DAVID S. ROBINSON

Christ and Revelatory Community in Bonhoeffer's Reception of Hegel

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For my mother and father

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The community in itself is what produces this doctrine, this relationship. The latter is not something produced from the word of Christ, so to speak, but through the community, the church.

– G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*

The Word is the rock upon which the Idealist *Geist*-monism founders; for the Word implies that sin still exists, that absolute *Geist* has to fight for its rule, that the church remains a church of sinners.

– Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*

Introduction

A. Juxtaposing Monuments

There is a stark difference between two monuments that stand outside Humboldt University in Berlin.[1] The first monument lists Dietrich Bonhoeffer among the names of twelve people who died between 1938–1945. The inscription gathers the names as 'those who fell in the struggle against Hitler's fascism'. Beside the list, two contorted fists protrude from iron bars wound with barbed wire. There is no facial representation. Although Bonhoeffer lost his teaching license in 1936, in part for association with an illegal seminary, the university now places him with the collective that commands the attention of current students and faculty. 'Their death is an obligation to us', the inscription reads.

The second monument features the name 'Hegel' on a tall stone column with no identifying date, place, or title. The bust at the top is pitched slightly forward, lips pursed and eyes intent. The clarity of the presentation calls to mind Hegel's description of the philosopher, particularly in contrast to the political actor. In a lecture delivered at the university in the 1820s, Hegel states that in political history 'the subject of deeds and events is the individual in his particular natural make-up, genius, passions, energy, or weakness of character – in a word, what makes him *this* individual'.[2] The philosopher who surveys that history stands in marked contrast:

Here on the other hand the productions are all the more excellent the less is their merit attributed to a particular individual, the more, on the other hand, do they belong to freedom of thinking, to the general character of the human being as human being, the more is thinking itself, devoid of personality, the productive subject.[3]

Hegel's claim to speak for 'thinking itself' would be subjected to Søren Kierkegaard's scorn. In one of several jibes, Kierkegaard points out the irony in-

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[1] The university was founded as The University of Berlin, a title that covered the period of Hegel's professorship. It was known to Bonhoeffer as Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität and today goes by the name Humboldt-Universität.

[2] *LHP*, 9.

[3] *LHP*, 9.

volved in a claim to discern the course of reason in world history without explicitly accounting for oneself.[4] Bonhoeffer draws on Heidegger to take a similar critical line, stating that 'Hegel wrote a philosophy of angels, not of human beings as *Dasein*'.[5] Idealism, especially as represented by Hegel, appears to have reached a 'synopsis of act and being', Bonhoeffer observes, 'if only those doing the philosophising themselves did not founder on the resistance of their own reality to this philosophy'.[6]

The stark difference between the monuments should not obscure the significant similarities between Bonhoeffer and Hegel. Although they each offered original contributions to their fields of theology and philosophy, neither understood himself as an 'individual' thinker. Each sought to articulate the constitutive social aspect of human reason, acknowledging the question of God as integral to this task. Engaging the Lutheran theological tradition, each sought to challenge a sharp distinction between divinity and humanity, taking seriously the ways that revelation 'becomes' the community. Specifically, convictions about the 'real presence' of Christ in the Eucharist led them to articulate an account of God not only within, but *as* human social relations. These endeavours carried strong ethical implications, as shown throughout their highly contested reception histories.

B. From Disruptive Word to Revelatory Community

A great deal of Bonhoeffer's critical engagement with Hegel involves the relation of Word, the divine address embodied in Christ, to *Geist*, collective 'spirit' or 'mind'. With Hegel in view, Bonhoeffer will often portray the Word as a disruptive presence vis-à-vis communal patterns of reason and practice. He signals this approach in his first dissertation, *Sanctorum Communio*, by claiming that 'the Word is the rock upon which the Idealist *Geist*-monism founders'.[7] In Bonhoeffer's 1933 Christology lectures, which occur in the same year as his Hegel seminar, a 'counter-*logos*' [*Gegenlogos*] confronts a merely 'human-*logos*' [*Menschenlogos*], with Hegel's shrewd account of reason singled out within the latter.[8] By speaking of a 'disruption of the Word' in this sense, Bonhoeffer draws on a Lutheran commitment to the 'external' Word while also

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[4] 'Too bad that Hegel, merely for the sake of illusion, did not have 1843 years at his disposal, for then he presumably would have had time to make the test as to whether the absolute method, which could explain all world history, could also explain the life of one single human being.' Søren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), 201.

[5] *DBWE 2*, 42; *DBW 2*, 35.

[6] *DBWE 2*, 42; *DBW 2*, 35.

[7] *DBWE 1*, 212; *DBW 1*, 143.

[8] *DBWE 12*, 302; *DBW 12*, 282.

alluding to Karl Barth's early work that, in Gary Dorrien's words, 'abounded with metaphors of disruption, cleavage, and faith'.[9]

Bonhoeffer's emphasis on the *disruptive* Word is provoked, in part, by Hegel's focus on the work of the spirited community in the construction of doctrine. Hegel asserts that doctrine is not produced by the 'Word of Christ, so to speak', but by the community.[10] In Nicholas Adams' gloss, Hegel criticises religious thinking because 'it treats what it freely *produces* as something alienly *received*'.[11] As Adams also notes, however, Hegel's response risks its own 'false opposition'. I argue that such overcorrection provokes Bonhoeffer to accentuate the externality of the Word. As Bonhoeffer nevertheless maintains Luther's insistent '*est*', testimony to the present Christ given in and through the community, his work is a promising resource for intra-Lutheran 'repair'.[12]

The task of 'repair' involves attending to the nuance in both Hegel's and Bonhoeffer's positions, which are not reducible to the *Gegenlogos-Menschenlogos* dialectic. For one, Hegel is also conditioned by a Lutheran emphasis on the community's *reception*. In a statement highlighted in Bonhoeffer's edition of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Hegel states that concerning 'positive' elements of the 'absolute religion', '*everything must come to us in an external manner*'.[13] Moreover, Bonhoeffer does not merely portray the Word as an external, disruptive force. *Act and Being* is an attempt to challenge a reduction of revelation to mere 'act' – a punctiliar disruption of otherwise immanent processes. To that end, he states that revelation is 'held fast' by the community:

God gives the divine self in Christ to the community of faith and to every individual as member of this community of faith. This happens in such a way that the acting subject in the community of faith, proclaiming and believing, is Christ…Hence the gospel is somehow held fast here. God's freedom has woven itself into this personlike community of faith, and it is precisely this which manifests what God's freedom is: that God binds God's self to human beings.[14]

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[9] Dorrien goes on to note the irony that 'for all of Barth's warnings about the narrowness and hubris of theological systems, his dogmatics took on the appearance of a massive new Scholasticism'. Gary Dorrien, *Kantian Reason and Hegelian Spirit* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 469, 487.

[10] *LPR III,* 254; *VPR III,* 198.

[11] The criticism is summarised with reference to the *Phenomenology* in Nicholas Adams, *The Eclipse of Grace: Divine and Human Action in Hegel* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 69.

[12] Adams calls for a 'repair' of Hegel's thought on this point, suggesting the use of a 'NeoPlatonic strand in Christian negative theology'. See Adams, *Eclipse*, 69.

[13] *NL-VPR III*, 19.

[14] *DBWE 2*, 112; *DBW 2*, 108.

Emphasis on the social continuity of revelation is already signalled in *Sanctorum Communio*, where Bonhoeffer adopts Hegel's notions of a historically conditioned 'objective *Geist*' and a divine, self-revealing subject 'existing as community'.[15] This theological trajectory drives Bonhoeffer's criticism of Barth's early 'actualism' and later 'positivism of revelation'.

The adjective 'revelatory' is taken from the subtitle of the third volume of Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, the focus of Bonhoeffer's 1933 seminar. This text records Hegel's use of the evocative phrase 'God existing as community' in the context of his engagement with the Lutheran doctrine of the Eucharist. Revelation was not merely ecclesial for Hegel, however, and much of his other work attends to social 'orders' beyond the church.[16] That broader philosophical project was shaped inevitably by Hegel's status as a civil servant at the recently founded University of Berlin in the early nineteenth century.

Insofar as Bonhoeffer also portrays the ways that revelation becomes the community, Hegel's claim to 'God existing as community' proves congenial to his work. However, from his first dissertation onwards Bonhoeffer persistently changes the subject so that the phrase reads 'Christ existing as community'. That variation can stand as a shorthand for Bonhoeffer's complex engagement with Hegel over Christology, ecclesiology, history, and political philosophy. It indicates a posture of reception that I characterise as both eclectic and Christologically intent. Such characteristics are also conditioned by history, of course: Bonhoeffer's variations on Hegel were part of a critical response to the work of church 'deconfessionalisation' that had occurred in the intervening years.

C. Ferment of the Mind: Textual Reception and its 'Matrices'

This study prioritises Bonhoeffer's reception of Hegel's texts. The key work for his exposition is the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, edited by Georg Lasson. Bonhoeffer also refers to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Geist*, *Philosophy of Right*, and *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline*. During the dissertations, many of his interactions come at second-hand, in and through the work of supervisors. My study will therefore focus on the lectures

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[15] As Bonhoeffer states: 'The church is the presence of Christ in the same way that Christ is the presence of God. The New Testament knows a form of revelation, "Christ existing as community".' *DBWE 1*, 140–41; *DBW 1*, 87.

[16] This broader interest is indicative of his Lutheran commitment. As Stephen Houlgate observes, Hegel credits Luther with stressing that 'Christian faith and love are properly expressed in the *sittlich* spheres of family life and civil society'. Stephen Houlgate, *An Introduction to Hegel: Freedom, Truth and History*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 263–64.

Bonhoeffer delivered in 1932–33, as they surround his expository Hegel seminar.

The textual focus of this study is important in light of the interpretive challenge posed by both Hegel's and Bonhoeffer's writings, which led Karl Barth to advise care in approaching their respective works. As to Bonhoeffer, Barth praises his early ecclesiology, as well as his clear and courageous response to the oppression of the Jews, even as he questions the elusiveness of Bonhoeffer's theological terms. 'Do we not always expect him to be clearer and more concise in some other context', Barth writes to a correspondent, 'either by withdrawing what he said, or by going even further?'[17] Fifteen years later, in a letter to Eberhard Bethge, Barth opines that systematic theology was not Bonhoeffer's strongest field and laments that Bonhoeffer's turbulent life and early death cut short his remarkable ability to evolve.[18] Barth also counsels interpretive caution when reading Hegel. Commenting on Hegel's far more developed body of work and longer reception history, Barth queries whether the true age of Hegel was yet to come. Whether or not Hegel would become the 'Aquinas' of Protestantism, Barth warns readers to think three times before contradicting him, for they would likely find their contradiction already voiced within Hegel's system – and given its best possible answer.[19] It is a warning often ignored by critics that overstate the effectiveness of a young doctoral student's criticism.

Claims to intellectual influence extend well beyond textual transmission, of course. While text-focused 'genealogical' enquiries are often sophisticated, Kwame Anthony Appiah warns that 'that metaphor is perhaps too determinate – in the mode of those biblical catalogs of begats – to capture the ferment of the mind'.[20] Appiah speaks instead of 'matrices', attention to which involves wider political currents as well as a variety of a thinker's peers in order to gain a sense of what ideas were 'in the air'.[21] This study will identify two additional matrices involved in Bonhoeffer's reception: interlocutors and political context.

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[17] Karl Barth, 'Letter to P.W. Herrenbrück, 21 December 1952', in *World Come of Age: A Symposium on Dietrich Bonhoeffer,* ed. R. Gregor Smith (London: Collins, 1967), 90.

[18] Barth warns against fixing Bonhoeffer into a trajectory based on previous writings, speculating on how his own work might have been construed were he to have died after the publication of the *Römerbrief*, or immediately following the 1927 *Christliche Dogmatik.* Barth rejected the latter volume years later for the new approach that became the *Church Dogmatics.* Barth's letter to Bethge is reprinted in André Dumas, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Theologian of Reality*, trans. Robert McAfee Brown (London: SCM Press, 1971), 239–42.

[19] Karl Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (London: SCM Press, 1972), 396.

[20] Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Lines of Descent: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Emergence of Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014)*,* 4.

[21] See Appiah, *Lines*, 4–5.

As to *interlocutors*, Bonhoeffer received much of his Hegel education from Reinhold Seeberg, his first doctoral supervisor, as well as Wilhelm Lütgert, who specialised in Idealism and supervised Bonhoeffer's *Habilitationschrift*. Moreover, Bonhoeffer's university courses, including a 1927 series on the philosophy of culture by Eduard Spranger, exposed him to the neo-Hegelian 'revival' of the 1920s.[22] As shown by his early seminar papers, he was also aware of a larger 'speculative trajectory' that followed on from Hegel and minimised confessional and biblical interest.[23] Alongside these Berlin instructors, Bonhoeffer's thinking was also formed through a longstanding dialogue with his friend and fellow student Franz Hildebrandt, whose own dissertation appropriates several of Hegel's ideas.

As to the *political context*, there was a significant movement of German neo-Hegelianism in Bonhoeffer's time. Although Bonhoeffer was no longer based in the academy after 1936, the work of legal philosophers such as Carl Schmitt and Karl Larenz would have confronted him through laws introduced under the Third Reich. Neo-Hegelianism, however contestable its claim to Hegel's thought, came to present a nationalist and exclusive political settlement.[24] This contextual note should be qualified, however, by the fact that Bonhoeffer did not have a mono-cultural experience of Hegel reception. During his exchange period in America, for instance, he came across the work of W.E.B. Du Bois, whose critical work with Hegel cut against the grain of national and racial exceptionalism.

D. From Theology to Philosophy – and Back Again

This book draws on recent scholarship that depicts Hegel as a philosopher who is interested in the logical forms derived from Christian doctrine.[25] In other

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[22] The background of emerging movements emphasising synthesis or 'the whole' is recounted in Fritz Ringer, *Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community 1890–1933*, Reprint ed. (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1990), 305–314, 365, 384–403.

[23] In a 1926 seminar paper, Bonhoeffer observes that '[s]ince Schleiermacher, theology had partly been allowed to grow speculative and wild – this is especially evident in Hegel's student Biedermann – and partly was constrained by biblicism. At any rate it seemed to have distanced itself a long way from Lutheran-Reformed doctrine'. *DBWE 9*, 404; *DBW 17*, 30 [published in the *Register und Ergänzungen*].

[24] See Andreas Grossmann, 'German neo-Hegelianism and the Plea for Another Hegel', in *The Impact of Idealism: The Legacy of Post-Kantian German Thought, Volume II,* ed. John Walker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 232–259.

[25] I draw on Adams' distinction between philosophy – a 'second-order discourse' that investigates systems of classification and the rules that govern judgments – and theology as a 'first-order' task of articulating doctrinal loci that takes its categories and rules of judgment for granted. Adams, *Eclipse*, 167–68.

words, I do not read him primarily as a theologian, much less one who seeks to revise Christian dogma. Such an explicitly doctrinal project is suggested by titles that depict him as a 'theologian of Spirit' or as developing a distinct 'Christology'.[26] Hegel's multi-layered treatment of *Geist*, typically translated 'spirit', can lead to the assumption that he develops an alternative pneumatology. I argue, in contrast, that Hegel does not offer a competing theology of the Holy Spirit, even though Trinitarian doctrine informs his philosophical account. If Hegel is primarily interested in Christian theology in order to investigate its logic, rather than to articulate an idiosyncratic doctrinal statement, his work may be less threatening to the theologian.[27] Insofar as threat does exist, it is best handled by a 'turn to the texts' following a period marked by broad and misleading overviews.[28] Such expositional work should acknowledge diachronic distinction while identifying both 'epic' and 'dramatic' tendencies in Hegel's thought.[29]

Along with depicting Hegel as a philosopher first, I readily acknowledge Hegel's insistence on his Lutheran confession. As Hegel was also accused of heterodoxy during his lifetime, often for holding a form of 'pantheism', he sought to defend himself both in published works and personal correspondence. To take one example, in a late letter, Hegel asserts his defence against challenges to the integrity of his Christian doctrine, while criticising rationalist approaches to the Trinity in turn: 'I am a Lutheran, and through philosophy have been at once completely confirmed in Lutheranism. I detest seeing such things explained in the same manner as perhaps the descent and dissemination of silk culture, cherries, smallpox, and the like'.[30] Although there were important political motivations behind such a profession, Stephen Houlgate rightly states that it would be 'wilful to dismiss this as subterfuge'.[31] I therefore

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[26] See the anthology *Hegel: Theologian of Spirit*, ed. Peter Hodgson (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997) as well as James Yerkes, *The Christology of Hegel* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1978).

[27] Hegel is explicit that logic is his primary concern, as observed in Adams, *Eclipse*, xviii.

[28] The case is made for close exposition of primary sources, situated within a summary of the field, in Adams, *Eclipse*, xvii.

[29] In Adams' interpretation, Hegel shows tendencies towards both 'epic metaphysics', which establishes the true nature of reality from a position of supreme insight, and 'dramatic metaphysics', which begins from the human 'middle' and constructs an account of reality from there. *Science of Logic* is given as an example of the former, with *Phenomenology of Geist* representing the latter. Adams, *Eclipse*, 16.

[30] G.W.F. Hegel to Friedrich August G. Tholuck, July 3, 1826, *Hegel: The Letters,* trans. Clark Butler and Christiane Seiler (Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 1984), 519–20; cited in Dorrien, *Kantian Reason and Hegelian Spirit*, 222.

[31] Houlgate, *Hegel*, 254.

Introduction

attend to the confessional aspects of Hegel's texts, demurring over claims that he is inadvertently heterodox or practically an atheist.[32]

Along with having a basis in Lutheran theology, Hegel's philosophy has itself become a source for much subsequent theology. Adams observes that Hegel's work 'generates the German philosophical lexicon through which many of the imaginative moves in the twentieth century are cast'.[33] As a result of Hegel's pervasive influence, a theologian can be overtly critical of him while still appropriating his thought forms.[34] Insofar as Bonhoeffer works downstream from Hegel, many of his terminological and conceptual choices are best understood by having Hegel's project in view. At times he will react against his predecessor, of course. For instance, Bonhoeffer's depiction of the disruptive Word should be understood as, in part, a reaction against a Lutheran 'pneumaticism' that informs Hegel's project.[35] Indeed, I argue that the background of Hegel's account of *Geist* helps to explain why Bonhoeffer does not give much explicit attention to pneumatology as a doctrinal *locus*.[36] Rather than criticising him for lacking systematic 'balance', a reader can come to appreciate his attempt to foreground what is lacking in his time, namely, the distinctive 'mind' and body of Christ.

This book comes at a period of renewed interest in Hegel in English-language scholarship. Hegel's published works are in the midst of being translated for new critical editions.[37] Another set of volumes presents Hegel's various lecture series in diachronic rather than composite fashion.[38] Regarding editorial

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[32] In spite of a catalogue of heretical sources, Cyril O'Regan observes that 'Hegel presumes himself not to be deviating from the spirit of Lutheran confession'. Cyril O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel* (New York, NY: SUNY Press, 1994), 195. Oswald Bayer asserts that Hegel's secularisation of Christian freedom, 'which is primarily real only in promise', involves a theoretical turn in which 'he is an atheist, despite the fact that he saw himself as a Lutheran!' Oswald Bayer, *Freedom in Response – Lutheran Ethics: Sources and Controversies,* trans. Jeffrey F. Cayzer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 85.

[33] Following this influence, Adams continues that 'Hegel's theological innovations are quite secondary'. Those innovations, he admits, are susceptible to the charge of heresy. Adams, *Eclipse,* 4, 220, 226.

[34] For example, Barth criticises Hegel's Pelagianism even as he displays neo-Hegelian tendencies in *Church Dogmatics*. Adams, *Eclipse*, 3.

[35] Hegel is said to radicalise the 'pneumaticism' that was crucial to revelation for Luther. See O'Regan, *Heterodox Hegel*, 39, 150.

[36] The charge that Bonhoeffer lacks a pneumatology is reiterated in Rowan Williams, 'Margins and Centres: Bonhoeffer's Christ', (Hulsean Lectures, University of Cambridge, February 16, 2016).

[37] Cambridge University Press has published the *Encyclopaedia* and *Science of Logic*. The draft form of *Phenomenology of Geist* is currently in circulation, and will be published in 2018.

[38] Oxford University Press has been reprinting Hegel's lecture series, with Peter Hodgson serving as a lead editor.

commentary and interpretive literature, Frederick Beiser observes that the 'Hegel Renaissance' involves adaptations to current philosophical trends.[39] At least three dominant schools of philosophical interpretation can be identified: materialist readings, based in the *Phenomenology*, which tends to collapse divine agency into an atheistic history; neo-pragmatist readings in which Hegel works from the Kantian project to articulate the social construction of reality; and metaphysical readings that refer primarily to the *Science of Logic* and *Encyclopaedia* with an emphasis on the concept of 'infinity'.[40] In the midst of such interest, theological concerns are frequently marginal. It is a particularly critical time, then, for reception accounts of particular theologians that show how Hegel both receives Christian doctrine and comes to influence it in turn.

Bonhoeffer certainly understood philosophy with a view to its doctrinal origins. He observes at one point that German-Continental traditions, including Idealism, 'are based on philosophical-methodological demands derived from theological insights'.[41] In *Ethics*, he describes the political crisis of the early 1940s as a time when many important philosophical concepts find a way back to their origin in the church after a period of estrangement.[42] The language of estrangement and return is ironic when heard in relation to Hegel, whose account of *Geist* proceeds through such a movement. In any case, Bonhoeffer speaks of recovered alliance more often than threat in his later writings.

E. Beyond Revolt: A Case for 'Eclectic' Reception

Bonhoeffer tends to allow philosophy its own integrity while making his resolutely theological interest clear. As early as *Sanctorum Communio* he compares philosophical and theological enquiry through the analogy of how sound is perceived. 'Just as sound lies in different spheres of perception for musicians and physicists,' Bonhoeffer claims, 'so it is with time for Idealist epistemology and for a Christian concept of person, without the one sphere cancelling out

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[39] The Hegel renaissance is a 'puzzling' phenomenon, understandable only because of those 'nonmetaphysical' interpreters who have rendered him more acceptable to a secular, positivist age. See Frederick Beiser, 'Introduction: The Puzzling Hegel Renaissance', in *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel and Nineteenth Century Philosophy*, ed. Frederick Beiser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 3–5.

[40] The schools are sketched in Graham Ward, 'How Hegel Became a Philosopher: Logos and the Economy of Logic', *Critical Research on Religion* I, no. 3 (2013), 272.

[41] *DBWE 15*, 443; *DBW 15*, 437.

[42] *DBWE 6*, 132; *DBW 6*, 124.

the other'.[43] Having identified disciplinary difference, Bonhoeffer frequently sidesteps philosophical questions, declining, for example, debate on the existence of an 'external world'.

This study presents Bonhoeffer's employment of philosophy, among other disciplines, in the service of his first-order theological work. The first sentence of Bonhoeffer's preface to *Sanctorum Communio* makes his regular intention clear: 'in this study social philosophy and sociology are employed in the service of theology'.[44] As Michael Mawson has argued, Bonhoeffer is not primarily interested in providing grounds for a dialogue between disciplines.[45] Moreover, Bonhoeffer's willingness to engage philosophical terms is tempered by the awareness that the transferral of concepts can 'burst the framework' of the host discipline.[46] When such a threat is identified, he is willing to issue sharp criticism of philosophical figures and movements, as shown in his depiction of 'Idealism' as particularly susceptible to the 'incurvature of the self'.

Why then did Bonhoeffer choose to lead an expositional seminar on Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* in 1933? In Jörg Rades' words, Bonhoeffer sought to recover, in the midst of a crisis in German history, his lost cultural inheritance 'in the proper way by reading and then interpreting it'.[47] Such broader cultural interest is always framed by Bonhoeffer's commitments to the authority of scripture and the Lutheran confessions. In other words, he read Hegel for the task of ecclesial theology before any desire to produce work that is 'philosophically interesting'. As a result, Bonhoeffer does not stake everything either for or against Hegel. He remained, as Ralf Wüstenberg observes, adherent to no single philosophical school.[48]

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[43] *DBWE 1,* 48; *DBW 1*, 28. The sound analogy is apt, for Bonhoeffer describes the act of 'hearing' revelation as evoking a person's active centres of intellect and will. Borrowing a concept from Seeberg, he describes this reception as the 'formal presupposition' of his anthropology – the human being defined by the 'audibility' of the Word. See *DBWE 1*, 63n4.

[44] *DBWE 1*, 21; *DBW 1*, 13.

[45] This is emphasised in response to Peter Berger's criticism that Bonhoeffer does not provide a fruitful starting point for the dialogue between theology and the social sciences in Michael Mawson, 'Theology and Social Theory – Reevaluating Bonhoeffer's Approach', *Theology Today* 71 no. 1 (2014), 74.

[46] *DBWE 2*, 77n89; *DBW 2*, 71n89.

[47] Jörg Alfred Rades, 'Bonhoeffer and Hegel: from *Sanctorum Communio* to the Hegel Seminar with some Perspectives for the Later Works', Dissertation first draft and quotations [ca. 1983–1989] University of St. Andrews [UTS Archives, Bonhoeffer Secondary Papers, Series 2A Box 3], 7.

[48] Wüstenberg makes this point before offering a Hegelian reading of Bonhoeffer's movement between different philosophers. See Ralf Wüstenberg, 'Philosophical Influences on Bonhoeffer's "Religionless Christianity"', in *Bonhoeffer and Continental Thought*, ed. Brian Gregor and Jens Zimmermann (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009), 146.

This book characterises Bonhoeffer's reception of Hegel as both *eclectic* and *Christologically intent*.[49] The term 'eclectic' is used by Ferenc Lehel, a student in the 1933 Hegel seminar. Lehel relates that he was surprised by his teacher's posture, given anti-Idealist currents in theology.[50] He adds that Bonhoeffer read Hegel as an 'ecclesial theologian' who was not overawed by the system. Rather, Bonhoeffer was like an expert in the preservation of buildings, one who took more joy in the oldest, most valuable parts rather than registering his anger over its flaws.[51] Lehel's metaphor fits my earlier characterisation of Bonhoeffer's work as that of repair, not mere demolition. Preservation is not the work of a dilettante, and proper appreciation requires a good understanding of the entire structure. Along these lines, it is revealing to hear Bonhoeffer's response to one seminar student's proud conclusion that Hegel's *Philosophy of Religion* was not 'truly Christian': 'an author should not be attacked or interpreted from one of his negative sentences; we should ask what he intends with the whole book'.[52] Such counsel motivates the comparative expositions pursued in the chapters to follow. In other words, close readings of Hegel's texts are provided in order to appraise 'Bonhoeffer's Hegel'.

While Bonhoeffer led a seminar that sought to understand the 'whole book', he evidently felt the freedom to adopt a Hegelian term of art without importing its entire framework. At times he even sought to counter an overall trajectory in Hegel's work through his own distinctive recoveries, particularly in the area of Christological doctrine. Secure in his theological sources, Bonhoeffer advised his students to respond to Hegel with both *ja und nein*.[53] Such a free approach to Hegel bears comparison with Barth's own self-description years later: 'I myself have a certain weakness for Hegel and am always fond of doing a bit of "Hegeling". As Christians we have the freedom to do this.... I do it eclectically'.[54]

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[49] The combination of terms is inspired by Philip Ziegler, who claims that Bonhoeffer was '*ad hoc* and tactical' in his use of philosophy. Philip Ziegler, 'Completely within God's Doing' (Lecture, Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer Conference, University of Aberdeen, December 12, 2014).

[50] Ferenc Lehel, *Dietrich Bonhoeffers Hegelseminar: Nach Aufzeichnungen von Ferenc Lehel*, ed. Ilse Tödt (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1988), henceforth *HS*, 9–10.

[51] Lehel, *HS*, 10; cf. Rades, 'Bonhoeffer', 11.

[52] Wolf-Dieter Zimmermann and Ronald Smith, eds., *I Knew Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (London: Collins, 1966), 65.

