is the self-realization of Spirit in its freedom and intelligibility.

#### REVELATION

The violet apples borne by the tree are eaten separately by Anthony and Haidee, alone and apart from each other. Each enters into a visionary state. Focusing on Anthony's experience, this is carefully set out by Lindsay (183 ff). It proceeds gradually, with Anthony reflecting on it at each stage. First of all, he is obscurely aware that a thought is "struggling to free itself in his head" (184). He is at this point alone in his room, but a servant enters to tell him Grace is outside and would like to speak with him. Anthony is struck by being able to see through the man's face, regarding him as "naked," meaning that his face no longer masks his soul in the way that we generally "hide" what we think. Anthony suspects he will be similarly "naked" to Grace, so that nothing is hidden to her and she will see the "great and single idea" that is forming in him. He decides to admit her and as she enters, so Haidee's name suddenly fills Anthony's mind. He thinks of Haidee not as a woman but as an "unthinkably lofty, maternal, protecting spiritual influence" (186). This, he realizes, was the thought he had been struggling to bring to mind.

The further thought then "bubbles up" that Grace, as she talks to him, is communicating only with his bodily self, in an "invitation to share a common coffin" (189) at odds with his own conviction that he has risen from the dead.

He responds to Grace by rejecting her efforts at reconciliation. She leaves, and another thought “bubbles up” in him, that he would prefer to have been talking with the author of the Genesis passage in the Bible. This thought is described as occurring “like a mighty swollen bud” (191), and Anthony locates his Bible in order to look up the passage. He says to himself that the story represents “more than myth or allegory” (192) and that if the events it describes had ever occurred, then he too must be enacting them now. He reads the passage, and where it says Adam and Eve put on fig leaves for “aprons,” Anthony takes this to mean veils, and concludes that their shame at being naked was because their spiritual form shrank from self-consciousness of their animality. As such, the eating of the apple does not sign this animality itself, but rather their resurrection from the dead as separation from the animals in self-conscious thought.

Hence, in his vision of Haidee, Anthony now supposes she is not a woman, but a spirit. This is the revelation, taken as having arisen logically in his mind. He goes on to say she is literally a spirit (193), and that he does not see Heaven but rather sees Heaven through her, seeing through her to a spirit world: “a so-distant yet possibly contiguous incorporeal field of actually-existing life, no doubt far solidier than the solid world of matter, which he had ever known to be its travesty and mockery!” (194). It is important that his intuitions here are said to “overshoot the walls of his conscious brain and to rebound towards him from outside as sense-perceptions” (193). This is how he goes on to talk in sensory terms about Haidee, more beautiful than other women, and about this spirit world tied to the sublime in nature, talking of mountains and skies, and so on. But Lindsay is deliberately specific in saying Anthony’s statement to himself, that Haidee is a spirit, had “quietly proceeded to complete itself logically in his mind” (193).

Hegel’s logic of *pure* thought is directed on what is universal in mankind as thinking. In section 24 of the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, Hegel reiterates this distinguishes us from animals, not as having particular thoughts about things we experience, but in being able to identify ourselves as “I” (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia* 56 ff). Thinking is present in everything we do, and Hegel argues the first time an individual knows himself is as a kind of doubling up of thinking, whereby this universal thinking is present to itself, as thinking about thinking. Hegel denies this is delivered by abstracting from particular thoughts tied to experience, or given as a faculty of thinking. Rather, thinking is what is genuinely universal in everything, both in nature and in thought about it. In this respect it embraces everything and is its basis. “I” is then this ultimate and pure consciousness. It is Thought brought forth by thinking, and at which point:

Spirit is here purely at home with itself, and thereby free, for that is just what freedom is: being at home with oneself in one’s other, depending

upon oneself, and being one's own determinant. (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia* 58).

In Wallace's translation:

The mind in these circumstances is in its own home element and therefore free: for freedom means that the other thing with which you deal is a second self—so that you never leave your own ground but give the law to yourself [...]. [W]hen we think, we renounce our selfish and particular being, sink ourselves in the thing, allow thought to follow its own course, and if we add anything of our own, we think ill. (*Logic of Hegel* 41)

It is through this universal "I" that *Spirit* knows itself as thinking, but this self-realization is attained only through its mediation in an Other, in Nature.

Hegel says this is anticipated in the Christian religion in the relation between God and Jesus, through which the Holy Spirit is active in the world. In *The Violet Apple*, it is an understanding "gifted" in the visions had by Haidee and Anthony, and suggested in Anthony's painting of the tree-framed cross. There is no promise or purported guarantee of some transcendent perfection. But Anthony and Haidee have been granted an insight and presumably we have, too, if we read Lindsay's parable rightly. They choose marriage and accept the limitations of their individual selves, and their choices are informed now by this understanding of the activity of *Spirit* in the world. Hegel allows conventions and institutions break down under the pressure of individuals' subjective freedom, and this is the progress of *Spirit* through history. But Anthony is determined, at least, not to sin twice.

Anthony's visionary experience had continued during a visit from a friend, Mr. Ilyitch. He plays the piano for Anthony, playing first the "Don Juan" Overture by Mozart, then Beethoven's Andante Favori in F. Anthony then has a further vision of Haidee, as Eve before the expulsion from the Garden of Eden. He sees her framed against a background of sunset and forest trees. Their eyes meet and he understands that "Paradise was not all, and not the best . . .", and that "they two were one; all the rest of existence the other" (202). This is the resurrection of life in contrast to the "common coffin" Anthony talked of in relation to Grace's own egoistic concerns and interests. Again, Lindsay is adhering to Hegel's account of the Fall, in which the expulsion from the Garden of Eden is a condition of *Spirit's* returning into itself as *pure* Thought, through its Othering in Nature.

In *The Violet Apple*, Lindsay's reworking of the myth of the Fall is drawn on the significance Hegel attaches to this imagery in his own philosophy of *Spirit*. There is a sense that Lindsay might expect his readers to respond in just the way that Anthony, in the story, is attracted by the Bible's "metaphysical

grandeur." And Hegel allows that such pre-rational picturing in art and religion is, as it were, a stage along the way of *Spirit's* self-realization as pure Thought in his own philosophy. Ultimately, its freedom and intelligibility are delivered by working through that philosophy, as itself thinking about thinking. But the mythic imagery of the Fall from Paradise is taken up by Lindsay as integral to the affective power of what is fundamentally at stake in Hegel's writings, in the Absolute returning to itself through Creation, through mankind as symbol of the divine.

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### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ERIC WILLS gained his PhD from Staffordshire University in 2018 with a thesis examining Nietzsche's use of figurative language. He is currently interested in how ideas in the German philosophical tradition were taken up by a number of literary authors in the early decades of the last century, including John Cowper Powys on whom he has also written.