[53] The initial 'yes' is to the possibility of Christian knowledge of God, while the 'no' comes at the 'equation' of revelation and reason. Lehel, *HS*, 18.

[54] Barth also notes that he can adopt elements of Marxism without thereby being a Marxist. The remark was recorded in a conversation with pastors and lay people in September 1953; cited in *Karl Barth: His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts*, ed. Eberhard Busch, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1976), 387.

Bonhoeffer's eclecticism can serve as an alternative to theological approaches to Hegel, and philosophical movements more generally, that are characterised as revolt or confrontation. The term 'revolt' heads Gary Dorrien's presentation of the Barthian movement in reaction to Idealism.[55] Dorrien sees the broad Idealist tradition as vital to contemporary progressive theology, although he notes its problematic ironies, particularly with respect to race.[56] Such admission leads to Dorrien's appreciation of the conviction, modelled by Barth, that 'a healthy pluralism in philosophy and rhetorical forms is needed if theology is to be free to locate the event of correspondence between human word and divine truth'.[57] Unfortunately, Dorrien largely omits reference to Bonhoeffer, who works between Barth and Hegel while incorporating elements of race-critical thinking.

In Cyril O'Regan's recent work, Hegel's wholesale revision of Christian doctrine is said to provoke Hans Urs von Balthasar's 'vehement and systematic resistance', or 'total confrontation'.[58] Such a reaction is motivated by Hegel's varied 'heterodox' sources, from Valentinian gnosticism to Lutheran mystic Jacob Boehme, which O'Regan traced in his earlier study, *The Heterodox Hegel*. Hegel's Lutheran profession notwithstanding, O'Regan argues that his 'ontotheological redescription' involves, *inter alia*, monophysite Christology, excision of the resurrection, and ultimate 'divinisation of the community'.[59] O'Regan's more recent presentation of Balthasar as a theologian in 'confrontation' with Hegel stands as a useful contrast to this study. I present Bonhoeffer as identifying Hegel's heretical tendencies with respect to both Christ and the church, particularly his 'docetism', while still appropriating what is of value.

In order to present a reception account that is 'beyond revolt', it is instructive to briefly compare the nuance in Kierkegaard's own work with Hegel. The comparison is important as Bonhoeffer drew on Kierkegaard's thought in order to attack the state of religion in his time.[60] Scholarship on Kierkegaard's reception of Hegel has gone from claiming an utter lack of commonality between

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[55] Chapter Eight is titled 'The Barthian Revolt' in Dorrien, *Kantian Reason and Hegelian Spirit,* 454–529.

[56] See Dorrien, *Kantian Reason and Hegelian Spirit*, 1, 542–49.

[57] Dorrien also notes early concerns over Barth's 'haphazard' use of philosophy and 'dilettantism'. Dorrien, *Kantian Reason and Hegelian Spirit*, 482, 486.

[58] These are descriptions of Hans Urs von Balthasar's critical approach to Hegel, which nonetheless comes out of 'respect and even affinity'. They are prompted by the fact that Hegel 'fundamentally revises the grammar of Christian belief'. Part of Balthasar's response is to reassert theology as 'first among equals'. See Cyril O'Regan, *Anatomy of Misremembering*, *Volume 1: Hegel* (Chestnut Ridge, NY: Herder & Herder, 2014) 24, 36, 65.

[59] See O'Regan, *Heterodox Hegel*, 168, 201, 208, 214, 220.

[60] It should also be noted that Emanuel Hirsch did significant work on Kierkegaard while developing a position of extreme nationalism.

the figures to tracing a sequence of phases.[61] Joel Rasmussen argues, however, that such sequence cannot be too clearly defined: 'Kierkegaard's relations to Hegelianism are creative, dialectical and sometimes appreciative, while also highly critical – even in the final years of his life'.[62] Similarly, Merold Westphal summarises Kierkegaard's reception by saying that 'there is appropriation as well as negation, and Kierkegaard is never simply anti-Hegelian'.[63] In light of this precedent, it is worth questioning an account of Bonhoeffer's reception of Kierkegaard framed in terms of co-belligerency against Idealism.[64]

F. Scholarship on Bonhoeffer's Reception of Hegel

The primary aim of this book is to offer a text-based, diachronic account of Bonhoeffer's reception of Hegel with a focus on the theme of revelatory community. A robust treatment of this relationship remains lacking, even though there has been exponential growth in scholarly attention to Bonhoeffer's *oeuvre* over the past three generations. This gap is partly due to the appropriate scholarly focus devoted to completing the *Bonhoeffer Works* English critical editions in collaboration with the German set that was finished right before the

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[61] These are narrated as an early period of positive influence; middle period of sustained criticism, largely against then-contemporary Danish Hegelians; and a final stage where Kierkegaard 'made his peace with Hegelianism', in Joel Rasmussen, 'Kierkegaard, Hegelianism and the Theology of the Paradox', in *The Impact of Idealism, Volume IV: Religion*, ed. Nicholas Adams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 91–113.

[62] Rasmussen argues that Kierkegaard draws on Hegel for his early criticism of Romantic irony, after which he continued to supplement Hegelian philosophy from within. See Rasmussen, 'Kierkegaard, Hegelianism', 93, 96.

[63] Merold Westphal, 'Kierkegaard and Hegel', in ed. Alastair Hannay and Gordon D. Marino, *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 101.

[64] The two figures are brought together in a combined 'attack on Idealism' over epistemology, ethics, and finally, Christology and discipleship in Matthew Kirkpatrick, *Attacks on Christendom in a World Come of Age* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011). Kirkpatrick offers the disclaimer that there is currently a debate in Kierkegaard scholarship over whether Kierkegaard was attacking Hegel directly or a later manifestation of his thought in Denmark, claiming that Bonhoeffer was not aware of this later distinction. He relegates Bonhoeffer's early interest in Hegel to the influence of Seeberg as well as the young student's aspirations within the German academic context. This marginalisation is furthered by Kirkpatrick's argument that Kierkegaard's depiction of the individual is actually foundational to Bonhoeffer's ecclesiology – this in spite of Bonhoeffer's statement that Kierkegaard relies too heavily on a concept of the 'self-established I' and has no doctrine of the church. Kirkpatrick, *Attacks*, 82, 132–35.

turn of the millennium.[65] Given the recent closure of the English-language canon, there has been a call for rigorous 'synoptic' assessment.[66]

The present enquiry follows after the second generation of scholars, who have shown more attention to the continuity of Bonhoeffer's corpus while inviting dialogue with philosophy and the social sciences.[67] Appeals to continuity notwithstanding, it is widely acknowledged that Bonhoeffer's provocative style, *ad hoc* use of genre, and early death make any attempt at the 'systematisation' of his fragmentary body of work an acute challenge. This period of reception is represented by Wayne Floyd's and Charles Marsh's accounts of Bonhoeffer's use of Hegel.

The strongest recent call for exploring the relationship between Bonhoeffer and Hegel comes from Wayne Floyd. In an essay from the 2008 collection *Bonhoeffer's Intellectual Formation*, Floyd notes the need for further research into how Bonhoeffer's work relates to the philosophical tradition from Kant to Hegel, while charting the most promising studies to date.[68] His own earlier work, *Theology and the Dialectics of Otherness*, helped turn attention to Bonhoeffer's philosophical inclination while suggesting a strong interpretive line vis-à-vis Hegel. In that book, Floyd argues that Bonhoeffer's conceptual concerns are given a 'fuller and more nuanced' treatment in Theodor Adorno's 1966 work *Negative Dialectics*.[69] The connection is suggestive, both for construing dialectics as a 'tensive-dynamic retention of poles' and for challenging the adequacy of conceptual thinking to a fragmentary reality.[70] Moreover, Floyd effectively raises the troubling relation between anti-Semitism and a philosophy of 'totality'.[71] Nevertheless, his study dwells more in the late twentieth century than in Hegel's own time, and its interest focuses more on the philosophical dynamics of Bonhoeffer's thought rather than on the centrality of his

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[65] Volume 17, which features a comprehensive index for the set, was published in 2014 for the English editions and in 1999 for the German editions.

[66] This observation leads the collection of essays marking the completion of the critical works in English. The editors note that Bonhoeffer is 'simultaneously the most quoted and the most misinterpreted Christian theologian of the twentieth century'. Clifford Green and Guy Carter, 'Foreword', in *Interpreting Bonhoeffer: Historical Perspectives, Emerging Issues,* ed. Clifford Green and Guy Carter (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013), xi.

[67] Key figures here include Clifford Green, Wayne Floyd, and Charles Marsh. See an overview of the three generations of reception in Adam Clark and Michael Mawson, 'Introduction', in *Ontology and Ethics: Bonhoeffer and Contemporary Scholarship*, ed. Adam Clark and Michael Mawson (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013).

[68] See Floyd, 'Encounter with the Other: Immanuel Kant and G.W.F. Hegel in the Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer', in *Bonhoeffer's Intellectual Formation*, ed. Peter Frick (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 83, 90–93.

[69] Wayne Floyd. *Theology and the Dialectics of Otherness: On Reading Bonhoeffer and Adorno* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1988), 261.

[70] Floyd, *Dialectics of Otherness*, xvii, 62, 99, 147.

[71] Floyd, *Dialectics of Otherness*, 218, 267–68.

Christological form of response.[72] Given that Floyd is largely responsible for the English critical edition of Bonhoeffer's *Act and Being*, it is important to understand the limitations of this interpretive line.

Charles Marsh's early work acknowledges the significance of Hegel for Bonhoeffer's theology. In his 1994 book *Reclaiming Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, Marsh devotes a significant section to Hegel. There he suggests that Bonhoeffer matures in his relationship to Hegel's work after his first dissertation, partly as a result of the Hegel seminar he led in 1933:

> His writings become more attentive to the richness and polyvalence of Hegel's thought. He is less concerned with overcoming Hegel than in thinking along with the philosopher on the meaning of God's presence in the complex drama of divine worldliness. Bonhoeffer will no longer argue the case that Hegel proffers a crude totality that stamps out all particularity and difference, but he will, for example, try to think of the totality proper to the biblical witness of God's redemptive story, and in this way revise Hegel's description from the inside out, that is, theologically.[73]

Marsh also states that Bonhoeffer's socio-ethical terminology – in oft-cited phrases such as 'being for others' – can seem 'monochronic and thin' without understanding its passage in and through Hegel's thought.[74] Readers convinced by Marsh's claim of the 'promise' Bonhoeffer evidently saw in Hegel will likely be disappointed by Marsh's recent rendition of the relationship. In his 2014 biography *Strange Glory*, Marsh singles out Hegel in especially negative terms.[75] The Hegel seminar is mentioned as a wistful but ineffectual enterprise, while a 'Hegelian' manner of thinking leads to the merger of National Socialist doctrines into Lutheran theology.[76]

Two factors contribute to the relative neglect of Bonhoeffer's relationship to Hegel beyond the work of Floyd and Marsh. First, there is a decided scholarly interest in Bonhoeffer's second dissertation, *Act and Being*, which has

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[72] Floyd's more recent article casts Bonhoeffer's engagement with Hegel after the dissertations as an attempt to recover the 'other' against 'systematic' thinking. See Floyd, 'Encounter', 108–110.

[73] Charles Marsh, *Reclaiming Dietrich Bonhoeffer: The Promise of his Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 91.

[74] Marsh elaborates that 'Hegel compelled Bonhoeffer to consider nothing less than the ontological and structural reconfiguration of the person in fellowship with God'. Marsh, *Reclaiming*, 175n11.

[75] The young Bonhoeffer seems unlikely to see the benefit of Hegel's work in this description of his dissertation: 'Bonhoeffer had mounted an acrid assault on the German philosophical tradition, hacking through the thickets and thorns of Hegelian dialectic in a desperate bid to rescue the sanctity of the social, relational self from a world-dominating "Transcendental Ego".' Charles Marsh, *Strange Glory: A Life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (New York, NY: Knopf, 2014), 91–2, 118.

[76] Marsh, *Strange Glory*, 361, 440n88.

been the focus of philosophically-informed studies by Christiane Tietz, Michael DeJonge, and Edward van 't Slot.[77] As a result, *Sanctorum Communio*, which is the original context of Bonhoeffer's modification of Hegel's phrase 'God existing as community', has not received much detailed attention. One promising recent attempt to redress this imbalance has come in the work of Michael Mawson.[78] Mawson's attention to *Sanctorum Communio* brings the text in which Bonhoeffer does his most overt work with Hegel back into view. This shift is particularly critical as 'Christ existing as community' is widely recognised to be a succinct expression of Bonhoeffer's project as a whole.[79]

Second, in relation to the dominance of *Act and Being* in the literature, significant scholarly attention has been paid to Bonhoeffer's use of Martin Heidegger.[80] Such focus is understandable given that Bonhoeffer's second dissertation advisor referred to Bonhoeffer as a 'Heidegger man'.[81] Bonhoeffer indeed finds Heidegger's notion of *Dasein* useful, claiming that it can resource a 'genuine coordination' of act and being that, although reminiscent of Hegel's thought, prioritises the temporal bounds of existence.[82] Nevertheless, Jens Zimmermann has argued that Heidegger's influence is relatively contained to the second dissertation.[83] Moreover, Bonhoeffer's contemporaries saw a difference in him. As Helmut Gollwitzer attests, in contrast with their habit of

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[77] See Christiane Tietz-Steiding, *Bonhoeffers Kritik der Verkrümmten Vernunft. Eine Erkenntnistheoretische Untersuchung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999); Michael DeJonge, *Bonhoeffer's Theological Formation: Berlin, Barth, and Protestant Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Edward van 't Slot, *Negativism of Revelation? Bonhoeffer and Barth on Faith and Actualism* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015).

[78] The reasons for the neglect of the first dissertation and the case for its re-examination are set forth in Michael Mawson, *Christ Existing as Community: The Ethics of Bonhoeffer's Ecclesiology* (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Notre Dame, 2012), 7–11.

[79] Martin Rumscheidt identifies the phrase as indicative of Bonhoeffer's 'Hegel-Seebergian socializing orientation'. He also summarises its recurrent usage across the critical editions: the phrase occurs fourteen times in *DBW/E* 1, twice in *DBW/E* 2, 4, once in *DBW/E* 5, 9, 13, and three times in *DBW/E* 10, 11, 14. Martin Rumscheidt, 'The Significance of Adolf von Harnack and Reinhold Seeberg for Dietrich Bonhoeffer', in *Bonhoeffer's Intellectual Formation*, 205, 208n26.

[80] For an overview of Bonhoeffer's engagement in *Act and Being*, with suggestions about his ensuing Christology, see Stephen Plant, '"In the Sphere of the Familiar": Heidegger and Bonhoeffer', in *Bonhoeffer's Intellectual Formation*, 301–327.

[81] Bonhoeffer's second dissertation supervisor, Wilhelm Lütgert, typecast him as a 'Heidegger man'. Lütgert reports that Bonhoeffer's move from Seeberg to him comes through his 'developing independently, following Heidegger'. *DBW 12*, 113.

[82] *DBWE 2*, 71; *DBW 2*, 65. Bonhoeffer's engagement with Heidegger was motivated by the publication of *Being and Time* in 1927.

[83] Jens Zimmermann argues that Heidegger's 'deficient hermeneutic ontology (as much as his atheism) greatly diminishes his use for Bonhoeffer's own project'. Jens Zimmermann, *Humanism and Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 292.

speaking 'the lofty language of the early Heidegger', Bonhoeffer was mistrusted for seeming to lean on Hegel in his Christology.[84]

A study of Bonhoeffer's engagement with Hegel must acknowledge the importance of *Act and Being* while moving beyond this single work. As Floyd observes, although Kant and Hegel are not named as much in Bonhoeffer's later writings, this is not because Bonhoeffer has left them behind 'but because, like grammar in a sentence, they have disappeared as topics of conversation because they have become part of the very structure ordering all topics of conversation that do get discussed'.[85] This comment picks up on Marsh's earlier statement that most of Bonhoeffer's later engagements with Hegel are 'subtextual', noting the complication involved in coming up with a true alternative.[86] Relatedly, as Tietz argues, Bonhoeffer's later *Ethics* consider how the reconciliation effected in the Christ-reality affects human reason, including a more positive appraisal of the Enlightenment.[87]

In light of these factors, the present work shifts focus towards Bonhoeffer's years as a *Privatdozent*, the period in which he engages Hegel's primary texts in depth. I show that the lectures of 1932–33, surrounding his Hegel seminar, provide the return of several themes raised in *Sanctorum Communio*, such as the transition between the primal and sinful states and the centrality of Christ. Bonhoeffer's ecclesio-political work from 1933 onwards is also taken into account, including the Finkenwalde training materials, in an attempt to show the 'subtextual' exchanges with Hegel. These materials bolster the argument that Bonhoeffer's claim to 'Christ existing as community' should be understood as a variation on Hegel that seeks to pre-empt what he there identifies as a 'docetic-Idealist ecclesiology'.

This book is distinct from previous approaches to Bonhoeffer's reception of Hegel in three ways. First, I provide an account of the diachronic movement of Bonhoeffer's thought with respect to Hegel, showing the relation between philosophical questions raised in the 'academic period' and confessional questions raised in his innovative ministerial training – although I trouble this distinction along the way. I therefore proceed through Bonhoeffer's texts chronologically, with the occasional thematic link drawn across the corpus. Second, in line with both Hegel and Bonhoeffer's focus on 'actualisation', their writings are contextualised politically. For example, I situate Bonhoeffer's emphasis on recovering the Lutheran confessional writings against the backdrop of a movement

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[84] He concedes that the attribution seems unfounded, certainly when compared with Franz Hildebrandt's ready appropriation. See *I Knew Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 139.

[85] Floyd, 'Encounter', 113.

[86] Marsh, *Reclaiming Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 83.

[87] Christiane Tietz, 'Bonhoeffer on the Uses and Limits of Philosophy', in *Bonhoeffer and Continental Thought*, 31–37, 41–42.

of 'deconfessionalisation' in Hegel's time.[88] Such historical work allows for a more precise account of political difference than the lingering insinuation that Hegel was a proto-apologist for the Third Reich. Third, I seek to treat Hegel on his own terms, not only with respect to his unique historical context but also according to his texts. By beginning with Hegel before moving to Bonhoeffer's criticisms or variations, I move away from a tendency to speak of 'Hegelian' thinking that too often conflates him with the neo-Hegelianism of Bonhoeffer's time. Following Bonhoeffer's lead in holding an expository seminar, alongside his counsel to students to ask what Hegel intended by a whole work rather than isolated passages, I include detailed expositions of Hegel in each chapter alongside Bonhoeffer's specific interpretations.

G. Chapter Outline

The primary aim of Part One, 'Beyond the Incurvature of the Self', is to challenge the neglect of Hegel's influence owing, in large part, to Bonhoeffer's critical depiction of 'Idealism' as an expression of 'self-confinement'. Acknowledging that Hegel's language of circularity and self-reflection requires scrutiny in light of the Lutheran criticism of the sinful 'incurvature' of human reason, I nevertheless argue that such depiction can obscure resources offered by Hegel's challenge to isolated attempts at moral purity and the ensuing construal of a 'sociality of reason'. To show that Hegel cannot be summarily dismissed for an alleged sinful 'incurvature' of the self, I trace his two critical portrayals of sinful reason that show striking similarity to Bonhoeffer's accounts.

In Chapter One I explore the account of revelatory community in Bonhoeffer's dissertations, tracing his qualified appropriation of Hegel's 'objective *Geist*' and his re-prioritisation of the 'Word'. I argue that when scholars dismiss Idealism as an expression of 'self-confinement', they fail to recognise the social dynamics of Hegel's thought, particularly his appeal to reciprocal 'confession', that appealed to Bonhoeffer. I therefore look beyond Bonhoeffer's own polemics to show his targeted variations on Hegel's phrase 'God existing as community': a change of subject, from God to Christ, and a related shift in ecclesial ethics, from confession to intercession. These changes reveal Bonhoeffer's conviction that Hegel's identification of God in the act of reconciliation, depicted largely as 'like-mindedness', does not adequately account for the church's persistently conflicted identity as the *peccatorum communio*. Unfortunately, this complex ecclesial response has been obscured by the 'sins' of Idealism.

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[88] See Thomas Albert Howard, *Protestant Theology and the Making of the Modern German University* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 11.

Chapter Two traces Bonhoeffer's retrieval of a theological 'history' that begins with the primal state and passes into the state of sin. To that end, I examine *Creation and Fall,* a 1932–33 exposition of Genesis 1–3, to show that Bonhoeffer is more indebted to Hegel than opposition to his predecessor's claim of 'divine knowledge' would suggest. I argue that although Bonhoeffer takes exception to Hegel's foreshortened reading of the *protoevangelium*, he adopts a similar account of the 'cleaving' mind that seeks to know good and evil. This depiction of split cognisance informs Bonhoeffer's subversion of Hegel's account of a volatile primal state, a philosophical protology that is elsewhere deployed to explain cultural supersession. Finally, I show how this engagement over Genesis 1–3 leads to Bonhoeffer's claim about the *Aufhebung* of fallen knowledge in his later *Ethics*.

Part Two, 'The Substitution of Christ', makes Bonhoeffer's Christology lectures a primary resource, following on from my treatment of his dissertations and Genesis lectures in Part One. The reason for the centrality of these lectures is twofold. First, they are delivered in Summer semester 1933 and so coincide with the Hegel seminar, Bonhoeffer's closest engagement with the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* to that point. Second, it is important to compare Bonhoeffer's and Hegel's uses of Christology in order to show the sharp critical edge of Bonhoeffer's 'eclectic' reception. To this end, I highlight how Bonhoeffer charges Hegel as the most refined exemplar of 'docetism', a characterisation that expresses their strongest point of departure. Years later, when Bonhoeffer speaks of a 'docetic-Idealist ecclesiology', the background of these Christology lectures helps to narrate why he would label a theory of the church as a Christological heresy. Although this theological line of criticism shows that Bonhoeffer identified a 'heterodox Hegel', this does not keep him from acknowledging Hegel's 'relative right' in the 'secularisation' of the Eucharistic union.

Chapter Three focuses on Bonhoeffer's charge that Hegel's work is a refined form of 'docetism', particularly the claim that Hegel's distinction between 'Idea' and 'Appearance' effectively divides a holistic Christology. Bonhoeffer therefore narrates a confrontation between the *Menschenlogos*, 'human *logos*', with which he identifies Hegel's thought, and the *Gegenlogos*, 'counter-*logos*'. Although Bonhoeffer depicts a *Logos* that disrupts human thought projects, I argue that he is not merely casting Christ as a figure of 'anti-reason'. Rather, I show how Bonhoeffer's dialectic exposes attempts to conceptualise the two natures in advance and therefore fail to think from the unity of the God-human person. Given that Bonhoeffer identifies Christ as the 'hidden centre' of *Wissenschaft*, 'science', I end by tracing how his gestures toward a Christological logic invite closer comparison to Hegel's project.

Chapter Four treats the theme of Christ's 'real presence' as Word and Sacrament. This chapter begins with a fuller contextualisation of Bonhoeffer's

work on Hegel within then-contemporary Lutheran-Reformed polemics, particularly Barth's criticism of Luther's Eucharistic theology and the Hegelian response given by Bonhoeffer's colleague Franz Hildebrandt. In light of that context, I show that Bonhoeffer takes up many of the same emphases as Hegel, such as the primacy of truth over feeling and the continual need for mediation between members. Nevertheless, he makes a series of departures, particularly through the attempt to retrieve the preached Word as Sacrament in its own right against Hegel's neglect of the sermon. This shift is focal to a series of Christological retrievals: while Hegel examines the transmission of doctrine by the spirited community, Bonhoeffer argues that Christ is not doctrine but presence; while Hegel's philosophical interest leads him to an account of the self-sufficient 'Idea', Bonhoeffer emphasises the contingency of 'Address'.

Part Three, 'The Body of Christ After "World History"', traces the broader political and historical purview implied by Bonhoeffer's criticism of Idealist 'confinement of the self' and his modification of Hegel's 'God existing as community'. Moving on from Bonhoeffer's Christology lectures, the primary resources for this part are his later works, particularly *Discipleship* and *Ethics*. I seek to show that Bonhoeffer's reception of Hegel cannot be reduced to his academic period, much less to his second, more philosophically-inclined dissertation. Rather, his very recovery of the church's 'confessing' identity is a reaction to the era of 'deconfessionalisation' in which Hegel plays a significant role. Along the way, direct divergences come into view, such as that over the ethical import on the Sermon on the Mount or the political relevance of the Augsburg Confession. These all amount to Bonhoeffer's distinct account of revelatory community that seeks to challenge a 'docetic-Idealist ecclesiology' by recovering the visible church's *Lebensraum*.

Chapter Five challenges a hasty opposition between Hegel's and Bonhoeffer's political stances by first distinguishing their contextual readings of the Sermon on the Mount. Hegel is shown to style Jesus as a French revolutionary – a necessary but passing figure for freedoms later enshrined in the Protestant state. Bonhoeffer, diagnosing a 'docetic-Idealist ecclesiology' to emerge as a result, seeks to resist state overreach by reclaiming Jesus' call to an 'unbounded community'. Although these Lutheran thinkers read Jesus' social ethic to different political ends, I argue that this should not obscure other points of convergence. Bonhoeffer's claim in *Discipleship* that the Christ-community exists in a state of non-recognition is therefore set alongside two claims in his later *Ethics* that invite engagement with Hegel: the sharp criticism of a trajectory of 'absolute freedom' emerging from France, and the acknowledgement of an embattled alliance between church and remnant-state in the preservation of right.

Chapter Six deals with the intertwined themes of 'race', *Volk*, and the shape accorded to history. Here I set Hegel's criticism of 'one-sided' accounts, particularly aimed at the nationalism of his own time, over and against the racial

lines drawn by later neo-Hegelians. In particular, I trace his claim that the state can forfeit its own 'principle' and so incur guilt in its treatment of foreigners, comparing this with the way that Bonhoeffer challenges the National Socialist state for its marginalisation of Jewish persons. I conclude by exploring the implications of Bonhoeffer's turn from an account of 'shapes of *Geist*' towards the 'form of Christ' revealed in intercultural exchange. Although his dialectic of incarnation and cross is set within a Eurocentric frame, I show how Bonhoeffer comes to insist on a fuller reckoning with those on the 'underside of history', particularly diasporic peoples. Christ remains, after all, the hidden centre.

Part One

Beyond the Incurvature of the Self

Chapter 1

From Word to *Geist*:
Revelation Becomes the Community

It belongs to the essence of the church that it still bears the community of sin within itself, and is real only in constantly overcoming it. – Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*

A critical account of Bonhoeffer's reception of Hegel must reckon with the alleged 'sins' of Idealism.[1] In his two dissertations, Bonhoeffer frequently renders Idealism as an expression of the 'confinement' of the self, vividly portrayed in Luther's language of 'incurvature'. In *Sanctorum Communio*, this typically involves a broader 'Idealist' foil, though Hegel is often singled out for both criticism and appropriation.[2] In *Act and Being*, Bonhoeffer makes a clearer distinction between 'Idealists', therefore providing a more direct challenge to Hegel's *Geist*. In his most succinct criticism, he states that 'the movement of *Geist* is turned in upon itself. In Luther's words, this is *ratio in se ipsam incurva*'.[3]

Hegel offers ample material for Bonhoeffer's depiction of incurvature. In the culminating section of the *Phenomenology* on 'absolute knowing' Hegel depicts his exercise in speculative philosophy as '*Geist* knowing itself as *Geist*', narrating that '"I=I" is the self-reflecting movement'.[4] The materials surrounding Hegel's 'reflective' statements therefore seem to require little investigation by Bonhoeffer critics, for whom this is a clear case of a thought

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[1] Portions of this chapter appear in an earlier form as David S. Robinson, '*Peccatorum Communio*: Intercession in Bonhoeffer's Use of Hegel'. *Studies in Christian Ethics* 28, no. 1 (Feb 2015): 86–100.

[2] In a lengthy footnote on Idealism, Bonhoeffer highlights an issue of central concern: the basis upon which the common nature and equal value of individuals is attempted, either by participation in universal reason (Kant-Fichte) or in objective and absolute *Geist* (Hegel). That notation includes figures such as Schleiermacher, and elsewhere he even identifies Idealist tendencies in Kierkegaard. *DBWE 1*, 193–98n68; *DBW 1*, 130–33n68. The use of a composite foil is ironic given that Bonhoeffer criticises Hegel for the loss of personal distinction in rendering a collective.

[3] *DBWE 2*, 41–42; *DBW 2*, 34–35.

[4] *PhG* §798, 803.

project marked by 'self-confinement'.[5] The charge has a long history in Bonhoeffer scholarship.[6]

While such a line of criticism has its place, the allegation of Idealist 'self-confinement' has to be brought into fuller reckoning with Hegel's account of the 'sociality of reason'. Only then can attention be focused on Bonhoeffer's most effective theological variations. Rather than locating Bonhoeffer's contribution as a philosophical shift from the closure to the openness of the self, I argue that Bonhoeffer's primary concerns are expressed by his modification to Hegel's 'God existing as community'. I first consider Bonhoeffer's attempt to reclaim the 'Word before *Geist*' and his emphasis on 'revelation in hiddenness'. I then trace the significance of Bonhoeffer's change of subject, from God to Christ, and a shift in action, from reciprocal confession to intercessory prayer.

Investigation beyond the charge of self-confinement is crucial to an account of Bonhoeffer's reception of Hegel, given that the Hegel-inspired phrase 'Christ existing as community' has been identified as a pivotal expression in Bonhoeffer's thought. Insofar as Hegel's logic in this phrase challenges strong oppositions between divine and human agency, it is well suited to Bonhoeffer's project of how revelation 'becomes' the community.[7] Bonhoeffer, channelling Luther, regularly reverses subject and predicate in speaking of Christ and the church, making it difficult to discern the line between the social processes of confession and forgiveness, much less intercession, and divine revelation.[8] As a result, Oswald Bayer criticises Bonhoeffer for not sufficiently differentiating Christology and ecclesiology, singling out 'Christ existing as community' as a 'not unproblematic form'. In the same work he criticises Hegel for giving up

[5] For example, Rumscheidt writes that what had troubled Bonhoeffer 'about the philosophy of Idealism and the liberal theologies that built on it was the confinement to the self'. See Rumscheidt, 'Significance', in Frick, ed., *Formation*, 208.

[6] Bethge's biography claims that Bonhoeffer's second dissertation is 'essentially addressing philosophers, whom he found guilty of the original sin of Idealism, namely confinement in the self'. He continues that the philosophers did not recognise themselves in this characterisation, and he later sides with critics about Bonhoeffer's conceptual oversimplifications. Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Biography*, Revised Edition, ed. Victoria Barnett, trans. Edwin Robertson, et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 133–35.

[7] An example of this is Bonhoeffer's most assured statement that 'the church is the presence of Christ in the same way that Christ is the presence of God. The New Testament knows one form of revelation: Christ existing as community'. Bonhoeffer therefore claims that ecclesial acts such as intercessory prayer must be 'viewed from two angles', challenging a stark division between human action and divine will. *DBWE 1*, 141, 186–7; *DBW 1*, 87, 124.

[8] 'We are God through the love that makes us charitable toward our neighbour' is one of Luther's statements to which Bonhoeffer refers. *DBWE 1*, 178–80; *DBW 1*, 117–18.

the 'externality' of the Word, even that of the Host.[9] It is worth a closer investigation, then, of both Hegel's project and the original context of Bonhoeffer's modification, which has largely fallen from view.[10]

A. *Geist* and the 'External' Word

This section provides the background to Bonhoeffer's variations on Hegel's account of revelatory community with particular attention to concepts of *Geist*. I first suggest that for Hegel *Geist* is primarily a description of the social composition of reason. Next, Bonhoeffer's appropriation of Hegel's 'objective *Geist*' is shown to be part of his resistance to atomistic forms of thought that express what he terms a 'fear of Hegel'. Nevertheless, taking a phrase from J.G. Hamann, Bonhoeffer seeks to recover the 'Word before *Geist*'. He does this by situating Hegel's concept within a theologically-conceived history of primal state, sin, and revelation.

I. Shapes of Geist *in Hegel*

This first section offers a preliminary description of *Geist* in Hegel's usage as a background to Bonhoeffer's use of the term. *Geist* will be left untranslated in order to avoid the unfortunate choice between 'spirit' and 'mind', while attempting to retrieve the latter meaning that is lost in the currently dominant rendition 'spirit'.[11] I particularly want to avoid a conflation of *Geist* and the Holy Spirit of Christian doctrine, a relationship Hegel does not cleanly differentiate but which, I venture, is not identification without remainder. I draw instead on Adams' claim that Hegel's 'spirit' is not the Holy Spirit, particularly not with respect to the Trinitarian life *ad intra.* It is, rather, predominantly a way of 'qualifying human action'.[12] Hegel will at times make reference to the Holy Spirit, the person who seems the primary referent for some uses of his

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[9] See Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation*, trans. Thomas Trapp (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 271, 251.

[10] In the afterword to the German critical edition of *Sanctorum Communio*, Joachim von Soosten already observes that 'in the debate over Bonhoeffer's dissertation, this phrase has almost taken on a life of its own; consequently, its original meaning in Bonhoeffer has been almost totally obscured'. *DBWE 1*, 295; *DBW 1*, 311.

[11] The 1910 translation by J.B. Baillie was titled *Phenomenology of Mind,* a rendition of *Geist* also employed in Peter Singer, *Hegel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[12] Adams, *Eclipse*, 46.

term *Geist,* but these appear to be in the minority.[13] It is therefore understandable that a theologian would want to speak of a 'divine actor with hypostatic density'.[14]

Hegel's account of *Geist* can be summarily described as *a rationally actualising social field*. The indefinite article allows for the various expressions of *Geist* – those of individuals, peoples, and world – that exist in a 'reciprocally dependent' relationship for Hegel.[15] He speaks of philosophically conceived history in terms of tracing the 'shapes of *Geist*', which is a way of saying that individual comprehension is always situated within broader historico-cultural movements.[16] His account interweaves a variety of levels of *Geist*, as indicated by hybrid terms such as *Volksgeist* and *Weltgeist*, which are constituent parts of 'absolute' *Geist*.[17]

First, *Geist* is *rational*, which means that it is intelligible or, rather, intelligibility. *Geist* is therefore expressed in the broader *ethos* of *Wissenschaft*, 'science', with speculative philosophy as its clearest expression.[18] When it comes to the final 'shape' of *Geist* in the *Phenomenology*, Hegel speaks of '*Geist* knowing itself in the shape of *Geist*, that is, it is *comprehending conceptual knowledge* [*begreifendes Wissen*]'.[19] The emphasis on conceptual clarity differentiates Hegel from other 'expressivist' accounts, for in Charles Taylor's words:

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[13] It is therefore questionable whether Hegel articulates an outright denial of the personhood of the Holy Spirit, so articulating a form of Sabellianism. This charge is brought against him in O'Regan, *Anatomy*, 261.

[14] This is O'Regan's description of von Balthasar's theological response to Hegel, which seeks to move beyond 'a name whose referent is the appropriating community in which it is supposed to inhere'. O'Regan, *Anatomy*, 200.

[15] The observation of 'reciprocal dependence' is made in Robert Brown and Peter Hodgson, 'Editorial Introduction: Analytic Summary of the Texts', in G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 13.

[16] 'Both because the substance of the individual, the world spirit, has possessed the patience to pass through these forms over a long stretch of time and to take upon itself the prodigious labour of world history, and because it could not have reached consciousness about itself in any lesser way, the individual spirit itself cannot comprehend its own substance with anything less.' *PhG*, §29.

[17] Inwood identifies nine different ways in which Hegel employs the term *Geist*, claiming that they are 'systematically related phases in the development of a single *Geist*'. Michael Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 275–76.

[18] The disciplinary claim is found in *PhG*, §37. The broader academic currents of *Wissenschaftsideologie* are traced in Zachary Purvis, *Theology and the University in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 77–85.

[19] *PhG*, §798.

the essence of subjectivity is *rational* self-awareness, that self-consciousness must be in the clear medium of conceptual thought and not in cloudy intuition or ineffable vision. Hence rationality, too, is for him a condition of integral expression or freedom, and reciprocally.[20]

The elevation of thought over 'feeling', particularly in religious expression, is conditioned by Hegel's influential disagreements with Schleiermacher.[21] Philosophical enquiry plays a leading role in the movement of *Geist*, not only discovering these shapes but instantiating them; thinkers perform true work, or 'labour'.[22] Ultimately, Hegel speaks of a consummative quality to *Wissenschaft* following on from the content of religion.[23]

It should be noted here that Hegel's account of rationality is profoundly shaped by Lutheran theological claims, particularly those surrounding the movements of incarnation and cross.[24] Thought is articulated as a passage of self-emptying, even death: '*Geist* only wins its truth by finding its feet within its absolute disruption'.[25] As a result, Hegel's terms of self-reflection should be qualified by his statement that *Geist* is neither marked by self-withdrawal nor absorption in what is known, but rather a process of self-emptying.[26] The apprehension of the rational aspect of reality is not immediate but requires the subject's division, both from 'nature' and within herself, on the way to the mediated recovery of unified reason.[27]

Second, the rational character of *Geist* is *actualising*. Hegel claims that 'the force of *Geist* is only as great as its expression'.[28] Moreover, the 'propelling' movement of *Geist*'s self-knowledge is called the work that *Geist* 'accomplishes as actual history [*wirkliche Geschichte*]'.[29] Hegel's account draws on

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[20] Taylor goes on to mention the Romantics and the *Sturm und Drang* movement as the background against which Hegel defined himself. Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 89.

[21] Dorrien states that Hegel understood Schleiermacher's finer distinctions, such as that between 'sensibility' [*Empfindung*] and 'feeling' [*Gefühl*]. In spite of his important similarities, however, Hegel often 'resorted to polemical blasting'. Dorrien, *Kantian Reason and Hegelian Spirit*, 213.

[22] See Adams, *Eclipse*, 91–3.

[23] Hegel states that 'the content of religion expresses what *Geist* is earlier in time than science [*Wissenschaft*] does, but it is science which is *Geist*'s true knowledge of itself'. *PhG*, §802. Terry Pinkard claims that Hegel's view in 1806 is that religion is 'subordinate' to philosophical reflection. Pinkard, *Hegel*, 217.

[24] This is famously expressed in the reference to the 'Golgotha of absolute *Geist*' in *PhG*, §808.

[25] *PhG*, §32.

[26] *PhG*, §804.

[27] See Taylor, *Hegel*, 84–86.

[28] *PhG*, §10.

[29] Note that Hegel states 'as' rather than 'in' history, a claim that bears comparison to 'God existing as community'. *PhG*, §803.

an Aristotelian characterisation of reason as 'purposive activity', with the related notion of reason as inseparable from material embodiment.[30] Reason, apprehension of the 'Idea', is not a separate arena that can be dualistically conceived. Rather, a constitutive aspect of reason is that it is efficacious, leading to establishment as a particular community. Mirroring the journey of individual *Geist,* different 'shapes' occur across historical or cultural *milieux.* Nevertheless, there is continuity between the shapes such that one can speak of a phenomenology of *Geist* in the singular: Hegel looks back on 'a languid movement and succession of *Geister*, a gallery of pictures', with each instantiation 'endowed with the entire wealth of *Geist*'.[31]

Third, *Geist* is *social*. Hegel argues that self-consciousness exists only in the encounter, even opposition, with another irreducible self-consciousness. In a famous passage from the *Phenomenology*, he leads up to the shorthand phrase that conveys the social space constituting mind:

By a self-consciousness being the object, the object is just as much an I as it is an object. – The concept of *Geist* is thereby on hand for us. What will later come to be for consciousness will be the experience of what *Geist* is, that is, this absolute substance which constitutes the unity of its oppositions in their complete freedom and self-sufficiency, namely, in the oppositions of the various self-consciousnesses existing for themselves: The I that is we and the we that is I.[32]

In Terry Pinkard's gloss of the concluding line, 'we are each "minded" only to the extent that others are so "like-minded"'.[33] This interpersonal language segues into the manner in which *Geist* actualises as institutions, from the entirety of the state through to a couple's marriage, with their respective linguistic and cultural components. This is what is intended by the term 'objective *Geist*' that Bonhoeffer will appropriate: the manner in which social relations should be accounted for not merely by summing up individual wills, but by seeing the way in which their interplay exhibits a 'life of its own'.

Fourth, and finally, *Geist* is a *field* – a term taken in its metaphorical and geographical senses. A metaphorical 'field' can refer to an arena of knowledge, which captures part of what Hegel intends but does not include the concrete sense in which he sees *Geist* to find its actualisation. The sense in which 'field' is also a specific territory is evident when Hegel discusses the geographical and climatic conditions to world history that either enable or hinder the emergence of *Geist*. When Hegel speaks of *Volksgeister*, then, he intends to convey not only the meeting of minds that constitutes a culture, but also its material,

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[30] *PhG*, §22. Taylor refers to 'hylomorphism' for the relation of matter to form that Hegel adopts from the Aristotelian tradition. Taylor*, Hegel*, 82.

[31] *PhG*, §808.

[32] *PhG*, §177.

[33] Terry Pinkard, *Hegel: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 217.

even topographical conditions. As the term *Volksgeist* suggests, a brief, general definition of *Geist* must be further specified according to Hegel's various hybrid terms.

Defining *Geist* as a rationally actualising social field is one way to indicate that for Hegel the divine persons are not equated with *Geist* without remainder. I therefore do not follow one prominent critic who refers equivocally to Hegel's '*Geist* or God'. Nevertheless, I acknowledge that Hegel tends to constrain God's manifestation within and as this variegated set of rational fields. Bonhoeffer's insistence on a 'disruption of the Word' should be understood against this backdrop, particularly his resistance to rational 'necessity'.

II. Bonhoeffer's Appropriation of 'Objective Geist'

Hegel's theory of 'objective *Geist*' provides Bonhoeffer with a concept that serves his ecclesiology. In *Sanctorum Communio,* Bonhoeffer adopts the notion of *Geist* as a collective 'spirit' or rationality that inheres within different groups, such as family, civil society, and state. Bonhoeffer's adoption of 'objective *Geist*' is the point at which he issues his clearest appreciation of Hegel.[34] The statement is also tied to his deepest critical point:

> The tragedy of all Idealist philosophy was that it never ultimately broke through to personal *Geist*. However, its monumental perception, especially in Hegel, was that the principle of *Geist* is something objective, extending beyond everything individual – that there is an objective *Geist*, the *Geist* of sociality, which is distinct in itself from all individual *Geist*. Our task is to affirm the latter without denying the former, to retain the perception without committing the error.[35]

This statement shows that Hegel provides Bonhoeffer with an alternative theory to 'atomistic' philosophies. Bonhoeffer's concern with individualism emerges at several points in his two dissertations as he refers to a nominalist position on the individual along with other views he terms 'atomist'.[36] At one point he states that Nominalism is utterly alien to Idealism, as it is a tradition that fails to see humanity in light of the unity of God.[37] Bonhoeffer's concern in nevertheless preserving 'individual' *Geist* leads him towards his critical proviso: 'our turning against Idealist theory is clear; equally clear, of course, is what we have to learn from it'.[38]

'What we have to learn' consists of a vital theory about the historical, institutional aspects of revelatory community. Objective *Geist* is both generated by

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[34] Bonhoeffer footnotes his reference with suggestions for pursuing this whole subject in Hegel's *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline*. See *DBW 1,* 62n29, as well as *DBWE 1*, 197n68.

[35] *DBWE 1*, 74; *DBW 1*, 46.

[36] *DBWE 1*, 38–39; *DBW 1,* 21–22.

[37] He references Seeberg for this claim. See *DBWE 2*, 49n18, 102; *DBW 2*, 43n18, 98.

[38] *DBWE 1*, 75n43; *DBW 1*, 47n43 [*SC-A*].

social formation and generative in turn: 'it has an active will of its own that orders and guides the wills of the members who constitute it and participate in it, and that takes shape in specific forms, thereby providing visible evidence that it has a life of its own'.[39] Objective *Geist* therefore provides a contrast to both 'unformed' and 'subjective' *Geister* by offering a 'structure' formed through the convergence of wills, a third entity that exists independently from them.[40] It is this 'metaphysical hypostatizing' that sociology has sought to move beyond, a movement Bonhoeffer describes as motivated by the 'fear of Hegel' and which therefore draws back from the challenge Hegel's notion of *Volksgeist* poses to individualism.[41] In contrast, Bonhoeffer claims that Christ's work resulted in a history that 'manifests the community's objective *Geist* in its being and becoming, in transmitted forms and structures, and in current vitality and activity'.[42]

What Bonhoeffer would have his readers 'turn against' is the Idealist tendency to relinquish individual *Geist* in favour of a corporate spirit. Notably, Bonhoeffer distinguishes Hegel as better at preserving the individual than other Idealists.[43] Nevertheless, Bonhoeffer claims that this problematic trend arises because Idealism lacks a 'concrete concept' of the person:

> Everywhere we find the same picture. The *Geist* is one, eternally identical, transpersonal, immanent in humanity; it destroys the concrete person, and thus prevents any concrete concept of community, instead replacing it with the immanent unity of *Geistenheit*.[44]

Bonhoeffer argues that this results from confusing the categories of the 'epistemological' and the 'social'. The social category, he claims, allows for the thinker to be shaken out of his claim to universal validity through a barrier that confronts the 'self-knowing and self-active *Geist*'.[45] Bonhoeffer therefore entrenches his account at the encounter of the 'You' – another self-conscious spirit, a 'being of alien consciousness'.[46] Rather than the intimate language of encounter of some personalist philosophy, the agonistic encounter of wills

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[39] *DBWE 1*, 209; *DBW 1*, 141.

[40] *DBWE 1*, 97–98; *DBW 1*, 62.

[41] *DBWE 1*, 102; *DBW 1*, 65.

[42] *DBWE 1*, 209; *DBW 1*, 140.

[43] Following Bonhoeffer's diagnosis that Fichte's 'great self' of the state requires too much surrender from individuals, he claims that Hegel is able to maintain a clearer sense for concrete individual life. See *DBWE 1*, 193–8n68; *DBW 1*, 130–133n68. Still, Bonhoeffer's concern is expressed by citing Hegel's statement that '*Geist* has reality, and individuals are its accidents'. *DBWE 1*, 103; *DBW 1*, 66. Bonhoeffer's reference is Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Natural Right and Political Science*.

[44] *DBWE 1,* 194–98; *DBW 1*, 131.

[45] His ensuing use of the term 'real dialectic' picks up Eberhard Grisebach's criticism of Idealist philosophy, prioritising instead the existential confrontation between persons. *DBWE 1*, 45; *DBW 1*, 26, cf. *DBWE 1*, 62n2.

[46] *DBWE 1*, 71; *DBW 1*, 44.

marks Bonhoeffer's sociality. Interpersonal encounter entails that 'each one wrestles to overcome the other', a phenomenon that reveals 'the fundamental significance of sociality of the human *Geist*'.[47]

In Bonhoeffer's estimation, such conflictual encounter is more dynamic than 'organic' or 'metaphysical' models of human sociality. While an appeal to confrontation between self-consciousnesses may challenge some Idealists, however, it does not so easily break with Hegel. Bonhoeffer does not reckon explicitly with Hegel's master-slave dialectic from the *Phenomenology*, for instance. Bonhoeffer's more effective response comes in his attempt to differentiate the dynamics of objective *Geist* according to differing theological 'states'. For instance, conflict is seen as either productive or stultifying depending on whether it occurs within the primal, sinful, or revelatory state.

Bonhoeffer's characterisation of *Geist* in the primal state offers his freest adoption of Hegel's social philosophy, as it was mediated to him through his doctoral supervisor Reinhold Seeberg.[48] Bonhoeffer speaks of *Geist* as a 'web of sociality' that involves both personal 'openness' and 'closure'.[49] As to *personal openness,* Bonhoeffer claims that there is no a- or pre-social centre; 'I and You' cannot be conceived apart from their unity.[50] Thinking and willing only come about through the '*reciprocal interaction with other minds* [*Geistern*]'.[51] Here Bonhoeffer demurs, asking if it is still intelligible to speak of I and You: 'Does not everything that appears individual merely participate in the one, supra-individual working of *Geist* [*Geistwirken*]?'[52] In response he states that personal being is also *structurally closed*. Using the image of a sea of surrounding *Geist*, Bonhoeffer states: 'The more the individual *Geist* develops, the more it plunges into the stream of objective *Geist*, the more it becomes a bearer of objective *Geist*, and this immersion is precisely what strengthens

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[47] *DBWE 1*, 72; *DBW 1*, 45.

[48] Bonhoeffer begins by crediting his doctoral supervisor Reinhold Seeberg with retrieving the notion of 'sociality' as inherent in primal state. Bonhoeffer notes that the first one to explore this is Schleiermacher, who only went so far as marking the union of self-consciousness and species consciousness. *DBW 1*, 64n1. Although a significant early influence, references to Seeberg wane after Bonhoeffer's dissertations, whereas he goes on engaging Hegel through the 1930s. For a fuller account of Seeberg's influence on Bonhoeffer, both positive and negative, see Rumscheidt, 'Significance', in Frick, ed., *Bonhoeffer's Intellectual Formation*, 202.

[49] *DBWE 1*, 65; *DBW 1*, 39.

[50] Bonhoeffer challenges the formulation of Fichte's synthesis of the realm of *Geist* for first conceiving an I and You separately and then proceeding to enquire about unity: 'The question of the alien psyche, the question how one finds one's way to the other, is not sufficiently informed by the fact of the *unity* of all activity of spirit'. *DBWE 1*, 75–76; *DBW 1*, 47–48.

[51] *DBWE 1*, 68–9; *DBW 1*, 42.

[52] *DBWE 1*, 73; *DBW 1*, 45.

the individual *Geistigkeit'*.[53] As Mawson notes, this description is hard to distinguish from Hegel's account of the 'deepening of individual subjectivity – "in and for itself" – through an existence that recognizes and is directed towards an other'.[54] Nevertheless, Bonhoeffer's qualified appreciation of Hegel is shown by the fact that he sets this initial account of *Geist* in the primal state – an implicit reminder of his claim that Idealism does not reckon with the pervasive effects of sin.[55] In light of primal conditions, Mawson states that Bonhoeffer comes to offer a 'Hegelianism without closure'.[56]

Given that the primal state has been irretrievably lost, Bonhoeffer's narration of objective *Geist* comes to be conditioned by the states of sin and revelation. These states are then conveyed through the scriptural figures of Adam and Christ, through whom Bonhoeffer seeks to develop *Geist*-language as a corrective to Hegel's account. In *Sanctorum Communio,* these figures are introduced through the notion of the 'collective person [*Kollektivperson*]'.[57] Nevertheless, even after the primal state Bonhoeffer's account of the revelatory community retains Hegel's language. Bonhoeffer speaks of the 'objective *Geist*' of the church as the bearer of the historical influence of Jesus Christ and the social influence of the Holy Spirit in cooperation.[58]

The Holy Spirit has a key role in 'actualising' the church in *Sanctorum Communio*, revealing Bonhoeffer's selective willingness to work in pneumatology.[59] While Christ's redemptive work through death is singular, Bonhoeffer states, it is of a piece with the Holy Spirit's extension into the empirical form of the church; 'In the resurrection [the church] is "created" only insofar as it has now run the course of its dialectical history'.[60] Then, in a description that previews later engagement with Hegel on this point, Bonhoeffer describes the transitional period between incarnate Christ and the outpouring of the Spirit in these words:

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[53] *DBWE 1*, 73; *DBW 1*, 46.

[54] Mawson, *Christ Existing as Community*, 101.

[55] Mawson, *Christ Existing as Community*, 129.

[56] Mawson, *Christ Existing as Community,* 104.

[57] In granting this key status to the collective person, Bonhoeffer sees himself to be preserving the core ideas of 'Romantic-Idealist philosophy' while sustaining his pursuit of a 'concrete philosophy'. This allows him to both incorporate the socio-ethical conflict that is the I-You relation, while also providing for the 'collective person' to confront its members in turn. *DBWE 1*, 105n142 [*SC-A*].

[58] *DBWE 1*, 210; *DBW 1*, 141. Bonhoeffer emphasises the 'magisterial' bearing of the Spirit in its confrontation with the human will in his early 'Seminar Paper on the Holy Spirit According to Luther', which treats Luther's Disputations of 1535–45. See *DBWE 9,* 325–370; *DBW 9*, 355–410.

[59] Mawson uses this treatment as a response to critics of Bonhoeffer's deficient pneumatology such as David Höhne and Rachel Muers. See Mawson, *Christ Existing as Community*, 185–86.

[60] *DBWE 1*, 152; *DBW 1*, 96.

The time between the resurrection and the ascension and the time after Pentecost are different insofar as in the first case the disciple-community lives in Christ as its Lord and life-principle, whereas in the second case Christ lives in the community. Formerly the disciple-community 'represented' Christ; now it possesses him as revelation, as *Geist*.[61]

Bonhoeffer then asks how *Christus-Geist* and 'the Holy Spirit of the sanctorum communio' are related to the objective *Geist* of the empirical church-community.[62] He holds that continued reference to the presence of Christ is needed because the Spirit is never conceived as bearing a body, citing Seeberg to dismiss the notion of the Spirit becoming 'incarnate' in the church, largely due to the complication of human sinfulness. How the revelatory community exists simultaneously as *peccatorum communio* leads Bonhoeffer to highlight the priority of the Word.

Although Bonhoeffer does not use the concept of 'objective Geist' as overtly in *Act and Being*, he carries on using the collective figures of Adam and Christ. In that work, Bonhoeffer argues that one cannot simply appeal to the primal state, or protology, in ethics: 'concepts of being, insofar as they are acquired from revelation, are always determined by the concepts of sin and grace, "Adam" and Christ'.[63] Lengthy treatments follow on the different modes of perception and social postures respective to *Sein in Adam* and *Sein in Christus*.[64] Representations of collectivity will also feature in his later polemics as a means of avoiding the temptation to vilify individual enemies of the church.[65]

III. Recovering the Word Before Geist

The previous section has shown Bonhoeffer's appropriation of objective *Geist,* from which he distinguishes the action of the '*Christus-Geist*'. Such distinction is primarily conveyed through his theologically rich concept of the 'Word'.[66] In *Sanctorum Communio*, the Word is the mediatorial action shared by Christ

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[61] *DBWE 1*, 152; *DBW 1*, 96.

[62] *DBWE 1,* 210; *DBW 1*, 141.

[63] *DBWE 2*, 32; *DBW 2*, 26.

[64] These are contrasted in part C of the work. *DBWE 2*, 136–161; *DBW 2*, 135–162.

[65] Bonhoeffer writes that the breach between the Confessing Church and the German Christians is not 'a judgment concerning Christian or unchristian persons, but rather one concerning the spirit of a church that has been recognized and condemned as an antichristian spirit…The issue here is not persons but churches, a matter of Christ and the Antichrist'. *DBWE 14*, 406; *DBW 14*, 391–2.

[66] Bonhoeffer's Christologically and scripturally determined concept of the Word will be capitalised to indicate its technical usage. Along with a basis in Luther's works, Bonhoeffer's rich conceptuality for the Word also draws on Barth's theology. For the early works that are the subject of this chapter, Bonhoeffer had access to Barth's *Romans* as well as the essays collected in *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, which he acquired in 1924–25. See Bethge, *Bonhoeffer*, 73.

and the Spirit which disrupts the constantly encroaching dynamic of sin. Claiming the primacy of theological categories, Bonhoeffer comes to speak of the necessity of recovering the 'Word before *Geist*'.

The Word provides, first, the mediated presence of Christ – a substitution for Hegel's predominant language of 'God' and, indeed, *Geist*. The 'Spirit-impelled' Word is the Word 'of the crucified and risen Lord of the church'.[67] It is the Word of Christ that makes present the 'actualised' community, for 'every word of Christ comes out of that community and exists only in it'.[68] Such actualisation requires, however, revelation of the enduring sin that Idealist accounts have not adequately fathomed. Bonhoeffer asserts:

> The 'Word' is the rock upon which the Idealist *Geist*–monism founders; for the Word implies that sin still exists, that the absolute *Geist* has to fight for its rule, that the church remains a church of sinners.[69]

Given that Bonhoeffer had spoken about the 'stream of *Geist*' in the primal state, the portrayal of the Word as a rock vividly renders disruption to the flow now contaminated by sin.

Bonhoeffer's retrieval of the 'external' Word becomes more pointed in *Act and Being*. He states that 'what reason can perceive from itself (as Hegel puts it) is revelation, and so God is completely locked into consciousness'.[70] Bonhoeffer continues that human 'reflection', as it takes the form of religion, is equated with revelation, a merger that means 'there is no room for faith and Word, if they are seen as entities contrary to reason'.[71] Bonhoeffer does not say that the faith-creating Word is necessarily and thoroughly 'counter-reason'; rather, he wants to re-establish its priority to *Geist*. Previewing his later recovery in the wake of Hegel's post-confessional philosophy, Bonhoeffer cites the claim from the Augsburg Confession that *Deus non potest apprehendi nisi per verbum*.[72] Bonhoeffer's confessional emphasis on the Word is an attempt to disrupt what he perceives as the pervasive assumption of Idealism, namely, 'the inmost identity of I and God', picking up from the expression that 'like is

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[67] *DBWE 1*, 157; *DBW 1*, 100.

[68] *DBWE 1*, 158; *DBW 1*, 101.

[69] *DBWE 1*, 212; *DBW 1*, 143.

[70] *DBWE 2*, 53; *DBW 2*, 56.

[71] *DBWE 2*, 53; *DBW 2*, 46.

[72] The reference is taken from Augsburg Confession 2,67, cited in *DBWE 2*, 53; *DBW 2*, 47. Rumscheidt suggests the translation 'God does not let the divine self be known or grasped save in and through the Word alone'. Compare Article IV, 67 in 'Apology of the Augsburg Confession', *The Book of Concord*, ed. and trans. Theodore Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 116.

known only through like'.[73] Hegel roots the claim to identity in creation ac-
cording to the 'image and likeness of God', whereas Bonhoeffer seeks to show
the extent of the loss of likeness brought about by the Fall.[74]

Returning to *Sanctorum Communio,* Bonhoeffer's emphasis on the Word
allows him to maintain the apparent contradiction of the Lutheran *simul.* Op-
posing a claim to 'organic' unity in the church, Bonhoeffer claims that the
Word must rhythmically disrupt, and rebuild, communal life. The Word's dis-
ruption entails both the encounter of the living Christ and the hearing of scrip-
ture, particularly in preaching.[75] This means that Bonhoeffer disavows
knowledge through 'speculative theories', which likely includes Hegel's social
philosophy, or any proof 'generally necessary' on the basis of creation. Rather,
'all statements are possible only on the basis of our understanding of the
church, i.e., from the revelation we have heard'.[76] The Word is the only fixed
point for the community, around which the church is broken up into the 'com-
munity-of-the-cross' and built up as the 'Easter-community'.[77]

The prioritisation of hearing over conceptual 'structure' is related to the
philosophical importance of language for Bonhoeffer. In a brief but suggestive
reference he states that '*the social phenomenon of language* is so closely re-
lated to thought that one may surely say that it is chiefly language that renders
thought possible – hence the ordering of language before thought, and word
before *Geist* (Hamann)'.[78] Reference to the work of J.G. Hamann comes in
Bonhoeffer's attempt to retrieve a scriptural framework that precedes the con-
ceptual field that is *Geist.*

The emphasis on language over shapes of *Geist* helps to explain Bonhoef-
fer's criticism of Idealist notions of time. He identifies the problem of time in
elaborating his concept of the person 'over against and beyond Idealism's un-
derstanding', which he characterises, from epistemology through ethics, as 'es-
sentially a timeless way of thinking'.[79] Idealism has no conception of move-
ment, Bonhoeffer continues, describing the dialectic of mind as abstract and
metaphysical, while that of ethics ought to be concrete.[80] Such concretion is

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[73] *DBWE 2*, 53; *DBW 2*, 47.

[74] Bonhoeffer will proceed to engage Hegel over Genesis 1–3 as an extension of this early
conviction that the Word precedes *Geist*, an interaction treated in Chapter Two.

[75] The encounter with Christ as the *Gegenlogos* will be examined in Chapter Three, while
the Word as preached scripture and Sacrament will be the subject of Chapter Four.

[76] *DBWE 1*, 65; *DBW 1*, 39.

[77] *DBWE 1*, 213–14; *DBW 1*, 144.

[78] Bonhoeffer does not appear to be consulting Hamann's texts directly; Clifford Green
traces the reference to Windelband's *History of Philosophy*. *DBWE 1*, 69n24; *DBW 1*, 42.

[79] Bonhoeffer notes that epistemology has had its effect on ethics. His original disserta-
tion included the statement that 'Idealism can also be beaten with its own weapons on this
point of the problem of time'. *DBWE 1*, 47n48.

[80] *DBWE 1*, 48–49; *DBW 1*, 28–29.

found, he claims, in the 'historical dialectic' of theological thinking about the church.

As with many aspects of Bonhoeffer's Idealist foil, the charge of timelessness is difficult to apply against Hegel, who is a profoundly historical thinker. It is likely best to understand Bonhoeffer's characterisation working with those elements in Hegel's philosophy that make a claim to a-temporality for the 'concept'.[81] In one memorable rendition, Hegel's concept is said to be 'de-tensed'.[82] Nevertheless, Hegel does not see 'absolute knowing' as an ultimately one-sided settlement, for he makes reference to a 'unity of thought and time', seeking to preserve several 'historicist' convictions.[83]

While Bonhoeffer would be suspicious of the elevation of a 'de-tensed' concept, his primary concern is with a *theological* history, that is, the determinative states named primal, sinful, and revelatory. For now, Bonhoeffer seeks to prise apart an a-temporal concept, which is to say, to reintroduce a 'real historical dialectic'. He does this in order to re-examine its theologically-narrated constitutive parts, arguing that:

> The concept of Christian community proves to be defined by an inner history. It cannot be understood 'in itself', but only in a historical dialectic. The concept is split within itself; its inner history can be seen in the concepts of *primal state, sin, and revelation*, all of which can be fully understood only when seen as intending community…It belongs to the essence of the church that it still bears the community of sin within itself, and is real only in constantly overcoming it.[84]

Bonhoeffer adds that 'in this respect we differ fundamentally from Idealism, for which origin and telos stand in real, unbroken connection, the synthesis of which is expressed in the concept of essence'.[85] It is clear that Bonhoeffer's stake in the authoritative form of the biblical witness, which Hegel largely characterises as sequential 'representation', will be a regular tension between them. That argument is inaugurated by Bonhoeffer's placement of the Word before *Geist*.

B. Revelation and Hiddenness in History

As Bonhoeffer adopted the phrase 'Word before *Geist*' from Hamann, this section begins with Hegel's own criticism of Hamann on the theme of revelation. This engagement shows Hegel's conviction that revelation entails not only a

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[81] Hegel describes time as 'the destiny and necessity of *Geist* that is not yet consummated within itself'. Once 'the concept grasps itself, it sublates its temporal form'. *PhG*, §801.

[82] The term is attributed to Cyril O'Regan in Adams, *Eclipse,* 201.

[83] The claim to unity occurs in *PhG* §803.

[84] *DBWE 1*, 58–9; *DBW 1*, 221 [*SC-A*].

[85] *DBWE 1*, 62; *DBW 1*, 36.

distinct scriptural testimony or confessional community but 'unfolds' into an integrated theory of social orders. I then turn to Bonhoeffer's reference to the 'revelation in hiddenness' in order to show how he locates revelation in the conditions of history while maintaining an element of eschatological reserve. This suits his more conflictual view of *Geist*, for in contrast to Hegel's identification of God in the community's 'reconciling yes', Bonhoeffer's divine-human intercessor is revealed even in the midst of obdurate divisions.

I. Hegel on the Unfolding of Revelation

Hegel's account of the 'appearing God' is motivated by trends in the 'apophaticism' of his day. Influenced by Romantic 'intuitionism', several thinkers had been questioning whether discursive knowledge of God was possible.[86] Hegel responds not only that such knowledge is possible, but that its revelatory scope expands beyond both the individual knower and the initially ecclesial practices of confession and forgiveness. There is thus a certain ambiguity to the term 'community' in his phrase 'God existing as community', for his other writings make plain that the conciliatory practice of the 'confessing' church expands into a larger political body.[87] This theme is picked up in a late address on the Augsburg Confession, where Hegel asserts that the Lutheran Reformation cannot be shut away from broader social organisation: 'if religion is reformed, the political, legal, and ethical system should also be reformed'.[88]

Given that Bonhoeffer makes reference to Hamann for his phrase 'Word before *Geist*', it is instructive to see Hegel's own criticism of Hamann's work as it clearly shows his conviction of an expanding revelatory scope. The issue of 'development' in thought is central to Hegel's review of Hamann's life and writings. On the one hand, Hegel acknowledges the profundity of Hamann's orthodoxy, which is expressed in 'the fiercest, most independent spirit'.[89] He affirms Hamann's challenge to approaches to scripture that do not recognise the subjective element in interpretation, observing that Hamann exposes 'Wolffian abstraction' and reveals that 'the so-called Enlightening which had

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[86] Hegel's differentiated responses to Jacobi, Schelling, and Schleiermacher, are summarised in O'Regan, *Heterodox Hegel*, 31–38.

[87] Bonhoeffer's variation 'Christ existing as community' therefore not only specifies the subject but also the community as that of the church. The critical editions suggest as much, translating *Gemeinde* as 'church-community'. I acknowledge the editors' interpretive acuity, though I do not think it best to further specify the term that Bonhoeffer left as it was, particularly in a language that commonly hybridises terms.

[88] See G.W.F. Hegel, 'Address on the Tercentenary of the Submission of the Augsburg Confession' (25 June 1830), in *Political Writings*, ed. L. Dickey and H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 189.

[89] G.W.F. Hegel, 'Hamanns Schriften', *Jahrbücher für wissenschaftliche Kritik*, nos. 77–80 and 107–14 (October and December 1828); *Hegel on Hamann*, trans. Lisa Marie Anderson (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2008), 6, 30.

the impudence to boast of the authority of the letter which it alone could *interpret* was playing a false game, since the meaning which exegesis brings is also an understood, subjective meaning'. On the other hand, Hegel frequently finds fault in Hamann's idiosyncratic and underdeveloped readings.[90] He sees Hamann's narrow applications of scripture to lack the scope of God's own work of revelation:

Hamann did not go to the effort which, if one may put it so, God did, albeit in a higher sense, to *unfold* [*entfalten*] in reality the balled core of truth which he is (ancient philosophers said of God that he is a balled sphere) into a system of nature, into a system of the state, of justice and morality, into a system of world history, into an open hand with fingers outstretched in order to grasp and pull unto himself the human spirit which is not merely an abstruse intelligence, a dull, concentrated weaving in itself, not merely a feeling and practicing, but rather a developed [*entfaltetes*] system of intelligent organization whose formal peak is thought.[91]

Instead of taking up this potential of thought, Hegel opines, Hamann remained in a stunted polemic, 'speaking at large and at random, against thought and reason in general'.[92] This distrust of reason meant that Hamann would not move from the scriptural base into proper doctrinal development, remaining with merely 'an intensive, subjective unity'.[93] To this extent, Hegel's critical review of Hamann highlights an alleged stubbornness with the Bible and orthodox confessions that locked him into a form of superstitious struggle with the Enlightenment.

Hamann's demurral at the 'unfolding' of thought requires further consideration. Though it is insufficient to pose the difference between Hegel and Hamann as that between 'secular' and 'confessional' uses of language, these terms serve to raise the issue of particularist language as distinguished from the integrated state about which Hegel would write.[94] On this matter, Hegel's review, which largely deals with Hamann's biography, does not delve deeply enough into their differences with respect to the linguistic basis of thought.[95] Nonetheless, Bonhoeffer's use of Hamann is primarily to support his own attempt to linger with the biblical-theological witness and ecclesial confessions. In short, Hegel's criticism of Hamann intimates an attempt at expansion with the phrase 'God existing as community' that Bonhoeffer will seek to call back to its ecclesial roots.

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[90] Among many comments on Hamann's form of devotion, Hegel mocks Hamann's claim that 'reading the Bible and praying is the work of the Christian'. See *Hegel on Hamann*, 12, 16, 30.

[91] *Hegel on Hamann*, 39.

[92] *Hegel on Hamann*, 39.

[93] *Hegel on Hamann*, 40.

[94] See Stephen Dunning, *The Tongues of Men: Hegel and Hamann on Religious Language and History* (Missoula, MN: Scholars Press, 1979).

[95] See Anderson, 'Introduction', in *Hegel on Hamann*, xv.

II. Bonhoeffer on 'Revelation in Hiddenness'

While the 'actualisation' of the Word is crucial for Bonhoeffer, his polemic against Idealism includes reference to the 'hidden' quality of revelation. Although the language of hiddenness is present from Bonhoeffer's first dissertation, the phrase 'revelation in hiddenness' occurs in a paper from Bonhoeffer's fellowship year in New York. There he contrasts truly historical revelation with the transparency of history before a certain form of rationality, that is, the manner in which 'revelation in ideas means revelation in openness'.[96] 'Revelation in hiddenness' marks a departure from Hegel's account of unfolding clarity, one of the reasons Bonhoeffer's phrase can appear, in the words of his professor at the time, 'a perverse expression'.[97] It is worth exploring the early appearance of this language, because Bonhoeffer will later respond critically to Hegel by speaking of Christ as the 'hidden centre of *Wissenschaft*' and the church as the 'hidden centre of *Weltgeschichte*'.

In *Sanctorum Communio*, Bonhoeffer's characterisation of hiddenness is elaborated in the relation between present historical form and eschatological reserve. This is part of his attempt to work between two dominant theological schools, an endeavour for which Hegel's 'God existing as community' proved indispensable. As Mawson observes:

Bonhoeffer's adoption of this Hegelian formulation indicates a desire to similarly identify the church as revelational in a strong sense. In other words, this formulation indicates Bonhoeffer's break from Barth's dialectical antithesis between revelation and the church, and also Troeltsch's sense in which religious values and ideals are on some level separable from contingent historical and social forms. Following Hegel, Bonhoeffer holds that the Christian community is integral to how God is revealing and working out his purposes in the world.[98]

Depicting these two points of reference as giving rise to one-sided impulses, Bonhoeffer claims that the *historicising* error confuses the church with religious community, while the *religious* error confuses it with the Realm of God itself. Just as for Hegel *Geist* is actualising because that which is rational is efficacious, so Bonhoeffer is not interested in speaking about the Word in a manner separate from socio-historical continuities. Asking what it is to believe in the church, Bonhoeffer replies that it is to believe 'that God has made the concrete, empirical church [*Kirche*] in which the Word is preached and the

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[96] The essay, 'The Christian Idea of God', is written in English. *DBWE 10*, 451; *DBW 10*, 429.

[97] The comment is written in the margin by Professor Eugene Lyman, from whom Bonhoeffer took two courses in Philosophy of Religion. *DBWE 10*, 457n49; *DBW 10*, 38n38. Bonhoeffer's professor went on to challenge him for drawing a dichotomy between a meaning, 'transparent to the eternal spirit', and the singularity of historical fact.

[98] Mawson, *Christ Existing as Community*, 198.

sacraments are celebrated to be God's own community [*Gemeinde*]'.[99] His initial attention is therefore on the religious error, which he charges with circumventing 'God's will that God's revelation, both in Christ and in the church, be concealed under the form of historical life'.[100]

It is in conflict, even unresolved conflict, that the God-human unity appears most clearly. The '*Geist*-unity of the community' is a synthesis willed by God, already established and hidden from human perception. Bonhoeffer states that it is a 'reality precisely where the seemingly sharpest outward antitheses prevail…When one person clashes with another, it might very well lead them to remember the One who is over them both, and in whom both of them are one'.[101] In terms Bonhoeffer draws from Luther, the church is 'not "unanimity in *Geist*", but the "unity of *Geist*"'.[102] After all, historical becoming is not sustained by romantic feelings of solidarity, but is paradoxically most evident where there is no other affinity between individuals. Bonhoeffer argues that it is precisely at the site of conflict – between 'Jew and Greek, pietist and liberal' – that this is most evident, for the opposed parties rhythmically confess faith, gather for communion, and intercede for one another in prayer.[103] Against the 'despisers of the historical nature of the church' to whom Bonhoeffer frequently alludes, the church is reticent in drawing boundaries too hastily as it seeks to bear with the hiddenness of this divine-human mode of working.[104]

As to the claim of revelation in hiddenness, Bonhoeffer builds an eschatological reserve into his attempt to convey the real and whole presence of Christ. Alongside his appropriation of Luther's saying that church members 'become Christ' to one another, he claims that they can only do this through faith. Here one encounters 'an eschatological prolepsis, where the You reveals itself to the I as another I…as Christ'.[105] Although ecclesial members know a 'real presence' in their exchanges, this remains proleptic: 'the unity is complete, but it is full of tension, and this points to an eschatological solution that is still hidden from us'.[106] This present, qualitative perception tends to relativise the thought that revelation could ultimately unfurl in history. With Hegel likely in view, Bonhoeffer states:

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[99] *DBWE 1*, 280; *DBW 1*, 191.

[100] *DBWE 1*, 126; *DBW 1*, 79.

[101] *DBWE 1*, 192; *DBW 1*, 129.

[102] *DBWE 1*, 193; *DBW 1*, 129–30.

[103] *DBWE 1*, 281; *DBW 1*, 192.

[104] Bonhoeffer favours the growth and individuation to come from the preached word in a broadly composed *Volkskirche*, rather than a seemingly solidified *Freiwilligkeitskirche*. The church will 'thus perhaps tend many a budding life that later become dangerous to it'. *DBWE 1*, 222–23; *DBW 1*, 151.

[105] *DBWE 1*, 213; *DBW 1*, 144.

[106] *DBWE 1*, 203; *DBW 1*, 136–7.

'We walk by faith, not by sight'. This remains true as long as there is history. For us, this leads to the basic insight that history, and consequently even the end of history, is incapable of bringing the ultimate solution. It further follows that the meaning of history cannot consist in a progressive development, but that 'every age is in direct relationship with God' (Ranke).[107]

It is only in the age to come that '*the objective* Geist *of the church really has become the Holy Spirit, the experience of the 'religious' community now really is the experience of the church, and the collective person of the church now really is 'Christ existing as church-community'*.[108] Bonhoeffer's freedom in referring to 'objective *Geist*' is therefore not evidenced in his discussion of the sinful or revelatory states; it is only in the fullness of the eschaton that union is consummate. Until then, the condition of hiddenness remains.

C. From 'Self-Confinement' to Reciprocal Confession in Hegel

So far, this chapter has traced Bonhoeffer's recovery of the 'Word before *Geist*' and his depiction of 'revelation in hiddenness'. The present section turns to the repeated charge, posed by Bonhoeffer and frequently adopted by critics, that Idealism expresses the 'incurvature of the self'. I argue that Bonhoeffer's critical line on his predecessor will not be understood unless the similarity in their accounts of reciprocal confession is acknowledged. In the *Phenomenology,* Hegel attaches great importance to verbal confession over and against the moral isolation shown by the 'beautiful soul'. Such 'confessing' community may still be 'confined', however, if moral isolation is overcome but an oppositional logic between human selves and divine agency remains. I therefore treat Hegel's challenge to such opposition in his account of the 'appearing God' as background to his later phrase 'God existing as community'.

I. Confessions of the Beautiful Soul

Hegel's account of the 'sociality of reason' involves an incisive criticism of the self-confined thinker. He then calls for acts of self-renunciation, or 'confession', in order for a state of 'like-mindedness' to come about.[109] The self

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[107] The parenthetical reference is to the historian Leopold von Ranke, who taught in Berlin in the nineteenth-century. *DBWE 1*, 282; *DBW 1*, 193.

[108] *DBWE 1*, 288; *DBW 1*, 198.

[109] The terms 'minded' and 'like-minded' are adopted from Pinkard.

that buffers itself from the demands of reasoned exchange is scrutinised through Hegel's characterisation of the beautiful soul.[110] He writes:

> It lacks the force to relinquish itself, that is, lacks the force to make itself into a thing and to suffer the burden of being. It lives with the anxiety that it will stain the glory of its inwardness by means of action and existence. Thus, to preserve the purity of its heart, it flees from contact with actuality, and it steadfastly perseveres in its obstinate powerlessness to renounce its own self, a self which has been intensified to the final point of abstraction … In this transparent purity of its moments it becomes an unhappy, so-called *beautiful soul* [*schöne Seele*], and its burning embers gradually die out, and as they do, the beautiful soul vanishes like a shapeless vapour dissolving into thin air.[111]

In Hegel's social logic, withdrawal leads towards the dissolution of the self, an ironic judgment because it is self-renunciation from which it fled.

As Hegel develops this characterisation, the isolation of the beautiful soul shows itself accompanied by 'judgmental consciousness' about others' moral actions. This is played out in his comment on the proverb 'no man is a hero to his valet'.[112] The valet sees how the master eats, drinks, and dresses, but this is not merely observation of the needs of a finite being. Rather, the valet imputes morally questionable motives to the contingency that compromises any action. In one example Hegel gives, if the master's action is accompanied by fame, then the valet judges 'this inwardness to be a *craving* for fame'.[113] The valet's imputation of motive is hypocritical because it 'pretends that such judgment is not merely *another manner* of being evil but is rather itself the *rightful consciousness* of action'.[114] 'Evil' here is a reference to acting according to 'one's own inner law and conscience'.[115] Given that the valet does not acknowledge he is also bound in this moral tension, such judgments show pusillanimity – an

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[110] This characterisation can be applied to Hegel's contemporaries, including Romantic 'ironists' such as Friedrich Schlegel, who highlighted the purity of one's own conscience in a given situation over and against the demand of general principles. Others might withdraw from action altogether in the 'rigorist' purity of their moral vision. The different types provide for 'the very modern frenzy' for 'counteraccusations of hypocrisy', setting the stage for a 'fully modern Christian *reconciliation* that overcomes the partiality in such fragmented points of view'. Pinkard, *Hegel*, 215–16.

[111] *PhG*, §658.

[112] *PhG*, §665. On a biographical note, Hegel once donned a valet's costume for a New Year costume ball. He claims to have acquired it on the spot from the court doorman. Pinkard, *Hegel*, 248.

[113] *PhG*, §665.

[114] *PhG*, §666.

[115] 'It in fact confesses to being evil by way of its affirmation that it acts according to *its* own inner law and conscience in opposition to what is recognised as universal'. *PhG*, §662.

apt term for contraction of the self.[116] The valet is a 'pure "particularist"', in Pinkard's designation.[117]

In Hegel's account, this judgmental consciousness is called to confess its own 'evil'.[118] In so doing, the confessant should expect a level of reciprocity, an acknowledgment of 'selfsameness' by the one who hears.[119] If this is rejected, the confessor shows not only self-deception but a refusal of community and its sustenance in language:

> But following on the admission of the one who is evil – *I am he* – there is no reciprocation of the same confession…the judging consciousness repels this community from itself; it is the hard heart which exists for itself and which rejects any continuity with the other … [the 'confessant'] sees the other as somebody who refuses to let his own inwardness step forth into the existence of speech and as somebody who contrasts the beauty of his own soul to the soul of one who is evil. He sees the judgmental consciousness as somebody who sets his own stiff-necked selfsame character in opposition to the confessing consciousness, and he sees the utter silence of someone who keeps himself locked up within himself, who refuses to be discarded vis-à-vis an other.[120]

The admission of the one who is evil – *I am he* [*Ich bin's*] – is likely a reference to Isaiah 47:10, in Luther's translation: *Ich bin's, und sonst keiner!* – 'I am, and there is no other!'[121] Identifying this allusion, Pinkard points out that the confessant speaks of 'having cleaved only to his own way of judging'.[122]

This confession is rebuffed by the hard heart that denies continuity, revealing its solipsism by refusing even to speak in response. The alternative to such refusal is the movement toward forgiveness, which must be verbalised; 'here once again we see language as the existence of *Geist* [*Sprache als Dasein des*

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[116] Hegel's *edelmütig* and *niederträchtig* are translated by Pinkard as 'noble-minded' and 'base', largely echoing A.V. Miller. Brandom renders *edelmütig* as 'magnanimous' and *niederträchtig* as 'pusillanimous', referring to them as Hegel's meta-attitudes towards the relations between norms (a term which mirrors Hegel's use of necessity). See Robert Brandom, *A Spirit of Trust: A Semantic Reading of Hegel's Phenomenology*. 5.13.p.110–1, cf.161. http://www.pitt.edu/~brandom/spirit_of_trust_2014.html (accessed July 31, 2014).

[117] Pinkard, *Hegel*, 248.

[118] Looking ahead to *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Hodgson notes that 'evil' becomes a rendition of 'sin'. See Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 151n12. Bonhoeffer uses the terms *Sünde* and *Böse* interchangeably in the chapter on confession in *Life Together*. See *DBWE 5*, 108; *DBW 5*, 93–94.

[119] *PhG*, §666.

[120] *PhG*, §667.

[121] Is. 47:10, NRSV: 'You felt secure in your wickedness; you said, "No one sees me." Your wisdom and your knowledge led you astray, and you said in your heart, "I am, and there is no one besides me."'

[122] Terry Pinkard, 'Semantic Self-Consciousness: Brandom on Hegel' (Essay presented at the conference *Language and Modernity*, Freie Universität Berlin, 19–21 June, 2014), 12.

Geistes]. Language is self-consciousness existing for others'.[123] The necessarily *spoken* word reveals that the hard heart of judgmental consciousness has been broken. This involves acknowledging its share in a history of evil as well as responsibility for the work of reparation.[124]

In this account of moral withdrawal and the alternative call to confession, Hegel employs a social logic derived from the heart of the Christian tradition. Though he does not share Hegel's interest in religion, Robert Brandom comments that the use of forgiveness to convey this process of recognition invokes the petition of the Christian prayer in which one asks for one's sins to be forgiven as one forgives the sins of others.[125] Brandom proposes the term 'trust' to convey the anticipatory aspect of a community venturing reciprocal confession, moving away from 'irony' by simultaneously acknowledging and invoking the authority of others to forgive.[126] In this account, Hegel's treatment of confession troubles demarcation between the epistemic and the ethical, categories Bonhoeffer will distinguish sharply.[127] The very process of knowing involves verbal, interpersonal relinquishment of erroneous and partial views.

Anticipating Bonhoeffer's own criticism, there are two reasons to question Hegel's depiction of confession and forgiveness. First, it can give rise to accounts of a 'Whiggish' process of revision, which Brandom presents along the lines of common law judges in deliberation, whereas institutional histories often tell a different story.[128] The assumption being challenged here is that a rational actor will knowingly and willingly renounce evil, that is, deficiency with respect to a truly common mind. Bonhoeffer will take a similar critical line by articulating a fuller concept of sin and therefore the unreliability of conscience.

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[123] *PhG*, §652.

[124] In Brandom's version, forgiveness looks back over the evil aspect in the confessant's history and recognises one's own share in it. This is extended into what he calls 'retro*activity*' in the concrete, practical response the confessor offers in restitution. Brandom, *Spirit of Trust*, 5.14. 225–9.

[125] The religion chapter of the *Phenomenology* comments back on a development already completed in the Spirit chapter, in which it is presented 'in a more perspicuous form'. Brandom, *Spirit of Trust*, 5.14. 166–7, 219–20.

[126] Brandom, *Spirit of Trust,* 5.15. 220–1.

[127] Bonhoeffer's claim that with regards to reality the 'social' category cannot be derived from the 'epistemological', for this would be to change it into a different category. *DBWE 1*, 45; *DBW 1*, 26.

[128] Pinkard points out the stark contrast shown by the historic institution of such a procedure: 'After violently subjecting the Anglo-Saxon king and his subjects at Hastings, William sent out judges to various parts of his new domain to establish a "common law". There the object was not to rationally extend some old rulings but to displace the old rulings root and branch and replace them with a new authority, one backed up by more than semantic sanctions. There was little to no "forgiveness" practiced there.' Pinkard, 'Self-Consciousness', 7–8.

Second, and relatedly, Hegel shows an ambivalence about, even attraction to, the figure of the 'beautiful soul'. At one point, Hegel employs the figure with reference to the earlier harmony of Greek politics before the fragmentary nature of modern life. In his 1809 Nuremberg address on *Gymnasium* education, Hegel advocates training in classical Greek sources by casting their value in secularised religious terms.[129] He speaks of the higher paradise of *Geist*, characterising it through the image of the beautiful virginal bride that had been associated with the 'beautiful soul' in Germany, particularly Württemberg. Hegel's appreciative usage shows that, in spite of his earlier criticism, he remains somewhat in thrall to the persona.[130]

II. Knowledge of the Appearing God

The section on confession and forgiveness from the *Phenomenology* leads to a form of *Geist* that reveals the life of God in the midst of community. Confession shows that the 'hard heart' has been broken and that universality has found new recognition. As a result, 'the wounds of *Geist* heal and leave no scars behind'.[131] 'Partitioned thought' is renounced as 'this first subject, which casts its actuality aside, makes itself into a sublated 'this subject' [*aufgehobenen Diesen*], and thereby exhibits itself in fact as the universal'.[132] The 'word of reconciliation' is 'existing *Geist*', which is to describe 'a reciprocal recognition which is absolute *Geist*'.[133] God's appearance occurs in the knowing:

> The reconciling yes, in which both I's let go of their opposed existence, is the existence of the I expanded into two-ness, which therein remains selfsame and which has the certainty of itself in its complete self-emptying and in its opposite – It is God appearing [*der erscheinende Gott*] in the midst of those who know themselves as pure knowledge [*Wissen*].[134]

This is a strong example of Hegel's account of *Geist* as a rationally actualising social field – in this case, through the verbal acts of confession and reconciliation – within which God appears.[135] The 'appearing God' of the *Phenomenology* provides a resonant background for Hegel's phrase 'God existing as community' in the later *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*.

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[129] In his words, classical works offer a 'profane baptism' into 'taste and science'. The address is cited and summarised in Pinkard, *Hegel*, 283–5.

[130] As noted in Pinkard, *Hegel*, 284.

[131] *PhG*, §669.

[132] *PhG*, §670, alt.

[133] *PhG*, §670.

[134] *PhG*, §671.

[135] God's appearing is in the 'minded' community, which implies the limitation of theology attempted through mere nature. Hegel makes this explicit in *LPR III*, 120–21; *VPR III*, 89–90.

In the *Lectures* that take place in the 1820s, Hegel challenges a firm barrier between academic disciplines by claiming that philosophy is, in its own peculiar way, *Gottesdienst*, or 'worship'.[136] Hegel's interest in the 'life of God' perceived in rational, communal processes of knowing continues as he argues repeatedly against the conviction of the age 'that God is revealed immediately in the consciousness of human beings', an immediacy then equated with religion.[137] The further reason for this strong claim about philosophy is Hegel's challenge to theology's own self-alienation, as seen in his portrayal of the theologian as the 'countinghouse clerk or cashier', bustling around with the 'alien truths of others'.[138] Such activity leads, he claims, to the mere 'knowledge *that* God is' and an arbitrary extension into ethics.[139] In contrast, Hegel articulates *Geist* both philosophically – as a 'self-manifesting, a being for *Geist*' – and, 'to put the point more theologically, God's *Geist* is [present] essentially in his community; God *is Geist* only insofar as God is in his *community*'.[140]

As Hegel is often accused of conflating God with community in such statements, it is worth noting his early salvo against those who protest on behalf of a related set of distinctions. Such interventions cannot be simply made against philosophy, he claims: 'as if anyone who has not totally neglected his education would not know that the finite is not the infinite, that subject is different from object, immediacy different from mediation'.[141] The point is to think through such basic oppositions:

> We cannot point out earth apart from the heavens, and vice versa. Immediate and mediated knowledge are *distinct* from one another, and yet only a very modest investigation is needed in order to see that they are *inseparable*. Hence, before one is ready to proceed to philosophy of religion, one must be done with such one-sided forms.[142]

Hegel thus introduces his term of art: 'Here is a unification in which the difference is not extinguished, but all the same it is sublated'.[143] This argument has been picked up by recent critics who argue against a loss of distinction

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[136] The first part, 'The Concept of Religion', regularly states the distinction between philosophy and theology, even as Hegel seeks to challenge a firm division by appealing to their common interest in 'eternal truth'. *LPR I*, 79; *VPR I*, 64.

[137] Hodgson notes that Jacobi is primarily in view, although Schleiermacher's project is also likely intended. *LPR I*, 85–86; *VPR I*, 70.

[138] Relatedly, he goes on to speak about an adherence to the 'letter' in study of the Bible, rather than the animating spirit through which it is grasped. *LPR 1*, 92–94; *VPR I*, 76–77.

[139] *LPR 1*, 93; *VPR I*, 77.

[140] *LPR I*, 90; *VPR I*, 74.

[141] *LPR I*, 97; *VPR I*, 80.

[142] *LPR I*, 98; *VPR I*, 81.

[143] *LPR I*, 99; *VPR I*, 82.

between such pairings as divine and human agency, suggesting a 'Chalcedonian logic' at work, that is, a logic of 'distinctness-in-inseparable unity'.[144]

True to Hegel's characterisation of *Geist*, such 'Chalcedonian logic' is actualising, which is to say that it finds expression in ethical life. The emphasis on ethics comes in a lecture that reprises the theme of confession and forgiveness. Hegel depicts the experience of '*remorse* and *repentance* in the inmost self', which involves a turn from 'the passions and intentions of particularity'.[145] While this necessarily has its start within, it does not end there:

> This experience of nothingness can be a bare condition or single experience, or it can be thoroughly elaborated. If heart and will are earnestly and thoroughly cultivated for the universal and the true, then there is present what appears as *ethical life*. To that extent ethical life is the most genuine cultus.[146]

Hegel sees the church's particular claim of reconciliation to spread outwards. This is not to let go of its founding realisation, however, for he quickly states that 'consciousness of the true, of the divine, of God, must be directly bound up with it'.[147] As a result he claims that philosophy is itself a 'continual cultus'.

The ensuing depiction of 'God existing as community' has to be read in light of these claims, for the community, however specific in its Lutheran Protestant – which is to say, modern – form proceeds to a unifying state settlement. Such elaboration had not happened in the time of early Christianity, in Hegel's view, for there were culturally limiting factors surrounding Christ's appearance. Jesus is therefore styled as a revolutionary who inaugurates the Kingdom of God in stark opposition to Jewish and Roman forms of life.[148] Though vital and sure to prevail, the new religion Jesus preaches 'does not actually exist as a community'.[149] It is therefore predictable that Jesus' life ends in an event of 'civil dishonour', although even this event would later be 'transfigured'.[150]

Besides, the implication runs, if one were looking for confirmation one should look to the community in which Jesus' aims are realised. In Hegel's famous line, 'the community itself is existing *Geist*, *Geist* in its existence, God existing as community'.[151] This is the third moment, he continues, culminating aspects of the first (universality, not yet disclosed) and second (concrete, other-being) moments in the broader schema of the lectures. Although these 'moments' are loosely associated with Father and Son, they are not a clear 'modal'

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[144] Drawing on the work of Martin Wendte, Adams uses Chalcedon as a model for describing Hegel's logic of 'distinctness-in-inseparable unity', opposing this to Manichean forms of thought. Adams, *Eclipse*, 6, 22–23.

[145] *LPR I*, 194; *VPR I*, 335.

[146] *LPR I*, 194; *VPR I*, 335. This phrase is marked in *NL-VPR III*, 236.

[147] *LPR I*, 194; *VPR I*, 335.

[148] *LPR III*, 194–95; *VPR III*, 150–51.

[149] *LPR III*, 194; *VPR III*, 150.

[150] *LPR III*, 205; *VPR III*, 161.

[151] *LPR III*, 256; *VPR III*, 198.

sequence. The complexity is clear in how the second moment is narrated 'such that the external appearance when inverted becomes the first moment and is known as the divine Idea, the identity of the divine and the human'.[152] The third moment, Hegel continues, 'is this consciousness of God as *Geist*. This *Geist* as *existing* and *realising* itself is the community'.[153]

Hegel's dual emphasis on the reasoning character of the community and its need for confession is summarised well by Rowan Williams. Williams explains that for Hegel the 'life of God' is expressed in the movement towards a community marked by 'the making of rational connections, the overcoming of otherness not by reduction to identity but by the labour of discovering what understanding might be adequate to a conflictual and mobile reality without excising or devaluing its detail'.[154] Williams ends this particular essay with reference to the social practices of a religious tradition 'whose mark of godliness is self-critical vigilance (what used to be called repentance, I think)'.[155] Williams' parenthetical reference raises the theological evocation that lies behind much of Hegel's thought, a theological background that Bonhoeffer will seek to retrieve.

D. Bonhoeffer's Turn to Intercession

This section begins by identifying Bonhoeffer's interest in auricular confession, both private and communal, throughout his writings. This broader interest sets his turn towards the act of intercessory prayer in *Sanctorum Communio* into sharp relief. Attending to the context of Bonhoeffer's explicit modification of Hegel's 'God existing as community', I argue that the change of subject, from God to Christ, is related to his change of act, from reciprocal confession to intercessory prayer. These turns together express Bonhoeffer's Christological specification, namely that the revelatory community is bound together by divine-human intercession and an ensuing ethic of standing in the place of another. Such an emphasis is required given Bonhoeffer's charge that Idealism does not take seriously enough the obduracy of sin.

I. Confessions of the Privately Virtuous – and the 'Confessing Church'

As Hegel before him, Bonhoeffer sees confession as constitutive of the revelatory community. In his later *Ethics,* he calls for a recovery of the 'divine office

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[152] *LPR III*, 257; *VPR III*, 198.

[153] *LPR III*, 257; *VPR III*, 198.

[154] Rowan Williams, 'Hegel and the gods of Postmodernity', *Shadow of Spirit: Postmodernism and Religion*, ed. Philippa Berry and Andrew Wernick (London: Routledge, 1992), 76.

[155] Williams, 'Hegel and the gods', 79.

of private confession' in order to reclaim a concrete ethics.[156] In the same work, Bonhoeffer criticises the moral actor who not only distances herself from public life but who judges others who take up such involvement. In one of six ethical orientations subject to Bonhoeffer's criticism, the 'privately virtuous' person is faulted for isolation:

In flight from public controversy this person or that reaches the sanctuary of a *private virtuousness* … in voluntarily renouncing public life, these people know exactly how to observe the permitted boundaries that shield them from conflict. They must close their eyes and ears to the injustice around them. Only at the cost of self-deception can they keep their private blamelessness clean from the stains of responsible action in the world.[157]

If boundaries are not crossed and otherness remains absolute, the ensuing moral isolation becomes self-destructive or hypocritical. This buffered self bears likeness to Hegel's 'beautiful soul', particularly as Bonhoeffer goes on to show the attendant contempt she holds for others.

Bonhoeffer's emphasis on reciprocal confession can be traced back through his works. In *Life Together*, Bonhoeffer invokes Luther to comment that the Christian life is 'unthinkable' without confession to another person.[158] This is not solely confession to a minister's hearing, but a broad charge among believers. In terms reminiscent of Hegel's symptoms of the hard heart, Bonhoeffer warns that if only one person hears confessions without himself confessing to another, he is liable to exercise a kind of spiritual tyranny in the community.[159]

The importance of confessing one's sin to another is so critical that Bonhoeffer intertwines it with the 'confession' of doctrine. The verb *bekennen* thus takes on a dual meaning in his work: the first is to a scripturally derived theological statement of belief, a *pro*fession such as that adopted as the distinguishing mark of the 'Confessing Church' over and against the 'German Christians'; the second is to the admission of sin.[160] This wordplay is particularly bold in an essay in which the international recognition of his church body was at stake:

The Confessing Church [*Die Bekennende Kirche*] does not approach confessionally different churches as its mortal enemies who are intent on its demise; rather, it enters into such contact bearing its own share of the guilt [*Schuld*] for the inner turmoil of Christendom, enters into that guilt, and, amid all false theologies it may encounter along the way, acknowledges first of all its own guilt and the inadequate power of its own proclamation. It acknowledges God's incomprehensible ways with the church. It is terrified by the serious nature of any church

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[156] 'The Protestant church lost its concrete ethics when ministers saw themselves no longer permanently confronted with the questions and the responsibilities of the confessional'. *DBWE 6*, 395; *DBW 6*, 399.

[157] *DBWE 6*, 79–80; *DBW 6*, 65–66.

[158] *DBWE 5*, 114; *DBW 5*, 99.

[159] *DBWE 5*, 116, 124; *DBW 5*, 100, 139. When Bonhoeffer directed the seminary at Finkenwalde he ensured that each of his trainees were paired to act as confessors, with student Eberhard Bethge serving as his own. See Marsh, *Strange Glory*, 235–7.

[160] This latter meaning is also specifically indicated by the verb *beichten*.

schism and by the burden such would impose on subsequent generations. It hears here the summons and admonition to accept responsibility and penitence. Given this situation, it will experience the entire distress of its own decision anew, and its own confession here will first of all be a *confession of sin* [*Sündenbekenntnis*].[161]

In this dual use of *bekennen,* Bonhoeffer expresses that the church is composed through confession in two forms: doctrinal content and corporate penitence.[162] It is striking that at the onset of the *Kirchenkampf* Bonhoeffer challenges an appeal to the 'purity' of the Confessing Church, recognising the dangers of a beautiful corporate soul.

II. Constitutive Intercession and the Simultaneity of Sin

Although Bonhoeffer emphasises auricular confession throughout his *oeuvre*, it is important to note its relative absence surrounding his most prominent use of the phrase 'Christ existing as community'. Near the end of *Sanctorum Communio* Bonhoeffer anticipates the emphasis on confession shown in later works by noting, 'I consider it the most important task for today to make private confession of sin [*Privatbeichte*] a living source of strength for the church community'.[163] Surprisingly, however, Bonhoeffer relegates this claim to a footnote and the main body of text contains little elaboration on the act. In the most likely section for confession to feature, directly prior to the forgiveness of sins between Christians, Bonhoeffer instead gives an extended treatment of intercessory prayer.

It is significant that the only time Bonhoeffer attributes the phrase 'Christ existing as community' to Hegel occurs as he elides verbal confession for the work of intercession. In an addition made while preparing the dissertation for publication, Bonhoeffer states: 'when one person intercedes in the name of Christ on behalf of the other, the whole community – which actually means "Christ existing as community", to use a modification of the Hegelian concept – participates in that person's prayer'.[164] The ensuing treatment shows that an acknowledged lack in Hegel's project does not keep Bonhoeffer from appropriating his predecessor's attempt to think divine and human agency together.

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[161] 'The Confessing Church and the Ecumenical Movement' appeared in August 1935 in the periodical *Evangelische Theologie.* See *DBWE 14*, 407, cf. 393–94n1; *DBW 14*, 393.

[162] Bonhoeffer's dual sense of 'confession' holds together what Andrew Shanks divides in his 'neo-Hegelian' theology. Shanks employs a central contrast between 'truth-as-correctness' and 'truth-as-openness'. Unsurprisingly, he allows that Nazi Germany is a case in which this breaks down, in which 'openness' meets its limits and 'reluctant schism' is warranted. See Andrew Shanks, *A Neo-Hegelian Theology: The God of Greatest Hospitality* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2014)*,* 25.

[163] *DBWE 1*, 248; *DBW 1*, 170 n117. In her recent Ph.D. thesis at the University of Cambridge, Nicola Wilkes takes this claim as indicative that confession is a central concern in Bonhoeffer's work.

[164] *DBWE 1*, 189; *DBW 1*, 126.

His approach can be contrasted with those critics who merely identify the difficulty of envisioning petitionary prayer in light of Hegel's project.[165]

The act of intercession leads to a core theological, and derivatively ethical, posture: *Stellvertretung*, or 'vicarious representative action'. Reciprocal confession is elided and not taken as a motivating factor. Rather, in the cases mentioned – Moses and Paul for the people of Israel, the church on behalf of the unknown sinner – there is no indication that confession is forthcoming. The displacement of confession suits Bonhoeffer's narration of the prior intervention of God-in-Christ. His language of vicariousness first emerges from the biblical concept of how God might regard a whole community *as if* all had repented.[166] It is also the first instance of the key refrain he elsewhere attributes to Hegel: 'It is "Adam", a collective person, who can only be superseded by the collective person "Christ existing as community"'.[167]

The act of intercession involves Bonhoeffer's own form of expansion beyond ecclesial bounds, even in this allegedly 'ecclesiocentric' book and well before the experimental prison letters. The act is part of the 'self-renouncing work' that constitutes community, elaborated as part of Bonhoeffer's discussion of the church's 'being-for-one-another [*Das Füreinander*]'. This involves advocacy to the extreme point of being willing to curse oneself out of communion with God for the sake of others.[168] Drawing on the scriptural accounts of how Moses and Paul were willing to set themselves outside of communion with God for the sake of their people, Bonhoeffer writes that this is 'the abyss into which intercession can lead the individual'.[169] Given his identification with Moses near the end of his life, having assumed guilt within his nation and facing the prospect of dying before seeing the land on the other side of war, this early reference foreshadows the cost of his own action.[170]

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[165] As one example, Taylor admits to being baffled at the form of Hegelian prayer, picturing it along the lines of contemplating identity rather than taking the form of petition. Taylor, *Hegel*, 494. O'Regan asserts that 'one cannot pray' in the Hegelian system. O'Regan, *Anatomy*, 131.

[166] This is in response to Abraham's intercession for Sodom. *DBWE 1*, 120; *DBW 1*, 75.

[167] The verb rendered 'to supersede' is *ablösen*. *DBWE 1*, 121, alt.; *DBW 1*, 72.

[168] As it is said of Bonhoeffer's forebear, 'so nervous is Luther of founding justification *in nobis* that he speaks of a willingness to be damned as the one assurance of salvation'. See Matt Jenson, *The Gravity of Sin: Augustine, Luther, and Barth on the homo incurvatus in se* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 78.

[169] In so doing, Paul is an example of obedience 'to the command that we should unreservedly surrender ourselves to our neighbour. But precisely for this very reason, he remains where he wishes God to ban him from, namely in the most intimate community with God'. *DBWE 1*, 185; *DBW 1*, 123.

[170] Bonhoeffer's poem 'Death of Moses' reveals how he identified with the biblical figure. See Craig Slane, 'The Death of Moses: Why Moses?' in Bernd Wannenwetsch, ed., *Who Am I? Bonhoeffer's Theology through his Poetry* (London: T&T Clark 2009), 228–230.

Even in a figure unknown to the one praying, such as the case of prayer for the 'sins of the unknown sailor', Bonhoeffer writes that 'in intercession I step into the other's place and my prayer, even though it remains my own, is nonetheless prayed out of the other's affliction and need. I really enter into the other, into the other's sin and affliction'.[171] This is no gift of empathy, for one finds such vicariousness through recognising a common culpability for the sins of the world, the 'bonds of guilt' that are most concentrated in the execution of Christ.[172] In this way, intercessory prayer is the spoken word that enacts the unfolding consciousness of the *peccatorum communio,* the communion of sinners. It is a bold politics of identity.[173]

Bonhoeffer's treatment of intercession employs Luther to place pressure on Hegel's syntax. He makes the provocative statement that 'in our intercession we can become a Christ to our neighbour'.[174] Bonhoeffer also characterises the church's posture of being 'with' and 'for' one another as 'structural' realities, including the bold statement from Luther that 'we are God through the love that makes us charitable to our neighbour'.[175] As Joachim von Soosten points out, 'this inseparable connection between ecclesiology and Christology, which already is present in Luther, can be pressed by Bonhoeffer to the point where the two become indistinguishable'.[176] Bonhoeffer nevertheless sounds his recurrent caveat, common in his treatment of Idealism, that this is not to imply 'any mystical notions of blurring the boundaries of the concrete reality of I and You', even if desire is singular and 'the positions resulting from sin are, as it were, exchanged, or transformed'.[177]

Intercession across conflict becomes a stronger, more tensile bond for community members. It also keeps at the fore the singular divine-human intercessor in whom the community is held together, its actualisation of that reconciliation notwithstanding. The shift to intercession allows Bonhoeffer to simultaneously

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[171] *DBWE 1*, 186–7; *DBW 1*, 124.

[172] *DBWE 1*, 187; *DBW 1*, 124–5.

[173] Guido De Graaff considers the resonances between a Christological account of intercession and the notion of 'civic sacrifice'. With a view to longstanding structural injustices, particularly those related to race, he queries how intercession relates to the question of who 'goes first'. See Guido De Graaff, 'Intercession as Political Ministry', *Modern Theology* 32, no. 4 (October 2016), 504–521.

[174] *DBWE 1*, 187; *DBW 1*, 125.

[175] *LW* 11:412; *WA* 10/1:100, as cited in *DBWE 1*, 178–9; *DBW 1*, 117–18. Bonhoeffer also makes reference to the work of then-contemporary Berlin church historian Karl Holl, who claimed that the reformer drew a strong link between Christ's justifying work and the communal structure of the church. For the broader background of the Luther Renaissance in which Holl was a leading figure, see James Stayer, *Martin Luther, German Saviour: German Evangelical Theological Factions and the Interpretation of Luther, 1917–1933* (Montréal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000).

[176] von Soosten, 'Afterword', *DBWE 1*, 293–4; *DBW 1*, 310.

[177] *DBWE 1*, 179–80; *DBW 1*, 118.

articulate the 'hidden' quality of the revelatory community, its expression of Christ even in contingent, sinful history. Finally, the move avoids the risk of *Geist* seeming a new form of 'immediacy' that foregoes conflict.[178] In the Hegel seminar it is observed that, as thinking is itself mediation, the mediator becomes 'superfluous' for Hegel, an observation Bonhoeffer seems to grasp already in this first dissertation.[179]

The act of intercession implies an ongoing dynamic of sin that obstructs communal bonds and requires intervention. This frank theological admission is a reaction to that which Bonhoeffer perceives to be missing in Idealism. He claims that the Idealist concept of 'imperfection', as expressed in Kant, cannot satisfactorily account for acts of 'intentional evil', even within the church.[180] Bonhoeffer also resists the 'Hegelian position', which he takes to imply that the empirical church-community's action 'as a whole' amounts to the action of the Holy Spirit, so opening God to the objective *Geist*'s susceptibility to evil.[181] He states:

> For the Lutheran concept of the church it is crucial that the *sanctorum communio* always has been a community of sinners and remains so. This fact is ultimately the reason why the Hegelian theory is untenable. Absolute *Geist* does not simply enter into the subjective *Geister*, gathering them up into the objective *Geist*; rather, the Christian church is the church of the Word, that is, of faith. Real sanctification is only a precursor of the last things. Here we still walk in faith, which means we can see nothing but our sin, and accept our holiness in faith.[182]

While the community has been given a new direction in Christ's activity, Bonhoeffer refers to the fact that sinfulness remains active, even in church councils.[183] He claims that such an understanding has been a new direction in recent theology, with likely reference to the work of Karl Holl.[184]

Such statements show Bonhoeffer applying the dynamism of the Lutheran *simul* not only to the individual sinner but also to the community as the *peccatorum communio*. The church is revelatory insofar as it lives out a historical dialectic: bearing the divisive effects of sin, coming to perceive its reality by faith, and actively turning away. In short, the church is the body of Christ 'only

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[178] Bonhoeffer will pick up this theme in *Discipleship*, where, writing against claims to 'psychological immediacy' between church members, Bonhoeffer insists that intercession is 'the most promising way to another'. *DBWE 4*, 96; *DBW 4*, 91.

[179] *HS*, 11.

[180] Bonhoeffer claims that Luther's concept of the *iustus peccator* remained foreign to Kant. *DBWE 1*, 210–14; *DBW 1*, 142–45.

[181] *DBWE 1*, 214; *DBW 1*, 144–45.

[182] *DBWE 1,* 212; *DBW 1*, 143.

[183] *DBWE 1*, 214; *DBW 1*, 145.

[184] See *DBWE 1*, 213n268, cf. Bethge, *Bonhoeffer*, 68.

insofar as God's own self is at work in the act of repentance'.[185] Further qualifying his use of Hegel's phrase, Bonhoeffer claims that only the community that is 'holy in its sinfulness' can stand as 'Christ existing as community'.[186]

The acknowledgement of sin shows the other way in which Bonhoeffer construes revelation to be hidden in the *peccatorum communio*. The presence of sin does not entail the absence of revelation but rather reveals the one who exists as sin-bearer, liberating the community to both acknowledge its own guilt and learn to bear the guilt of others. Such acknowledgement opens the Christ-community to a new form of social basic-relation: *Stellvertretung,* 'vicarious representative action' – first, by Christ alone, then derivatively by members for one another. Such a dynamic has to be kept in mind in Bonhoeffer's most assured deliveries of his core, Hegel-inspired refrain, such as when he states that 'the church is the presence of Christ in the same way that Christ is the presence of God. The New Testament knows a form of revelation: "Christ existing as church-community"'.[187]

Revelation in the sinful community, not revelation in human persons 'as such', provides texture to accounts of how Bonhoeffer modifies Hegel. As Marsh argues with respect to *Act and Being*, Hegel's account of divine self-knowing is appropriated by Bonhoeffer with two differences: first, the freedom of God is preserved against a notion of the community as prerequisite for self-knowledge; second, the 'transsubjective divine self-understanding' is in the complex operations of community, apart from any individual act or the dialectical transcendence of the Word alone.[188] Marsh makes little reference to the obstructive effects of sin as revelation occurs over and through communal reality.[189] The present account seeks to rectify this gap by tracing Bonhoeffer's counter-emphasis on how intercession constitutes the church.

E. 'Suspending' Reflection in *Act and Being*?

Having traced Bonhoeffer's turn to intercession in *Sanctorum Communio*, this final section dwells on his terms surrounding how revelation is 'received' in *Act and Being*. I focus on a paired distinction for types of consciousness that has been claimed as a departure from Hegel. These are presented as ways of understanding '*how human beings stand in light of revelation*'.[190] Bonhoeffer differentiates 'direct consciousness' from the 'consciousness of reflection': the

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[185] *DBWE 1*, 214; *DBW 1*, 144.

[186] *DBWE 1*, 214; *DBW 1*, 144.

[187] *DBWE 1*, 141; *DBW 1*, 87.

[188] Marsh, *Reclaiming Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 100–1.

[189] This criticism is made in Mawson, *Christ Existing as Community,* 171.

[190] *DBWE 2*, 28; *DBW 2*, 23.

former is 'purely "outwardly directed"' and the latter takes consciousness as its own 'object of attention'.[191] The pair is then associated with the terms *actus directus* and *actus reflexus*.[192] Bonhoeffer's elaboration shows his concern with how reflexive thought can displace the intentionality involved in act, drawing again on the language of 'confinement-to-the-self [*In-sich-bleiben*]'.[193]

Hegel appears very interested in what Bonhoeffer calls the 'reflexive act'. In the Preface to the *Phenomenology*, Hegel speaks of the subject in a process of '*self-restoring* sameness, the reflective turn into itself in its otherness'.[194] Rather than having original or immediate unity, the subject undergoes 'the coming-to-be of itself, the circle that presupposes its end as its goal and has its end for its beginning'.[195] Although 'otherness' is referenced, as well as the necessity of 'self-emptying' in cognition, critics of Hegel frequently claim that these are merely passing moments in a self-directed movement that obviates genuine difference.

Bonhoeffer criticises the concept of *Geist*, for all its dynamism, as a sign of the incurvature of reason, singling out Hegel among Idealists. He laments a certain loss of Kantian reserve, which allowed for the 'suspension' of thought:

If in original transcendentalism the human *Geist* was suspended between transcendence and, consequently, irrevocably in reference to [it], now the movement of *Geist* is turned in upon itself. In Luther's words, this is *ratio in se ipsam incurva*. *Geist* has, in principle, come to rest. Only in the power of remaining in itself is *Geist* enabled to step outside of itself. Accordingly, *Geist* remains fully in control of itself in this movement and never gets into the embarrassing position of merely 'being in reference to transcendence'.[196]

The reference to Luther's description of *reason* as curved in on itself, rather than to those passages in which he speaks of the *self* as curved in on itself, shows how Bonhoeffer's criticism can apply to *Geist* as an entire social field. He is clearly sceptical about an ensuing combination 'boundlessness' and enclosure. In a later paper delivered at Union Seminary in New York, Bonhoeffer conveys Barth's energetic 'attack on Idealism' with these words: 'Barth sees in the essential boundlessness of thinking, in its claim a closed system, in its egocentricity a philosophical affirmation of the theological insight of the Reformers, which they expressed in terms of *cor curvum in se, corruptio mentis*'.[197]

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[191] *DBWE 2*, 28; *DBW 2*, 23.

[192] The terms are drawn from Franz Delitzsch's *System der biblischen Psychologie* (1855), which draws on an early Protestant distinction between 'direct faith', *fides directa*, and 'reflexive faith', *fides reflexa*. *DBWE 2*, 28; *DBW 2*, 23.

[193] *DBWE 2*, 29; *DBW 2*, 24.

[194] *PhG* §18.

[195] *PhG* §18. Bonhoeffer has this section underlined in his edition. See *PhG-NL,* 20. This reference to cognition as a circle reappears in §802 as the 'circle returning back into itself'.

[196] *DBWE 2*, 41–42; *DBW 2*, 34–35.

[197] *DBWE 10*, 472–3; *DBW 10*, 445–6.

More work is warranted on the critical application of the 'incurvature' of reason to the pursuit of 'encyclopaedic' knowledge. Such an endeavour would require a study of the way in which Hegel's view of philosophy as an 'encompassing' endeavour led to a significant speculative trajectory in nineteenth-century theology.[198] Bonhoeffer knew Hegel's claim that the 'true is the whole', and so would have been aware of the irony of characterising such an encyclopaedic claim as liable to a thinker's sinful contraction of reality. That critical vantage point lies behind Bonhoeffer's attempt to claim a disruption of the Word, which he will later style as a form of 'counter-reason', or *Gegenlogos*.

For now, I question whether Bonhoeffer dismisses Hegel with his apparent preference for 'direct consciousness', or the direct act, as alone indicative of the posture of faith. Marsh draws such an opposition by claiming that the *actus directus* is Bonhoeffer's shorthand for the manner in which the person is summoned to obedience through direct intentionality towards Christ, before and beyond speculative self-reflection.[199] Although Marsh acknowledges that a subtlety of distinction is required to distinguish between reflection and action, he concludes that reconciliation is finally consummated in philosophical thought for Hegel and in obedience to Christ for Bonhoeffer. He goes on to state that 'Bonhoeffer activates Hegel's dialectic toward compassionate engagement and self-forgetfulness at the point where, for Hegel, it becomes the complete recovery of subjectivity through universal self-knowledge'.[200]

There is a danger in leaving an ultimate opposition between obedience and thought, particularly given Bonhoeffer's tendency to unite pairs. While Marsh is right that Bonhoeffer's characterisation of the reconciled state differs from Hegel, I argue that Bonhoeffer's distinction between the direct and the reflexive act should be read neither as an opposition nor as a sustained divergence from Hegel. In this I agree with Joshua Kaiser's argument that these dual aspects ultimately come together in the church, for Christ resolves the tension by becoming both subject and object of faith.[201] As a result, the obedient act does

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[198] Hegel's influential claim for *Wissenschaft* is cited within an overall encyclopaedic movement by theologians such as Karl Rosenkranz and Philipp Marheineke in Purvis, *University*, 171–80.

[199] Marsh states that 'the new I in Christ does not venture forth in a gesture of trying to re-contain the world as identity (in universality), but it is called out in simple obedience, *not* to return as a recovered I but to remain, extended in life with others, always more than the I. This transformation illustrates the inner content of community or its intrinsic reference'. Marsh, *Reclaiming Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 108.

[200] See also the identification of congeniality in Marsh, *Reclaiming Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 108–9, 181n137.

[201] Joshua Kaiser, *Becoming Simple and Wise: Moral Discernment in Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Vision of Christian Ethics* (Cambridge, MA: James Clarke & Co., 2015), 36.

not need to replace the reflective act, even as the latter cannot subsume the former.

As Hegel before him, Bonhoeffer often thinks in pairs, with his discussion of direct and reflexive acts seguing into his dominant pair of act and being.[202] These titular terms pose the question of how revelation is uniquely conceived in terms of a pair.[203] Bonhoeffer's ambitious resolution requires the unique epistemological site of the church.[204] From that base, Bonhoeffer redeploys a key Hegelian term of art to claim that: 'the dialectic of act and being is understood theologically as the dialectic of faith and the community of Christ. Neither is to be thought without the other; each is 'sublated' [*aufgehoben*] in the other'.[205] Bonhoeffer had earlier claimed that the problem of act and being had been bequeathed to theologians by the Idealist tradition, and with this verb choice he seems to be employing that tradition's tools to articulate a higher unity.

It is contested, however, that Bonhoeffer uses *aufheben* towards conceptual unity in a manner reminiscent of Hegel. The English critical edition renders the passage cited above as a statement that act and being, or faith and the community, are to be 'suspended' [*aufgehoben*] in one another.[206] Explaining this translation choice, editor Wayne Floyd claims that Bonhoeffer differs from Hegel in that he does not see these two elements as a 'dialectical process moving toward an ultimate synthesis of apparent opposites'.[207] He therefore translates the verb as 'to suspend' in order to connote the 'tensile, unresolved state of human existence as Bonhoeffer portrays it philosophically'.[208] Floyd's translation also draws on an earlier book in which he argued for a likeness between Bonhoeffer's and Adorno's use of dialectics.[209] There he spoke of Bonhoeffer's *Act and Being* as offering a 'dialectic suspended in motion', which resists the

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[202] The set of pairs is intricately connected, as shown in Bonhoeffer's transition in *DBWE 2*, 29; *DBW 2*, 24.

[203] Bonhoeffer offers a classificatory sketch of his theological contemporaries in relation to these two categories to begin his work. See *DBWE 2*, 25–27; *DBW 2*, 21–22.

[204] Neither concept is sufficient on its own, for Bonhoeffer claims that revelation must be thought 'within the concreteness of church-conception [*Kirchengedankens*]', and therefore through a sociological category that can unite act and being. This is to say that revelation must 'yield an epistemology of its own'. *DBWE 2*, 31; *DBW 2*, 26.

[205] *DBWE 2*, 31, alt.; *DBW 2*, 26. Bonhoeffer's scare quotes are original, suggesting both appropriation and critical distance from its use in Hegel.

[206] *DBWE 2*, 31.

[207] *DBWE 2*, 31n20.

[208] The other option Floyd provides is 'to subvert', tending towards the negative. *DBWE 2*, 31n20.

[209] See Floyd, *Dialectics of Otherness*, 261.

way in which the 'search for mutuality subverts difference'.[210] This has a de-cidedly ethical edge, as Floyd follows Adorno in linking identity thinking to anti-Semitism.

It is certainly important to acknowledge Bonhoeffer's concern with the loss of personal *Geist* in claims to the whole. Nevertheless, it is not clear that con-struing pairs in 'suspension' avoids the problem of a 'stalled dialectic', in Terry Eagleton's words, with each component ever bringing the other to birth in po-tentially reactionary ways. This is a concern with respect to 'faith' and 'com-munity' insofar as Bonhoeffer is seeking to move away from a purely actualist account of faith towards the communal continuities in which faith is held.

Hegel addressed the entrenchment that could emerge from a kind of 'sus-pension' in thought, which was caused, in part, by an abstract or isolated con-ception of faith.[211] In the *Phenomenology,* he shows how a narrow, Enlighten-ment-based 'pure insight' sets itself against a pietistic form of 'faith'.[212] In so doing, insight not only reacts against a pre-existing entity, but helps to produce its opponent and so ends up 'struggling with itself'.[213] Both mirror one another in their presumed 'purity', failing to see the way each is intertwined in the other, not least through a shared history. Hegel's own account of revelatory community seeks to move beyond such a dichotomous account of reason and faith, particularly as he narrates the process of doctrinal transmission.

As Bonhoeffer's translators often avoid rendering *aufheben* with the stand-ard term employed by Hegel scholars, it is worth reviewing Hegel's own ex-plication of the word. In the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, Hegel uses the example of an 'I statement', by which the knowing self is distinguished from animals and nature more generally.[214] The thinking 'I' is in the position of 'ideality' or *Geist*, set over and against 'reality' or nature. The problem, however, is that nature is 'not something fixed and finished for itself'.[215] Hegel continues by his characteristic emphasis that 'Idea' infuses reality in an implicit manner that needs to be made explicit. The point is unity: 'nature achieves its end and truth only in spirit, and spirit for its part is similarly not just an abstract beyond of nature; rather, it *exists* and validates itself as spirit only insofar as it contains in itself nature as sublated'.[216] Hegel then makes an aside on the dual meaning of the verb, *aufheben*, which means both 'clearing out of the way or negating',

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[210] Floyd, *Dialectics of Otherness*, 93, 137.

[211] Hegel depicts this dynamic in 'The Enlightenment Struggle with Superstition'. *PhG,* §541-§573.

[212] *PhG,* §548.

[213] *PhG,* §548.

[214] I am working from Hegel's succinct statement in *EL*. The original was published in 1830; the Lasson edition, which Bonhoeffer used, was published in 1905. Hans-Richard Reuter notes the likely allusion to §96 from that work in *DBW 2*, 26n18.

[215] *EL*, §96.

[216] *EL*, §96.

using the examples of a law or institution, and '*preserving*', using the example of that which is 'taken out of harm's way and put in a safe place'.[217] He argues that this combination of negative and positive meanings in a single word is neither a 'coincidence' nor should the apparent confusion be a reason for making the German language an 'object of reproach'. Rather, he claims that in this dual sense in linguistic usage 'we should recognize the speculative spirit of our language that transcends the either/or of mere understanding'.[218] The English language has sought to follow suit with 'to sublate', which has become the typical rendition for Hegel translators and critics.[219]

What, then, might it mean for Bonhoeffer to claim that the dialectic of act and being, theologically transposed into the question of 'faith' and the 'community of Christ', involves the *Aufhebung* of each component? Translating the term as 'suspension' seeks to preserve the 'otherness' of both act and being, for there is concern that their distinction could be lost. Whether Hegel's use of 'sublation' succeeds in accounting for distinctiveness, refinement, and union, as he attempts in his treatment of *Natur* and *Geist*, is a question that will be addressed throughout this book. Relatedly, whether Bonhoeffer's diction should be represented by the English 'sublation' will also be given a fuller treatment, particularly in Chapter Two. For now, it is important to raise the risk of a 'stalled' or entrenched dialectic entailed by the term 'suspension'. In any case, for Bonhoeffer it is clear that there is a crucial link between the act of faith and the being of community. Such a claim to unity requires the negation of each element in its isolated, reactionary form: faith cannot be abstracted from the church's communal life, nor can 'positive' communal life endure without the animation of belief.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown that Hegel's concept of 'objective *Geist*' provides Bonhoeffer with an account of the human sociality that serves his articulation of the communion of saints. Nevertheless, Bonhoeffer seeks to recover 'the Word before *Geist*', in this case a theological account that distinguishes the

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[217] *EL*, §96. The reference to taking something out of harm's way is significant in view of Hegel's pejorative view of the merely natural state, which is destructive when left to its own devices. On the other hand, the danger of this term is clear when one thinks of another culture or religion as undergoing sublation.

[218] *EL*, §96.

[219] Inwood traces the origin of the English 'sublate' to the Latin *sublatus*, past participle of *tollere* – an ambiguous verb that means both to raise up and to destroy or remove. The defects of the term are that it is not common in English (in contrast to German), and that it does not have a strong third sense: as Hegel himself notes, *tollere* does not carry the meaning 'to keep or preserve'. Inwood, *Dictionary*, 283–85.

primal state from the states of sin and revelation. He therefore speaks of the community as simultaneously a 'communion of sinners', an identification related to his claim to 'revelation in hiddenness'. Idealism, he observes, tends to deal one-sidedly with 'revelation in openness'.

The chapter has also complicated the frequent dismissal of Idealism as an expression of 'self-confinement', at least with reference to Hegel. While I acknowledge Bonhoeffer's stronger criticism of the 'incurvature of reason' vis-à-vis the potential 'disruption' of the Word, I argue that Hegel's account operates well beyond the self. This is evident in Hegel's criticism of the 'beautiful soul' and his call to reciprocal confession as the site of God's appearing. Here he reveals a social logic derived from Christian doctrine that is congenial to Bonhoeffer's criticism of the 'privately virtuous' and his call to confession. This similarity brings their deeper divergence into focus: Bonhoeffer modifies 'God existing as community' through a change in subject, from God to Christ, and a related change in act, from reciprocal confession to intercession.

These variations highlight the question of how a community can be revelatory given its simultaneous identity as *peccatorum communio*. For Hegel, God appears in the word of reconciliation, in the overcoming of 'minded' oppositions through confession and forgiveness. Bonhoeffer highlights intercession as the prior response to another's sin, pre-empting the act of confession. He therefore points beyond the sin that perpetually obstructs communal 'like-mindedness', indicating Christ's intervention as the deeper bond that constitutes the communion of saints and sinners. This is not to separate the act of intercession from the imperatives of social exchange that Hegel outlines. It is rather to bear testimony that intercession in the midst of *Kirchenkampf* perhaps best reveals the union of divine and human agency.

Chapter 2

A Cleaving Mind: The Fall into Knowledge

Tob and *ra* are concepts that express what is in every respect the deepest divide in human life. The essential point about them is that they appear as a pair, that in being split apart they belong inseparably together. – Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer delivered his lectures on Genesis 1–3 at the University of Berlin under the title *Schöpfung und Sünde.*[1] The course was one of several treatments of Jewish scripture in order to rethink ethical life under the emerging Third Reich, an exegetical habit that led to fines and publication bans in subsequent years.[2] He delivered the lectures in winter semester 1932–33, during which time Adolf Hitler was appointed German Chancellor. A day after that momentous event, Bonhoeffer recounted the irreducible ambiguity of the Fall, which he cast in the 'twilight' while reminding students that the name Lucifer means 'Light-bearer'.[3]

Along with thinly-veiled reference to contemporary events, the term 'Light-bearer' is one of several echoes of Hegel's lecture on the same passage, also delivered at the University of Berlin a century earlier. Bonhoeffer had the three volumes of his predecessor's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* at hand, newly edited by Georg Lasson. They contain Hegel's most explicit and sustained work with biblical text, which is likely why the section titled 'Representation of the Fall' is one of the most heavily marked in Bonhoeffer's set.[4] Along with providing a key secondary text for his Genesis lectures, the volumes serve

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[1] This original course title was changed to *Schöpfung und Fall* when the volume was published in 1933, avoiding the repetition of Emanuel Hirsch's title from 1931. The critical edition offers a composite text of Bonhoeffer's manuscripts, the 1933 publication text, and student notes recorded between November 8, 1932 and February 21, 1933. See John de Gruchy, 'Editor's Introduction', *DBWE 3*, 2,12–16.

[2] Bonhoeffer's 1940 volume on the Psalms incited a fine from the Reich Board for the Regulation of Literature. Wise to the terms in play, he defended his work as purely 'scientific exegesis'. Though the fine was retracted, Bonhoeffer was banned from further publication. See Geffrey B. Kelly, 'Editor's Introduction', *DBWE 5,* 143.

[3] The political context is noted in *DBWE 3*, 107–8n12; *DBW 3*, 99–100n8.

[4] The uniquely sustained nature of Hegel's work with Genesis is noted in Hodgson, *Christian*, 151.

Bonhoeffer's preparation for a Summer 1933 seminar focused on Hegel's work.

There are noticeable asymmetries between Hegel and Bonhoeffer. The 1932–33 term is the first and only time Bonhoeffer delivered his lectures on Genesis. He was twenty-six years old when he began his study, holding the position of *Privatdozent*. As a brief comparative, Hegel was a professor in his fifties when he delivered his lectures multiple times over a period of ten years (the Lasson text with which Bonhoeffer worked is a composite). We can therefore expect the maturity and scope of their respective treatments to differ.

The differences between the two lecturers must be considered alongside their significant similarities, however. Along with working at the same university a century apart, Hegel and Bonhoeffer share a commitment to the Lutheran tradition as a serious element of their respective projects, while both engage critically with Kant and subsequent Idealists. Interpretive care is therefore required to discern whether we can discern Hegel's direct influence in Bonhoeffer's depiction of anxiety at being caught in the fallen state of life 'in the middle'. Further complicating their relation is the fact that Bonhoeffer rarely names his interlocutors in the Genesis lectures, having published the first edition without footnotes.[5]

In this chapter, I argue that Hegel's account of the fallen state provides a compelling criticism of moral cognisance, one which informs Bonhoeffer's attempt to subvert a pejorative characterisation of the primal state. To make this case, I first highlight a central difference in how the thinkers approach 'divine knowledge', rooted in their respective readings of the *protoevangelium*. In the second section I show Bonhoeffer's alliance with Hegel in articulating moral cognisance as a state of perpetual 'cleaving' – a drive to know good and evil that in turn divides the knowing subject. Section three contrasts Hegel's depiction of primal humanity as a volatile composite of nature and spirit with Bonhoeffer's emphasis on completion in order to show how Bonhoeffer deploys this account of cleaving thought to subvert Hegel's claim to know the beginning. In the fourth section, I investigate the political subtext of the lecturers' employment of first personal pronouns 'I' and 'we' to signal how the biblical depiction of the Fall conditions their inquiries. Finally, I treat echoes of *Creation and Fall* in Bonhoeffer's later *Ethics*, proposing that his reference to the *Aufhebung* of the knowledge of good and evil reveals a segue to reconciliation that extends his critical variation on Hegel.

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[5] See de Gruchy, 'Editor's Introduction', *DBWE* 3, 15.

A. To Break and to Bind: Relating the Two Lecturers

Although Bonhoeffer is sharply critical of 'Idealism', this posture does not amount to a clean break with Hegel. This is partly due to the comprehensiveness of his predecessor's philosophical method, with its variegated depiction of rationality. As Judith Butler observes, reading after Hegel allows no easy departure:

> The question that emerges in a consideration of post-Hegelians is whether the "post-" is a relationship that differentiates or binds or possibly does both at once. On the one hand, references to a "break" with Hegel are almost always impossible, if only because Hegel has made the very notion of "breaking with" into the central tenet of his dialectic.[6]

The suggestion of a simultaneous act of breaking and binding raises the complexity of Hegel's logic, which is part of its appeal to Bonhoeffer. Before turning to specific criticisms, then, it is important to note how Hegel's philosophy is related to the interpretation of the biblical text.

I. Biblical Evocation in Hegel's Thought

In assessing Bonhoeffer's theological exposition, it is important to understand his interest in a nineteenth-century exercise in the philosophy of religion. The appeal comes in part through Hegel's criticism of purely 'biblical' thought, as indicated in the following statement:

> It helps not at all to say that one's thoughts are based on the Bible. As soon as these thoughts are no longer merely the words of the Bible, there is given to their content a form, more specifically, a logical form.[7]

Hegel is well aware that any such logic is conditioned by the presuppositions of a particular age. In his own time, he observes that readers bring to the Bible 'the notions that [humanity] by nature is good or that God cannot be known'.[8] As Bonhoeffer challenges similar presuppositions, Hegel's investigations of 'logical form' prove useful to his task. Insofar as Hegel articulates a logic that Bonhoeffer sees as germane to the text, he works with it, while using the same criterion to subvert other claims.

Hegel's interest in logical form raises the question of whether 'representation' [*Vorstellung*] is given a diminished status in his thought in favour of philosophy according to the 'concept' [*Begriff*]. His treatment of Genesis 3 is titled 'The Representation of the Fall', which begins with an observation about the 'great contradictions' contained in the text.[9] Moreover, Hegel's earlier

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[6] Judith Butler, *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France*, Second Edition (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1999), 183–84.

[7] *LPR III*, 23; *VPR III*, 24.

[8] *LPR III*, 23; *VPR III*, 24–25.

[9] *LPR III*, 152–153; *VPR III*, 121–122.

comments suggest philosophy as a superior mode of reflection to, for instance, sequential biblical narrative. As he states in the introduction of the third series of lectures, 'the witness of Spirit in its highest form is that of philosophy, according to which the concept develops the truth purely as such from itself without presuppositions'.[10]

Tempering an apparent supersession, however, Hegel follows this statement by criticising the position that opposes 'faith and thought' by claiming the latter as the sole means to 'the truths of religion'.[11] He argues instead that 'the witness of the Spirit can occur in manifold and various ways; it is not to be expected that for all of humanity the truth is made manifest in a philosophical way'.[12] The needs of a person differ, he continues, and as such external ecclesial authority, miracles and, indeed, biblical representational language are meaningful expressions of *Geist*. Adams comments that this statement shows Hegel preserving the integrity of the posture of 'faith' that philosophers, particularly the *Aufklärer*, need to take seriously to avoid constructing a false opposition.[13] As such, the 'concept' does not ultimately supplant the biblical language but, in Adams' definition, 'signals an atemporalized form of what appears narratively as a process'.[14]

Hegel's criticism of the false opposition between faith and reason is one example of how his work with thought forms can prove useful to theologians. In Adams' interpretation, Hegel offers a 'triadic' form of thinking in which two components, such as subject and object, maintain their integrities even as they are mutually constituted as a pair. This logic of pairs aims to overcome false and hasty oppositions such as that between divine and human action.[15] As such, it is an enterprise that has appealed to Bonhoeffer from his first dissertation, in which he appropriated Hegel's phrase 'God existing as community'.

The logic of pairs is complicated when good and evil are the two terms under consideration. Hegel and Bonhoeffer are both conditioned by a Lutheran suspicion of moral knowledge, alert to the risk of apprehending that pair which has alone been forbidden. This leads them to an intricate, paired portrayal of the 'cleaving' mind, as will be shown in part two. First, however, it is important to deal with Bonhoeffer's statement that suggests mere opposition to Hegel's project.

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[10] *LPR III*, 20; *VPR III*, 22.

[11] *LPR III*, 21; *VPR III*, 22–23.

[12] *LPR III*, 21; *VPR III*, 22–23.

[13] Adams continues that Hegel implies 'the faith is constant while the thinking is variable', with traditional representation not falling into the same problems as misguided forms of thought. Adams, *Eclipse*, 175. Stephen Houlgate also argues against an interpretation of Hegel as offering 'rival accounts', noting that for Hegel philosophy 'clarifies and confirms the perspective of faith'. See Houlgate, *Hegel*, 247, 251.

[14] Adams, *Eclipse*, 216.

[15] Adams, *Eclipse*, 9, 162.

II. Bonhoeffer's Criticism of Hegel's 'Divine Knowledge'

The claim that Hegel and Bonhoeffer employ a similar depiction of the fallen mind, derived from the scriptural account, must contend with Bonhoeffer's apparently stark opposition to Hegel's project. At one point the young theologian claims that postlapsarian knowers are those who 'are between good and evil and so stand between two possible states of having fallen away'. This is, he continues, 'not Hegel's divine knowledge [*Hegels göttliches Wissen*] of what is good and evil'.[16] Bonhoeffer's target appears to be Hegel's comment on God's acknowledgment that the human couple has 'become like us' in Genesis 3:22. Hegel opines that the statement is not ironic but rather confirms that the knowledge of good and evil belongs to the divine image that is humanity.[17] Martin Rüter and Ilse Tödt take this statement to be Bonhoeffer's criticism of Hegel's apparently positive construal of the Fall as an event that 'creates' humanity, in a sense.[18]

The claim that God confirms the serpent's promise seems a straightforward instance of the 'heterodox Hegel'.[19] However, this label risks missing a crucial aspect of the exposition, for Hegel inserts a telescoped account of salvation history into God's claim that humanity 'has become like us'. He reads the *protoevangelium* into the divine confirmation of Genesis 3:22 rather than locating it in the traditional 3:15, where the promise of the 'seed' is implicit in the curse, a move shown in the following comment:

> The serpent, therefore, has not lied, for God confirms what he has said. Much difficulty has been encountered in the interpretation of this text, and some have gone so far as to explain God's statement as irony. The truer interpretation, however, is that by this "Adam" the second Adam or Christ is to be understood.[20]

This remarkable statement shows that knowledge is not a self-enclosed process in Hegel, for it can only unfurl in light of the singular figure who appears in the 'fullness of time', to use one of his oft-cited verses from Galatians. In light of this coming, the Fall can be seen as fortunate.

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[16] This statement is not included in the main body of the text, but features in Hilde Pfeiffer's notes from the beginning of the ninth lecture. Compare the statement recorded by Ferenc Lehel, the student from whom we also have a detailed record of the 1933 Hegel Seminar: '[according to] Hegel human beings have God's knowledge of good and evil [*der Mensch [hat nach] Hegel Wissen Gottes um Gut und Böses*]'. See *DBWE 3,* 93n37; *DBW 3,* 87n28.

[17] This association is drawn by the critical edition. See the editors' note in *DBWE 3,* 93n37; *DBW 3,* 87n28.

[18] Rüter and Tödt describe Hegel as seeing 'dividedness' as a necessary, indispensable characteristic of humanity. See 'Editors' Afterword', *DBWE 3,* 160; *DBW 3,* 149–50.

[19] This problematic aspect to Hegel's account of the Fall is linked to the gnostic affirmation of the serpent in O'Regan, *Heterodox,* 163.

[20] *LPR III,* 157; *VPR III,* 126.

It would, of course, be uncharacteristic of Hegel to claim knowledge, divine or otherwise, as an immediate acquisition. As Wolfhart Pannenberg observes, critics often miss the fact that Hegel's talk of identity, such as that between the finite and infinite, is never immediate but rather a 'negative unity', that is, 'mediated by the negation and superseding of the finite'.[21] Along the way to such union, Hegel offers a set of resources for an exegesis of the Fall narrative, such as his characterisation of postlapsarian knowledge as 'evil', exposing humanity's deficiency before the Christ event. This is the point at which Bonhoeffer finds Hegel congenial, even if he will not follow his predecessor towards an ultimate identification of human and divine knowledge.[22]

Although Hegel's account alludes to the promise of the second Adam, it nevertheless appears as an immanent motion of thought, expressed in such claims as 'knowledge heals the wound that it itself is'.[23] The notion that the endeavour of *Wissenschaft* can be 'therapeutic' had deep personal meaning for Hegel, as revealed in earlier private correspondence.[24] Hegel's claim that knowledge, depicted as 'evil', is also the source of reconciliation – 'both sickness and healing' – is vigorously marked in Bonhoeffer's edition of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*.[25] Bonhoeffer's own account emphasises the distinction between divine address and human reception because of the inescapably fallen dynamic of thought. For Hegel, *Vernunft*, 'reason', is no longer compromised in this manner, leading Bonhoeffer to claim that such an approach leads to 'enthroning reason [*Vernunft*] in the place of God'.[26] In contrast, Bonhoeffer asserts reconciliation *sola fide:* 'Unity is grounded in faith alone. Faith is the truly good thing in God's eyes'.[27]

Nevertheless, as the Genesis lectures conclude Bonhoeffer accents the incapacity to think beyond the cursed aftermath of Eden. The reality of sin leaves him reticent to claim the *protoevangelium*. Bonhoeffer rather questions how Adam could know anything beyond present subsistence, depicting the gospel account of Golgotha as a 'strange paradise', inaccessible to the fallen mind as

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[21] Wolfhart Pannenberg, 'The Significance of Christianity in the Philosophy of Hegel', in *Basic Questions in Theology,* volume three, trans. R.A. Wilson (London: SCM, 1973), 162.

[22] The citation above, in which Hegel identifies the second Adam, is underlined in Bonhoeffer's edition with a question mark written into the margin. See *NL-VPR III*, 126.

[23] *LPR III,* 155; *VPR III,* 124.

[24] Advising his friend Karl Joseph Windischmann in 1810, Hegel wrote that 'it is science [*Wissenschaft*] which has led you into the labyrinth of the soul, and science alone is capable of leading you out again and healing you'. Pinkard cites this letter in relation to Hegel's own dark period, which Hegel spoke of as a 'mood of the soul, or rather of reason'. It was both an exhausting depression and, ultimately, a turning point in his life. See Pinkard, *Hegel*, 225.

[25] *NL-VPR III*, 110.

[26] *DBWE 3,* 27; *DBW 3,* 26.

[27] *DBWE 3,* 93n37; *DBW 3,* 87n28. This is one student's rendition of a lecture's opening summary.

Eden.[28] This reticence surrounding the promise is further indicated by the statement that 'in the world of tob and ra even revelation must veil itself'.[29]

The concluding reference to the veil is one of the ways that Bonhoeffer's Genesis lectures persist with the conditions of the fallen state, somewhat in tension with the strong eschatological and Christological account he offers in the introduction. The lecture series begins with the bold statement that the church of Christ lives, thinks, acts, and proclaims its message 'from the end'.[30] This has exegetical implications, as the church thus 'reads the whole of Holy Scripture as the book of the end, of the new, of Christ'.[31] Finally, Bonhoeffer claims that taking into account the ecclesial character of the Bible, alongside requisite historical and philological research, lies at the base of the claim that theological exposition has *Wissenschaftlichkeit*, the 'nature of a science'.[32]

While these eschatological and Christological statements represent a great deal of Bonhoeffer's theological project, I aim to show his complementary interest in criticising claims to know the beginning because of conditions 'in the middle', specifically, the split cognisance to emerge from the Fall. Bonhoeffer's articulation of the 'middle' condition requires him to attend patiently to the cursed aftermath of Genesis 3. Such tight focus may be partly motivated by his hesitation at Hegel's bold account of thought exercised in light of the consummate religion, as intimated in the blinding glare of his *protoevangelium*.[33] This does not mean that Bonhoeffer retreats into the *Unwissenheit* with which he characterises the 'first Adam', however. Rather, in the Christology lectures, delivered immediately after *Creation and Fall* in the summer of 1933, he confronts his audience with the revelation of Christ as *Logos* and therefore the 'centre of science [*Wissenschaft*]', albeit the 'invisible, unrecognized, hidden centre'.[34]

Further research is required into how Bonhoeffer articulates a *Logos* Christology that does not only 'counter' fallen human reason but becomes its reconciling centre. However, for the time being Bonhoeffer's Genesis lectures linger in this particular canonical location. Notwithstanding the introductory statements about reading 'from the end', Bonhoeffer persists in asking how thoroughly the Fall impedes reason. As such, he does not follow a longstanding Christian inclination to supersessionism, giving Jewish scripture a fuller hearing despite the increasingly hostile political environment of the 1930s. As I

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[28] *DBWE 3,* 146; *DBW 3,* 136.

[29] *DBWE 3,* 124; *DBW 3,* 116.

[30] *DBWE 3,* 21; *DBW 3,* 21.

[31] *DBWE 3,* 22; *DBW 3,* 22.

[32] *DBWE 3,* 22–23; *DBW 3,* 22.

[33] Some of Bonhoeffer's most emphatic marginalia occur around Hegel's statements of God's entire revelation, after which nothing divine remains secret. See *NL-VPR I*, 75.

[34] See *DBWE 12*, 301, alt.; *DBW 12*, 281. Bonhoeffer adds that Christology only becomes the centre of scholarship insofar as it comes 'from outside'.

will now show, Bonhoeffer's resistance is motivated by a depiction of the fallen mind strikingly similar to Hegel's account of divided consciousness.

B. Similar Depictions of the 'Fallen' Mind

As I will demonstrate in this part, neither Hegel nor Bonhoeffer speaks of moral decision as the clean cutting away of one option, the evil, for another, the good.[35] Rather, they both indicate that the fallen moral subject simultaneously grasps for a unified knowledge of good and evil while knowing herself divided by the attempt. I will render this dual dynamic with the English 'cleaving', with both meanings – 'to cling' and 'to split' – in operation. With respect to the 'knowledge of good and evil', I will employ the hyphenated 'good-evil' to pronounce the dynamic of inseparability, or indeed bondage, emphasised by Hegel and Bonhoeffer in every act of judgement.

I. Hegel on the Reflexive Division of Judgement

Hegel reads the 'representation of the Fall' in Genesis against one-sided accounts of human nature as good or evil. He defines these two options as follows: *humanity is by nature good*, which is to say, 'implicitly Spirit and rationality, created in and after the image of God';[36] *humanity is by nature evil*, namely, the mode of existence that 'remains within the circle of his desires, and whose law is that of natural immediacy'.[37] Rather than siding with one, Hegel claims that the two must be thought together and, therefore, apart:

> It is false to ask whether or not humanity is good by nature. This is a false way of posing the question. It is just as superficial to say that he is equally good and evil. … Both good and evil are posited, but essentially in contradiction, such that each of the two presupposes the other. It is not that only one exists; rather they both exist in this relation and are opposed to each other.[38]

Meanwhile, Hegel's pairing of this antithesis does not at first suggest an untroubled, panoptic view 'about' good-evil; rather, this knowledge exposes the subject's own division between the pair.

Hegel conveys this reflexive aspect of division by playing on the etymological base for *Urteil,* 'judgement', which shares a root with *teilen*, 'to divide'.[39] As the subject judges, she expresses her cleaving mind. Hegel is targeting a

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[35] The notion of cutting away is implied in the classical Latin *dēcīdere* ('to cut off, to cut down, to mark out, carve') that lies beneath the English 'decide'.

[36] *LPR III*, 138–39; *VPR III*, 113–14.

[37] *LPR III*, 140; *VPR III*, 115.

[38] *LPR III*, 142; *VPR III*, 116.

[39] The link is noted in Hodgson, *HCT*, 153.

dominant contemporary notion that humanity is 'by nature' good, using strong terms to trouble moral deliberation:

> In terms of content, it means that the human has elevated himself to the knowledge of the difference [between good and evil], and that this knowledge is the source of evil, indeed is evil [*böse*] itself. … For knowledge and consciousness in general mean a judging or dividing, a self-distinguishing within oneself. … In this disunion only evil is contained, and hence it is itself evil.[40]

On this account there is clearly no neutral standpoint 'suspended' between two options. As Peter Dews comments, 'to treat this opposition as if it were a genuine equipolarity is already to have embraced the bad'.[41] The act of eating from the tree thus leaves the knower in a state of tragic irony, for the attempt to know the good inevitably reveals one's separation from the good.[42] However well-intentioned moral choice may be, it is always already self-indictment.

By Hegel's account the human person cannot simply surface by choosing the good, nor do the pair separate by nature of their own discord. He states that, 'this is not, however, a contradiction that simply falls apart but rather one that simultaneously holds itself together'.[43] This 'bound opposition' is depicted by the term *Entzweiung*, in which the term *zwei*, two, is embedded.[44] This term is customarily used in the story of the Fall whereas *Entfremdung* features elsewhere. Hegel's claim to simultaneity can be rendered by the duality of the English 'cleaving', with the meanings 'to cling' and 'to split' both in operation.[45] Along with its meaning for the mind of any given person, it should be noted that the theme of rupture is part of Hegel's early argument that the need for philosophy 'arises out of a need for social life to overcome or heal its internal ruptures'.[46] This term encapsulates Hegel's conceptual depiction of the biblical

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[40] *LPR III*, 158; *VPR III*, 127. This is briskly stated earlier as well: 'it is not the case that contemplation has an external relation to evil; rather contemplation or knowledge is itself what is evil'. *LPR III,* 143; *VPR III,* 109–10.

[41] Peter Dews, *The Idea of Evil* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 90.

[42] Nicholas Adams' unpublished paper, 'Hegel Reads Genesis', has been helpful in developing this insight.

[43] *LPR III*, 138; *VPR III*, 113.

[44] Commenting on Hegel's early writings, Pinkard shows how Hegel uses the term to articulate the encounter between two agents, in which the rational will disrupts [*entzweit*] itself into 'two powers, two characters'. He shows how Hegel's Jena drafts on this theme contribute to an emerging theory of 'recognition' in Pinkard, *Hegel*, 189–193.

[45] For the English editors, 'cleavage' and 'cleaving' are leading options to render *Entzweiung*, whereas *Entfremdung* is conveyed as 'estrangement'. See the more recent critical edition: G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, Vol. III,* ed. Peter Hodgson, trans. R.F. Brown, P.C. Hodgson, et al. (Oxford University Press, 2007), based on the Jaeschke German edition. Relatedly, Adams makes reference to the duality of the English 'cleave' in explaining *aufheben*, or 'sublation', in *Eclipse,* 32.

[46] Pinkard, *Hegel*, 157.

account that, as I will now show, is adopted by Bonhoeffer to convey the cleft ground on which the quest for moral knowledge proceeds.

II. Bonhoeffer on the Presumptuous 'Creator-Human'

Bonhoeffer's early salvo against Hegel's claim to 'divine knowledge' can be further qualified by the observation that he sounds very much like Hegel in his own treatment of Genesis 3:22. He comments:

> There can at this point be no more doubt that the serpent was right in the promise it made. The Creator confirms the truth of that promise: Humankind has become like one of us. It is *sicut deus*. Humankind has got what it wants; it has itself become creator, source of life, fountainhead of the knowledge of good and evil.[47]

Bonhoeffer elaborates on the ontological pretension in the knowledge claimed by such likeness, going so far as attributing 'aseity' to the fallen knower.[48] He thus leaves the newly designated *Schöpfermensch*, 'creator-human', to bear the weight of 'divinisation', living anticlimactically as 'solitary lord and despot of its own mute, violated, silenced, dead, ego-world [*Ichwelt*]'.[49] Although the creature is preserved, Bonhoeffer accentuates the terminal condition of this all-too-human god. Throughout the manuscript he employs two different Latin phrases to set the proper creaturely image of God [*imago dei*] apart from the serpent's promise to be 'like God' [*sicut deus*].[50] Bonhoeffer persists with this opposition in exposing Genesis, leaving to his Christology lectures the sustained confrontation between the presumptuous *Schöpfermensch* with the true *Gott-mensch*.

While Bonhoeffer places a stronger emphasis on how mortality undercuts human likeness to God, his depiction of postlapsarian knowledge bears striking resemblance to Hegel. He claims that good and evil represent the 'deepest divide' in human life, employing the same term *Entzweiung* that he has marked in Hegel's *Lectures*.[51] His ensuing depiction has three similar components, which suggest that the term 'cleaving' can also represent Bonhoeffer's own account. First, there is a drive for a perception that attempts to get the human mind 'around' good-evil, presuming externality from the pair. Thus, humanity seeks knowledge 'about' God, 'about' good and evil [*um Gott, um gut und böse*].[52] Second, this externalising attempt is given the lie through the perpetual division of the subject: the fallen knower is denied the panoptic view, being

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[47] *DBWE 3*, 142; *DBW 3*, 131.

[48] *DBWE 3*, 113; *DBW 3*, 105.

[49] *DBWE 3*, 142; *DBW 3*, 131.

[50] For example: 'the fall *really* makes the creature – humankind-in-the-imago-dei – into a creator-sicut-deus'. *DBWE 3*, 116; *DBW 3*, 107–8.

[51] *NL-VPR III*, 158.

[52] Note that Bonhoeffer replaces the preposition *in* with *um* in a later version. *DBWE 3,* 113n7; *DBW 3,* 105n8.

'bound to the depths' of this knowledge.[53] Bonhoeffer deepens this internalisation by using the affective hybrid terms *lustvoll-gut* and *leidvoll-bös*.[54] Third, there is the inseparable combination of the drive for external, unified perception and the reflexive division that binds the subject in turn: the pair good-evil is 'the deepest divide in human life', and yet 'in being split apart [*Zwiespältigkeit*] they belong inseparably together'.[55]

Two of the presuppositions brought to scripture in Bonhoeffer's own time deserve mention. First, this pejorative take on *Wissen* is strategic for his criticism of a sanguine view of *Gewissen,* 'conscience', particularly as rendered in Karl Holl's claim that Luther offers a 'religion of conscience'. Bonhoeffer repositions this term within the divided state of knowing: 'Before the Fall there was no conscience. Only since humankind has become divided from the Creator are human beings divided within themselves [*in sich selbst entzweit*]'.[56] Second, Bonhoeffer's criticism of ethical claims based on the *Schöpfungsordnungen*, 'orders of creation', remains in view although he does not develop his alternative 'orders of preservation' as thoroughly in these lectures as elsewhere.[57] This critical stance is adopted in the face of contemporary accounts by theologians such as Paul Althaus that serve to locate the *Völker* in a mythic protology. Bonhoeffer's depiction of split cognisance helps to trouble claims to think back to the unalloyed good of the primal state, rendering appeal to creation orders highly contestable. This has significant political effects as Bonhoeffer later develops his account of the *göttlichen Mandaten*, 'divine mandates', over against *göttlichen Ordnungen*, 'divine orders', with respect to Luther and heirs such as Hegel and Althaus.[58] In *Creation and Fall,* however, further work is required to subvert Hegel's attempt to know the beginning.

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[53] This is in contrast to the *imago dei* is 'bound to the word of the creator' from which its life is sustained in the unity of obedience. *DBWE 3,* 113; *DBW 3,* 105.

[54] He claims that good and evil form 'an ultimate split [*Zwiespalt*]' that reaches back to the fuller conceptualities of the 'pleasurable' [*lustvoll*] and 'painful' [*leidvoll*], terms drawn from Hans Schmidt. *DBWE 3,* 157; *DBW 3,* 167.

[55] *DBWE 3*, 88; *DBW 3*, 82–83.

[56] *DBWE 3*, 128; *DBW 3*, 120.

[57] As Rüter and Tödt comment, Bonhoeffer's most forceful comments against creation orders come earlier in 1932, with his alternative language of 'orders of preservation' playing only a 'subsidiary role' in *Creation and Fall*. See 'Editors' Afterword', *DBWE 3,* 148–9; *DBW 3,* 138–9.

[58] Bonhoeffer develops his four 'mandates' of work, marriage, government, and church, which are rendered as 'divinely imposed tasks as opposed to determinate forms of being'. *DBWE 6*, 68–75; *DBW 6,* 54–61.

C. Divergence over Protology

Having shown the similarities in Hegel and Bonhoeffer's portrayals of the cleaving state of fallen cognisance, I now turn to their descriptions of prelapsarian humanity. Reference to states before and after the 'Fall' are used advisedly, for Hegel is critical of the 'contradictions' endemic to the sequential form of representation in the biblical account. Bonhoeffer is more willing to speak in terms of sequence, though he will also note 'ambiguities' inherent in such depiction.

Hegel depicts primal humanity as a compound of 'nature' and implicit 'spirit', with the emergence of the latter leading to the division of cognisance. In contrast, Bonhoeffer gestures at a state of primal unity that fallen cognisance cannot apprehend, emphasising discontinuity. In short, Bonhoeffer arrests Hegel's trajectory to ask whether their common characterisation of split cognisance truly conditions, and so delimits, rational inquiry.

I. Hegel on Primal Volatility

Hegel articulates the primal state through the concepts *Natur* and *Geist*, a pair that has a long history in theological and philosophical anthropology. In Hegel's iteration, *Natur*, 'nature', is the base mode of human life. It is characterised as an unliberated state in relation both to self and external nature, a state 'of *desire* or *appetite*, of rudeness and self-seeking, of dependence and fear'. This dependence can be 'either mild or savage', given region and custom.[59] Hegel describes it as 'self-seeking', drawn by goals that relate to a person's 'singularity' as 'opposed to the universal', this narrow scope signalled by the term 'immediacy'.[60] He also makes clear that the issue is not fleshly constitution *simpliciter* but a manner of life 'submerged in corporeality'.[61] Insofar as it is associated with the body while not directly identifiable with it, *Natürlichkeit* resembles the Apostle Paul's characterization of life 'according to the flesh'.[62] It is worth repeating, however, that the temporal process involved in this trajectory means that Hegel locates this 'fleshly' state before the Fall.

Geist, 'spirit' or 'mind', is the higher mode of human life for Hegel. It is spoken of as a movement of 'elevation' or 'raising up', though the spatial metaphor should not be associated with incorporeality.[63] Terms of movement are important because spirit is not yet 'explicit' in the primal state; the human is

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[59] *LPR III,* 124; *VPR III,* 97.

[60] *LPR III,* 132; *VPR III,* 104.

[61] *LPR III,* 161; *VPR III,* 129.

[62] This comparison to the biblical portrayal of life *kata sarka* is drawn in Hodgson, *HCT*, 149.

[63] *LPR III*, 115; *VPR III,* 91.

'internally and intrinsically, namely, spirit as such, the image of God'.[64] This latent quality is that alone through which humankind is able to discern the voice of God in natural phenomena such as thunder.[65] The language of internality should not mislead, however, for *Geist* is manifest in cohesive social relations, leading Pinkard to speak of 'mindedness' and 'like-mindedness'.[66] Insofar as *Geist* remains implicit, though, the primal state itself is deficient, which Hegel conveys with the term *böse*, 'evil'.[67]

The 'evil' in question is not active malevolence but rather incompletion; 'a lack because spirit should not exist *in itself*; it is spirit only because it exists *for itself*… being-in-itself, or existence according to nature, ought to be sublated'.[68] Hegel's primal human state thus presages the knowledge of good-evil, that is, 'this stepping forth is already contained in the natural state itself'.[69] This is not to say that original deficiency is entirely regrettable; it is a state that 'ought not to be, i.e., ought to be annulled – not one, however, that ought not to occur: it has occurred because man is *consciousness*…. The latter is the eternal history of humanity'.[70] In light of this, one may well ask why such a step would be forbidden by God.[71]

Volatility is an apt descriptor for Hegel's composite of *Geist* and *Natur*.[72] The stirring motion, and resultant struggle, form the base of an Aristotelian trajectory. As Adams demonstrates, reference to *Geist* as the *an sich* image of God – 'implicit' in Hodgson's translation – invokes Aristotle's state of 'potentiality'. This is on a trajectory towards 'actuality', Hegel's *für sich*, and ultimately 'completion', Hegel's *an-und-für-sich*.[73] The primal human is not 'evil', or deficient, all the way down; *Geist* teems within the natural state and will emerge through knowledge, however costly the passage.

Alongside this Aristotelian framework, Hegel's account is motivated by a polemic against the 'barren viewpoint of the pedagogy of our time'.[74] Many of

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[64] *LPR III*, 134; *VPR III,* 106.

[65] *LPR III*, 121; *VPR III,* 90.

[66] Pinkard, *Hegel*, 219.

[67] O'Regan notes that this designation – human being as essentially evil rather than good as *prius* – is one instance of 'swerve' from the normative Christian tradition among several in the creation narrative alone. See O'Regan, *Heterodox*, 169–170.

[68] *LPR III,* 134; *VPR III,* 106.

[69] *LPR III,* 140; *VPR III,* 114.

[70] *LPR III,* 154; *VPR III,* 123.

[71] Acknowledging this question, Hodgson claims that such seeming 'contradictions' in the representational form of the Fall 'reflect the ambiguities that are present in consciousness and knowledge – ambiguities that only speculative thinking is able to grasp'. Hodgson, *HCT*, 150.

[72] My use here draws out the etymological link to the Latin *volāt-* (participial stem of *volāre*, 'to fly') as an allusion to spirit's urge towards 'elevation'.

[73] Adams, *Eclipse*, 57–8.

[74] *LPR III,* 130; *VPR III,* 102–3.

his contemporaries' approaches to education assumed human nature as good, which Hegel notes as an interpretation of the human person not 'in accord with his Idea' but merely empirically, that is, 'good without mediation of the negative'.[75] Such a view explains away that which 'ought not to be' in pupils as due to external factors rather than being rooted in the subject, a superficial view which Hegel charges with the nurture of vanity.[76] It is likely that Rousseau's *Émile, ou De l'Éducation* is in view, although Hegel is also engaging contemporary debates about properly German 'cultivation'.[77] As Hodgson summarises, the pedagogical approach targeted here 'regards civilisation as contaminating an original innocence and fails to recognise the necessity of discipline and acquired knowledge'.[78] Such acquisition requires the maturation of responsibility and, with it, guilt, from the formerly innocent. Hegel states:

> The original condition of the human, which is superficially represented as the state of innocence [*Unschuld*], is the state of nature, the animal state. Humanity is properly speaking culpable; in so far as he is good, he ought not to be so in the sense that a natural thing is good. Rather his guilt [*Schuld*] and will ought to come into play; it ought to be possible to impute [moral responsibility] to him. Guilt means, in a general sense, the possibility of imputation. The good man is good by and through his will, and hence by means of his guilt.[79]

The prefix *Un-* in *Unschuld* indicates the deficiency of the primal state, while at the same time foreshadowing the way in which human beings come to know better. To capture this critical edge, *Unschuld* for Hegel might be better rendered as 'guiltlessness' or even 'irresponsibility'. The claim to such deficiency is the key point at which Bonhoeffer turns against his predecessor in his description of protology.

II. Bonhoeffer on Original Unity

In *Sanctorum Communio,* Bonhoeffer had grounded his discussion of the primal state with a reminder of how this state unsettles reflection on the person 'as such', a preview of his future engagements with Hegel. Distancing himself from accounts of continuity or development, Bonhoeffer claims that:

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[75] *LPR III,* 130, 296; *VPR III,* 102–3, 221. See also Hodgson, *HCT,* 149–50.

[76] *LPR III,* 130; *VPR III,* 103.

[77] Pinkard outlines the debate over true and false *Bildung* in Hegel's early political context*,* as well as its distinction from mere 'education', with brief reference to the French context, in Pinkard, *Hegel,* 49–54.

[78] Hodgson names this pedagogical account as 'philanthropinism'. He goes on to note figures who depict a state of original perfection, including Schelling, against whom Hegel also wrote. See *HCT*, 149–150.

[79] *LPR III,* 141; *VPR III,* 115.

[In Idealism,] sin and salvation are realities that do not alter the original essence of things. For us, though, the doctrine of the primal state is significant precisely because it enables us to grasp concretely the reality of sin, which infinitely alters the essence of things.[80]

It is this alteration that makes Bonhoeffer suspicious of even the biblical writer's ability to depict the primal state, much less Hegel's own.

For Bonhoeffer the creaturely state is not deficient, but nor is it mature; he avoids linguistic cues that place the original creation on a developmental trajectory. When Bonhoeffer does employ the term *Natur*, therefore, he qualifies it in a manner that calls to mind Hegel's account. Arguing for humanity's rule over the created world as an expression of *Geist* embedded in *Natur*, he states that it is not as though 'nature were something foreign to spirit'.[81] Bonhoeffer's emphasis on original unity creates a contrast to Hegel's view of the incipient division of the primal state: 'in my whole being, in my creatureliness, I belong wholly to this world; it bears me, nurtures me, holds me'.

Bonhoeffer's depiction of the unified state of *Geschöpflichkeit* contrasts with the fatally 'cleaving' state of the *Schöpfermensch*. To this end, he elsewhere shifts from the term *Natur* to speak of an image of God composed of 'earth': 'As such creatures, human beings of earth and spirit [*Mensch aus Erde und Geist*] are "like" God, their Creator'.[82] In his copy of Hegel's lectures, Bonhoeffer reacts to the claim that humanity should not be innocent but rather *schuldig*, 'guilty, responsible', with several exclamation marks.[83] In his own lectures, he insists that Adam's 'distinctive characteristic' is 'utterly unbroken unity [*Einheit*] of obedience, that is, Adam's innocence [*Unschuld*] and ignorance [*Unwissenheit*] of disobedience'.[84] Against the implications of Hegel's *Unschuld*, Bonhoeffer seeks to avoid suggesting, by the negative prefix *un-*, a moral 'capacity' yet to be exercised.[85]

The claim to unity is made insofar as the human creature is recipient of the divine Word, free from an incipient division:

Only the Creator knows what the tree of the knowledge of *good* and *evil* is up to this point; Adam does not yet know it. As one who lives in the unity [*Einheit*] of obedience Adam does not comprehend that which is two-sided [*Zwiefache*]; as one who lives in the unity of the knowledge of God as the centre and the boundary of human life Adam cannot conceive of the breaking apart of that knowledge into good and evil. Adam knows neither what good nor what evil is and lives in the strictest sense *beyond good and evil;* that is, Adam lives out of

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[80] *DBWE 1*, 62; *DBW 1*, 36.

[81] *DBWE 3,* 66, alt; *DBW 3*, 62.

[82] *DBWE 3,* 79; *DBW 3,* 74. The phrase *Der Mensch aus Erde und Geist* serves as the title of his entire lecture on Genesis 2:7.

[83] *NL-VPR III*, 107.

[84] *DBWE 3*, 84, alt.; *DBW 3*, 79.

[85] I am indebted to a conversation with Bernd Wannenwetsch for this insight.

the life that comes from God, before whom a life lived in good, just like a life lived in evil, would mean an unthinkable falling away.[86]

The allusion to Friedrich Nietzsche for the phrase 'beyond good and evil' polemically renders the non-deficiency of this state.[87] While Bonhoeffer is sympathetic to Hegel's insistence on the assumption of *Schuld*, 'guilt' or 'responsibility', in ethical life after the Fall, he cordons off the primal state from such necessary development. After all, such retrojection seems suspiciously like the account of a fallen knower who, in seeking a unitive account, effectively divides what was once whole.

Bonhoeffer observes that this state of human unity in obedience fits the biblical witness to creation's *Vollendung*, 'completion'. Commenting on Genesis 1:28–31, he highlights God's recognition of the goodness of creaturely being and the bestowal of divine blessing in the work's completion. Bonhoeffer then depicts Sabbath rest as a state of wholeness misunderstood by those who 'impudently' contrast it with their own vitality and 'thereby defend and glorify struggle and unrest'.[88] Bonhoeffer does not name his target, but the 'vitalism' of emerging Third Reich propaganda is certainly in view.

Alongside that contemporary political concern, it is worth noting that Hegel does not offer a robust account of Sabbath as a grounding dynamic for the primal state. Rather, as Dews comments, Hegel stands out for the manner in which he 'emphasizes antagonism, conflict, and suffering as fundamental features of reality'.[89] In light of Bonhoeffer's awareness of Hegel's pejorative view of the primal state, it is worth reconsidering whether Bonhoeffer spoke against those who seek not only to 'defend' but to '*unite* and glorify struggle', that is, those who locate an incipient division in the primal human, one continuous with later maturation.[90]

Just as Adam cannot think fallen humanity, so Bonhoeffer claims that the 'cleaving' mind cannot access the primal state of existence. The danger of such an attempt is signalled early in the lectures when Bonhoeffer identifies a temptation for the philosophically-interested exegete. Commenting on the 'beginning' of Genesis 1:1–2, he says that one attempt at knowledge of this state can come through 'the one who has been a liar from the beginning'.[91] Bonhoeffer

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[86] *DBWE 3,* 87–8; *DBW 3,* 82.

[87] Bonhoeffer makes a related reference to Nietzsche in a 1929 lecture, claiming that he did not 'discover' this state that transcends moral division; completion in God's limitless love belongs to the 'original, albeit concealed' Christian witness to creation. See *DBWE 10,* 363; *DBW 10,* 327.

[88] *DBWE 3,* 70; *DBW 3,* 65.

[89] Dews, *Evil,* 85.

[90] *DBWE 3,* 70, emphasis mine; *DBW 3,* 65. The word translated 'defend' here is *verteidigen* even though *vereinigen*, 'to unite', actually features in the 1933 publication – a transcription the editors claim is 'clearly by mistake'.

[91] *DBWE 3,* 28; *DBW 3,* 27–28.

then gives 'the evil one' direct address: 'I am the beginning and you, O humankind, are the beginning. You were with me from the beginning. I have made you what you are, and with me your end is sublated'.[92] Bonhoeffer likely has Hegel's dual meaning in view as he has just referenced 'the Hegelian question' of a beginning point for the philosophy of religion.[93] His use of the term *aufheben* is likely a way of showing the susceptibility of even dialectical thinking, which he will elsewhere employ, to the fallen condition of knowing when its ambition exceeds creaturely bounds. In particular, it signals resistance to what Bonhoeffer seems to sense is lost in Hegel's reference to 'finitude' as lacking truth or in need of 'negation'.[94] The placement of Hegel's term of art in the tempter's mouth is mischievous, as Bonhoeffer elsewhere quips to the effect that the score turns out so well because Hegel leaves the devil out of the game.[95]

To resist one of the temptations involved in seeking to know the beginning, Bonhoeffer articulates a familiar depiction of the one knowing good-evil:

> What is important to understand, however, is that this story claims us not as listeners with the gift of imagination but as human beings who, no matter how much they stretch their imaginations and all their other mental or spiritual powers, are simply unable to transport themselves to this paradise 'beyond good and evil', 'beyond pleasure and pain'; instead, with all their powers of thinking, they remain tied to this torn-apart world, to antithesis, to contradiction. This is so because our thinking too is only the expression of our being, of our existence, which is grounded in contradiction. Because we do not exist in a state of unity, our thinking is torn apart as well.[96]

In order to convey this inaccessibility, Bonhoeffer distinguishes pre- and post-Fall cognisance by altering his diction and syntax. For the prelapsarian, Bonhoeffer renders God's knowledge of the tree and his prohibition to humanity with the phrase *der Baum der Erkenntnis des Guten und Bösen*.[97] This changes in his lecture on the opening of the fallen couple's eyes in Genesis 3:7, briskly titled *Das Neue*, from which point he renders fallen human knowledge as *Das Wissen um gut und böse*.[98] The shift from *Erkenntnis* to *Wissen* and the move

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[92] *DBWE 3*, 28 alt.; *DBW 3*, 28.

[93] *DBWE 3*, 27; *DBW 3*, 26. To represent this duality, and the apparent villainisation of Hegel, I opt for the technical English term that unites the aspects currently divided between text and footnote. As it is, the translator notes that in light of Hegel's usage this can also read 'your end has been raised up to me'. See *DBWE 3*, 28–29n12.

[94] This temptation passage may help to illumine Bonhoeffer's exclamatory markings at Hegel's description of how *Das Endliche* undergoes sublation, even negation, leading to affirmation as infinite. *NL-VPR I*, 218.

[95] This note is found on a paper left in Bonhoeffer's copy of Hegel's lectures, filed in the estate as *NL* A 31,4. Its contents are transcribed as 'Dietrich Bonhoeffers Hegel-Zettel' in *Hegelseminar*, ed. Ilse Tödt, 107–08.

[96] *DBWE 3,* 92; *DBW 3,* 86.

[97] *DBWE 3,* 87; *DBW 3,* 82.

[98] *DBWE 3,* 122; *DBW 3,* 114–15.

from the genitive construction to the preposition *um* signal a more 'external-ised' stance of knowing. By altering these terms, Bonhoeffer signals that split cognisance conditions himself and his lecture audience in their *wissenschaft-lich* inquiry. As I will now show, such a self-critical move is already suggested by Hegel.

D. The Politics of Knowing

In this section I consider the critical range of Hegel's and Bonhoeffer's accounts of the 'cleaving mind' by showing their reflexive use of pronouns as lecturers. In particular, I trace their use of the pronouns 'I' and 'we' to perform the implications of the Genesis text. For instance, Hegel's use of the first person singular suggests a pedagogical willingness to inhabit perception 'according to nature'. This promising move is circumscribed, however, by the distance he maintains from other cultures insofar as they are described in primitive terms. In contrast, Bonhoeffer would not map protology onto other peoples, given that his far more positive account of the state is lost to all. He therefore shows a more expansive use of 'we' in assuming the guilt of a postlapsarian division of thought.

I. Hegel on the Primal State of Others

As a lecturer, Hegel regularly employs the third person singular to describe the object of his inquiry.[99] However, he makes a suggestive departure by employing the first person singular in describing division:

> Evil first exists within the sphere of estrangement: it is the consciousness of being-for-one-self vis-à-vis an other, but also vis-à-vis an object that is inherently universal in the sense of the concept or rational will. I exist for myself for the first time by means of this separation, and therein lies the evil. To be evil means in an abstract sense to isolate myself.[100]

Hegel's use of the first person singular to inhabit the 'natural' person is apt, for narrow preoccupation with the self is a primary characteristic of 'natural' humanity. His pronominal turn can be understood as an enactment of his pervasive claim that 'contemplation or knowledge is itself what is evil'.[101] This suits Hegel's approach to the philosophy of religion is intended as no mere 'historical' curiosity but an explication of humanity according to the 'concept', with present-tense implications.

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[99] E.g. 'the natural man does not exist in the form that he ought to…' *LPR III,* 123; *VPR III,* 97.

[100] *LPR III,* 143; *VPR III,* 109. Adams identifies this switch to the first person singular in another passage of the lecture manuscript in 'Hegel Reads Genesis'.

[101] *LPR III,* 143; *VPR III,* 109–10.

Hegel's use of the first person *plural* may at first seem unremarkable, though investigation of his other works reveals a disturbing cultural constriction.[102] In his *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, delivered over the same decade as his course on the philosophy of religion, Hegel's pejorative terms for the primal state feature as he summons his audience in 1820s Berlin to consider the developmental stage of other cultures. In a section entitled 'The Natural Context or the Geographical Basis of World History', he overlays an 'implicit' divide in protology on other peoples, as shown in the following observation:

Thus, in Africa as a whole, we encounter what has been called the *state of innocence*, in which man supposedly lives in unity with God and nature. For in this state, man is as yet unconscious of himself. The spirit should not remain permanently in such a state, however, but must abandon this primitive condition. … Man is not truly a human being until he knows what goodness is, has experienced opposition, and become divided within himself. For he can only know what is good if he also has knowledge of evil. For this reason, the state of paradise is not a perfect one. … For the concept of the spirit is only potentially present, and it has wrongly been assumed that it already existed in reality.[103]

Hegel's ensuing commentary on accounts of intra-African slavery shows the disturbing political import of his contemporised use of protology. On the one hand, he makes the unequivocal claim that '[s]lavery ought not to exist, as it is by definition unjust in and for itself'.[104] On the other, such injustice is explained as characteristic of the primal state, conceding the educative effect slavery can have for those peoples who have allegedly not yet emerged into the necessary divide of consciousness.[105]

At least Hegel acknowledges an initial barrier to thought at the level of cross-cultural understanding. 'We' have great difficulty understanding the African context, he states, as it is 'remote and alien in relation to our own mode of consciousness'.[106] However, while this other culture cannot be accessed through the feeling of those in the lecture hall, much less an actual voyage, he maintains that it is ultimately accessible through the mediation of thought.[107] The exercise reveals a troubling cultural assumption embedded in Hegel's philosophy: it is an inquiry that presumes the 'rational state' of his Germanic audience.

Enslavement is not the only historical dynamic at stake in Hegel's remarks. Chillingly, he also speaks of the native peoples of the Americas, those who exhibited 'a purely natural culture which had to perish as soon as the spirit approached it'.[108] Identifying the peoples of America as ever 'physically and

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[102] E.g. 'we need only briefly to be reminded…' *LPR III,* 126; *VPR III,* 99.
[103] *LPWH,* 178.
[104] *LPWH,* 183–84.
[105] *LPWH,* 183.
[106] *LPWH,* 176.
[107] *LPWH,* 176.
[108] *LPWH,* 163.

spiritually impotent', it is little surprise that 'the natives were gradually destroyed by the breath of European activity'.[109]

Hegel's comments show the terrible political corollary of his contemporisation of a deficient primal state. Such fatal cultural divisions offer a stark example of a broader Enlightenment understanding that 'reason could only come to maturity in modern Europe', in the words of Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze.[110] Although Hegel's more cautious, retrospective approach should be distinguished from the stronger regulative appeal of Kant's racial theories, the political outworking of his views take their place within a broader movement of 'providential historicism' that has frequently undergirded colonial projects.[111] It is one of the complex, sometimes 'savage', ironies of the spread of Idealism.

II. Bonhoeffer on 'Our' Urgeschichte

Bonhoeffer is also susceptible to showing the prejudice of his cultural location. For instance, disturbing statements from the late 1920s reveal his own attempt at a historicised account of providence that oversees the expansion of one people at the cost of another.[112] This material has been recently criticised by Reggie Williams, who argues that it took work alongside African Americans in Harlem to unlearn the disregard for others' lives that characterises some of Bonhoeffer's earlier lectures, emerging as they did from a wounded nationalism after the 1914–18 War.[113]

Nevertheless, Bonhoeffer's use of the first person pronoun is more expansive and self-indicting than Hegel's. This is partly because he does not contemporise the primal state, much less one that is deficient, but also because by this point he has left behind the attempt at a providential historical account. Acknowledging that any attempt to think protology is inevitably conditioned by 'our' cleaving form of thought, Bonhoeffer underscores the first person plural in the assumption of guilt:

This is God's Word; this is an event at the beginning of history, before history, beyond history, and yet in history; this is a decision that affects the world; *we ourselves* are the ones who are affected, are intended, are addressed, accused, condemned, expelled; *God, yes God,*

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[109] *LPWH*, 163.

[110] Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, 'Introduction', *Race and the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1997), 4.

[111] See David Fergusson, 'Divine Providence', *The Oxford Handbook of Theology and Modern European Thought*, eds. Nicholas Adams, et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 663–65.

[112] Such claims have to be read in the context of Bonhoeffer's resentment at the punitive measures of the Treaty of Versailles, including the reallocation of land. See *DBWE 10*, 373; *DBW 10*, 339.

[113] Reggie Williams, *Bonhoeffer's Black Jesus* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014), 10–15.

is the one who blesses and curses; it is *our* primeval history [*Urgeschichte*], truly our own, every individual person's beginning, destiny, guilt, and end – so says the church of Christ.[114]

Bonhoeffer is sure to render the address of God's Word as 'external' in an effort to exceed both the presuppositions of an age and cultural borderlines. To this end, he regularly reminds his Berlin lecture audience of how this text challenges the presumption of *Wissenschaft*. Bonhoeffer thus oscillates from the third to the first person plural, in a single passage speaking of human beings who, with 'all *their* other mental or spiritual powers, are simply unable to transport themselves to this paradise "beyond good and evil,"' continuing that this is the case 'because *our* thinking too is only the expression of our being, of our existence, which is grounded in contradiction'.[115]

Tellingly, Bonhoeffer's *nostra culpa* keeps him from merely scapegoating the classical German philosophers. At one point he places himself and his audience between the poles of confidence in reason represented by Kant and Hegel, identifying shared anxiety at the prospect of an unknown beginning.[116] Bonhoeffer extends this collective identification from Idealist philosophers to include the biblical writer. Remarkably, he claims that the biblical account bears the marks of split cognisance, as suggested by the fact that the Fall takes place in the *Zwielicht,* 'twilight'. The poorly illumined scene means that its actors will often be mistaken, nuances of expression lost. This setting signifies the ambiguity of an event in which evil comes through good creatures, such as the serpent and tree, a troubling duality which 'must on no account be crudely simplified and its two aspects be torn apart'.[117] Bonhoeffer states:

For precisely this twilight, this ambiguity, in which the creation here stands constitutes the only possible way for human beings in the middle to speak about this event – and the Yahwist too was a human being in the middle.[118]

Though conceding the way in which scripture itself is conditioned by the human incapacity to know its beginning, Bonhoeffer nevertheless claims it as the site through which God's Word breaks in on the cleaving tendency of fallen thought.[119] It is only in this way that the twilight allows discernment of a form – the Adam who 'disturbs and criticises us'.[120] The claim to this disruptive Word thus seeks to reverse the judgement Hegel and others visit on primal humanity, even on the 'primitive' form of the text.

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[114] *DBWE 3,* 82; *DBW 3,* 77.
[115] *DBWE 3,* 92, emphases added; *DBW 3,* 86.
[116] *DBWE 3,* 27–28; *DBW 3,* 26–27.
[117] *DBWE 3,* 104; *DBW 3,* 97.
[118] *DBWE 3,* 104; *DBW 3,* 97.
[119] *DBWE 3,* 30; *DBW 3,* 29.
[120] *DBWE 3,* 92; *DBW 3*, 87.

E. A 'Sublation' of Ethics?

Bonhoeffer's work with the Genesis text, read after Hegel, provides a radical criticism of the lecture theatre as a site for moral knowledge. This final section considers the reach of that challenge in light of the reception of the later *Ethics*. I argue that Bonhoeffer carries forward many aspects of his engagement with Hegel over Genesis 1–3, with implications for the translation of allusive terms such as *Aufhebung*. To this end, I make a parallel case to Garrett Green's thesis that Barth's 'sublation of religion' reflects his own Hegelian form of thought, entailing a subtlety that ought to trouble assumptions beyond schools of theology.

Bonhoeffer takes up key 'logical' terms derived from his exegesis of Genesis 1–3 in the 1942 *Ethics* manuscript entitled 'God's Love and the Disintegration of the World'. He refers to the knowledge of good and evil as *Wissen um Gut und Böse*, his earlier differentiated construction for the postlapsarian state.[121] Moreover, he regularly repeats the claim that such knowledge entails a state of *Entzweiung* with respect to the origin, which editor Clifford Green links to the reference to the world's 'disintegration' in the manuscript title.[122] Bonhoeffer therefore dismisses psychological analysis as subject to this 'law of disunion' and thus no ultimate source of reintegration.[123] There is little doubt that Bonhoeffer's onslaught intends a thoroughgoing negation of the 'cleaving' tendency in human thought.

Such negation has been briskly presented in English translations of the *Ethics*, particularly as this section has previously featured as the first chapter of Bonhoeffer's proposed book. Bethge's longstanding rendition reads that insofar as 'the knowledge of good and evil' appears to be the aim of all ethical reflection, the discipline of Christian ethics must work 'to invalidate' this knowledge.[124] The more recent critical edition differs from this direct negation to render Bonhoeffer's bold statement thus:

The knowledge of good and evil [*Wissen um Gut und Böse*] appears to be the goal of all ethical reflection. The first task of Christian ethics is *to supersede* [*aufzuheben*] that knowledge. This attack on the presuppositions of all other ethics is so unique that it is questionable whether it even makes sense to speak of Christian ethics at all.[125]

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[121] *DBWE 6*, 299–300; *DBW 6*, 301.

[122] *DBWE 6*, 300; *DBW 6*, 302, with Green's comment on *DBWE 6*, 300, n[6]. The titular translation of *Zerfall* is an improvement, in terms of signalling the regular use of *Entzweiung*, from Bethge's translation 'decay'.

[123] *DBWE 6*, 320; *DBW 6*, 322.

[124] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, ed. Eberhard Bethge (London: SCM Press, 1955), 3.

[125] *DBWE 6*, 299–300, emphasis mine; *DBW 6*, 301. The translators for this edition are Reinhard Krauss, Charles West, and Douglass Stott.

The translation is an improvement in that it moves beyond sheer negation. Nevertheless, in light of Bonhoeffer's sustained engagement with Hegel's thought over the Genesis materials, closer attention should be paid to his use of the verb *aufheben*.[126]

As this chapter has shown, Bonhoeffer does not employ philosophically-freighted diction uncritically. He is willing to place the verb on the lips of the tempter, serving to warn exegetes that the 'evil one' can use a philosophical term of art just as he might employ scripture. Nevertheless, I have sought to argue that Bonhoeffer does not merely demonise the Hegelian terms he encounters, naively thinking he can 'break' with his predecessor. The markings in his personal copy of Hegel's lectures show a clear interest in how Christianity might serve as the 'sublation' of *Entzweiung*.[127] Insofar as Bonhoeffer does differ, he likely intends to redeploy the term to his own ends.

Bonhoeffer's particular usage can be seen in 'God's Love and the Disintegration of the World' when he later makes reference to the one who lives from 'the *Aufhebung* of the knowledge of good and evil'.[128] This state is characterised by newfound unity in that it is no longer torn between various ethical possibilities; the person has 'only the one option of being elected to do the one will of God in simplicity'.[129] Although the term 'simplicity' [*Einfalt*] suggests an account of instinctive obedience over and against reflective moral deliberation, this is to miss the nuance of Bonhoeffer's diction. As Kaiser argues, the initial tension between direct response and reflection emerges into a new unity rather than a one-sided solution.[130] Indeed, Kaiser acknowledges that Bonhoeffer's account of simplicity is conditioned by the incorporation of human moral knowledge.[131]

Bonhoeffer's appeal to simplicity is therefore better understood as a contrast with two particular views of moral reflection. First, Bonhoeffer is reacting to the depiction of ethics as an arena of 'tragic conflict'. In this he is reacting against Eduard Spranger, whom he cites as saying that the 'point of decision

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[126] Unfortunately, while *Entzweiung* and other critical terms are added in brackets, this verb is not provided. Moreover, in the midst of many superb critical notes, Hegel's technical use of this term is not mentioned the way it is in notations on *Creation and Fall*. Relatedly, it should be noted that the verb *aufheben* is only given one entry (from *Akt und Sein*) in the overall *DBW Register*, while neither verbal nor nominal forms of 'supersede', 'subvert', or 'suspend', are listed in the subject area of the *DBWE* index.

[127] *NL-VPR I*, 202.

[128] *DBWE 6*, 320 alt.; *DBW 6*, 322.

[129] *DBWE 6*, 320; *DBW 6*, 322.

[130] The 'tension' between unreflective and reflective acts is not left in that state, but drawn into conceptual unity on the basis of Christ's two natures. Kaiser, *Becoming*, 18, cf. 56–59.

[131] Kaiser states that, for Bonhoeffer, Christian ethics 'supersedes the knowledge of good and evil precisely by incorporating it, in some manner, into itself'. He notes this as a 'more Hegelian meaning', though he does not suggest translation according to standard Hegel texts. Kaiser, *Becoming*, 23.

of specifically ethical experience is always conflict'.[132] As his ensuing treatment of Antigone shows, Bonhoeffer claims that a mindset that only sees conflictual laws in operation belongs to a pre-Christian manner of thought. For the New Testament, ethics is not a matter of conflict; reappropriating Spranger's reference to 'ethical experience', Bonhoeffer claims that 'the rediscovered unity, the reconciliation has become the ground'.[133] As a result, 'there is nothing problematic, tortured, or dark about the living and acting of human beings, but instead something self-evident, joyous, certain, and clear'.[134]

On the theme of overcoming conflict, it is worth noting that Bonhoeffer's depiction of the 'cleaving' mind in *Ethics* carries a series of philosophical implications. The *Entzweiung* of the knowledge of good-evil contains a number of cleavages that are 'variations' [*Spielarten*] on that central division. These variations include, *inter alia*, the split between idea [*Idee*] and reality, reason [*Vernunft*] and instinct, universal and concrete, individual and collective.[135] Of particular note given Bonhoeffer's criticism of Hegel's theory of the incarnation, another such cleavage is that between 'necessity and freedom'.[136] Although Bonhoeffer does not develop the nature of these divisions here they serve to show that simplicity is not to be confused with resignation to 'one-sidedness'.

Second, Bonhoeffer's account of simplicity stands in distinction to self-knowledge as a means of self-justification. In other words, it is a form of action that foregoes the 'knowledge of one's own goodness'.[137] Bonhoeffer therefore refers to the 'simple act' rather than one which is innocent or guiltless. While the undividedness of the act is paramount, this is not merely to reinstate the conditions of primal existence; 'being in Adam' has, in that sense, been irretrievably lost. After all, when it comes to the post-Fall world, Bonhoeffer is sympathetic to Hegel's claim to the necessity of *Schuld*. Bonhoeffer therefore proposes that 'the structure of responsible action involves both *willingness to become guilty* [*Schuldübernahme*] and *freedom*'.[138] Insofar as moral deliberation assures a moral actor that she is in the right, it threatens to replace a response to God's will that may well require the assumption of guilt.

The ground for assuming guilt is the person and decisive action of Christ, who bore guilt on behalf of humanity and embodies the good in and for his people. Christine Schliesser has shown that Bonhoeffer's references to becom-

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[132] Bonhoeffer references Spranger's work *Lebensformen*, acknowledging that Spranger defines his sense of conflict more narrowly. *DBW 6*, 311.

[133] *DBWE 6*, 309; *DBW 6*, 311.

[134] *DBWE 6*, 309; *DBW 6*, 311.

[135] *DBWE 6*, 308; *DBW 6*, 310.

[136] *DBWE 6*, 308; *DBW 6*, 310.

[137] *DBWE 6*, 320; *DBW 6*, 322–323

[138] *DBWE 6*, 275; *DBW 6*, 275–76.

ing guilty through responsible action are thoroughly grounded in his Christology.[139] Schliesser traces how Bonhoeffer's theme develops from earlier works, in which the emphasis was on sharing in others' guilt or seeking out the guilty, to *Ethics*, in which guilt is actively incurred in one's own action.[140] Counterintuitively, therefore, it is precisely the acceptance of guilt that is paired with the 'simple, i.e. "untragic" Christian life'.[141] After all, Bonhoeffer's later theory was worked out in light of his renunciation of American refuge in order to take part in political resistance to his homeland regime, action which led many in the church to suspect and even disown him.[142] Even such guilt does not entail tragedy, however, for it is grounded in a reconciled relationship with God.

Meanwhile, a crucial matter of translation appears at the hinge point between Hegel's and Bonhoeffer's accounts of the cleaving mind and the reconciliation that comes through the revelation of Christ in the church. Bonhoeffer's unmodified use of *Aufhebung* suggests he is willing to let the allusion to Hegel stand, qualifying his account contextually rather than avoiding, or altering, key terms. Thus, for a translator to take one side of this ambiguous term is likely to offer too much interpretive help, well considered though the reasons may be. The case for retaining the dual sense of the term *aufheben* is particularly compelling in light of Bonhoeffer's explicit mention, in other writings from the period, that this is precisely what he intends. In his account of the *primus usus legis*, Bonhoeffer claims the use of the law as '"sublated" ["*aufgehoben*"] (in the double sense of the word) by the gospel. It is broken and fulfilled [*durchbrochen und erfüllt*]'. This is significant for the fate of the knowledge of good-evil because Bonhoeffer notes the ways in which this first use of the law is susceptible to the 'righteousness of works', giving rise to human presumption and sin.[143] The translator for this critical edition explicitly notes the use of a standard translation of Hegel's term.[144]

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[139] Christine Schliesser, *Everyone Who Acts Responsibly Becomes Guilty: Bonhoeffer's Concept of Accepting Guilt* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 59, 137.

[140] She argues for an 'unbridgeable qualitative difference between Christ's action and ours' with respect to his sinlessness, while acknowledging the criticism that there is some Christological confusion when it comes to the active incurrence of guilt. See Schliesser, *Everyone*, 92, 139, 182.

[141] She also makes reference to his divergence from Greek tragedy. See Schliesser, *Everyone*, 144, 176.

[142] Schliesser recalls that the Confessing Church removed Bonhoeffer's name from its prayer list, while the Bishop of Bavaria refused to perform a ceremony on his behalf. Schliesser, *Everyone*, 196.

[143] *DBWE 16*, 594; *DBW 16*, 611.

[144] This rationale is repeated when Bonhoeffer employs the verb with respect to the fallen exercise of human government, which would be eschatologically '"sublated" (in a double sense)' through Christ's rule. *DBWE 16*, 512; *DBW 16*, 516.

The translation of key philosophical terms has implications for the extent of Bonhoeffer's reception, particularly whether he is read beyond theology faculties. This concern is at the forefront of Garrett Green's challenge to the longstanding translation of Karl Barth's term *Aufhebung* as the 'abolition' of religion. Green claims that as Barth goes on to speak of 'the true religion', this rendering has been 'wholly misleading' with the result that *Church Dogmatics* is neglected in the Religious Studies canon.[145] To counter this tendency, Green argues that the term's technical aspect has to be preserved because '[a]s in Hegel, so in Barth, *Aufhebung* is a key to the *logic* of the argument, a logic that can be appropriately termed dialectical for both, though in quite different senses'.[146] Thus, Green argues that Barth's claim of revelation as the *Aufhebung* of religion ought to be translated as 'sublimation' rather than 'abolition', although I would argue that there are good reasons to stay with Green's earlier suggestion of 'sublation'.[147]

If this logical dynamic should be preserved in Barth's writings, the need to express critical variations on Hegel is all the more acute with Bonhoeffer. On the one hand, Bonhoeffer's radical criticism of ethics draws on Barth, an influence particularly evident in his call to Christian deliberation 'as the critique of all ethics'.[148] On the other, he is not wholly within the Barthian circle, as from his first dissertation he sought to start reflection from the doctrine of the church, socialising basic Christian concepts with a turn on Hegel's phrase 'God existing as community'. This mediating instinct is identified by Bonhoeffer's contemporary Franz Hildebrandt, who would characterise his friend as attempting to work with categories drawn from both Barth and Hegel.

In summary, Bonhoeffer scholarship has moved on from a translation of *Aufhebung* that suggests sheer negation and its various translation choices are well considered. However, I argue that in light of Bonhoeffer's critical engagement that stretches back to Genesis 1, it is important to signal ongoing reference to Hegel's term of art in the translation of *Aufhebung*, even as Bonhoeffer

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[145] Garrett Green, 'Introduction' in Karl Barth, *On Religion: The Revelation of God as the Sublimation of Religion*, ed. and trans. Garrett Green (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), 5. My thanks to Carsten Card-Hyatt for this reference.

[146] Green, 'Introduction' in Barth, *On Religion*, 6.

[147] The decision for 'sublation' comes in Garrett Green, 'Challenging the Religious Studies Canon: Karl Barth's Theory of Religion', *Journal of Religion* Volume 75, Issue 4 (October 1995), 477. He later makes the change in order to overcome the drawback that the former is not a common English term, while *aufheben* has an everyday usage in German. Green also wants to invoke the term 'sublime' with respect to Barth's view of an emerging 'higher' form of religion. However, this leads to several qualifications, as Green has to distinguish 'sublimation' from *Sublimierung*, claiming Barth's concept 'has nothing whatever to do with the Freudian concept'. Astonishingly, he concedes that 'the reader must add the dialectical pole of negation'. See 'Translator's Preface', in Barth, *On Religion,* ix.

[148] The editorial notes are particularly good on picking up echoes of Barth, noting here the use of this phrase in the *Commentary on Romans*. DBWE 6, 300n3; *DBW 6*, 301.

forges his alternative account of reconciliation. Further research will be required to distinguish their respective accounts of the 'simplicity' of thought on the other side of division.[149] The claim of the current chapter is that such a project would have to take account of a robust engagement that reaches back to Genesis 1. Moreover, it has traced an incisive account of the 'cleaving mind', drawn from the biblical text and philosophical engagement, across the current division of academic faculties.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that Hegel's account of the fallen state provides Bonhoeffer with a compelling criticism of moral cognisance, while provoking him to thereby subvert his predecessor's judgement on the primal state. To make this case, I have traced Bonhoeffer's opposition to Hegel's account of 'divine knowledge' while showing that there is nevertheless alliance in a scripturally-derived depiction of the fallen mind. I render this as a state of perpetual 'cleaving' – a drive for unity in the knowledge of good-evil that in turn divides the knowing subject. I have then shown how Bonhoeffer uses the characterisation of a 'cleaving' mind against the claim to know the beginning, particularly Hegel's depiction of primal humanity as a volatile composite of nature and *Geist*. Bonhoeffer's changes of diction from nature to earth, and guiltlessness to wholeness help to resist the prelapsarian divide suggested by Hegel's terms. In short, Bonhoeffer is *for* Hegel by employing a similar depiction of the cleaving state of thought after the Fall, but *against* Hegel by inhabiting this condition in order to subvert claims to know the beginning. This is the negative corollary of Bonhoeffer's emphasis on the eschatological and Christological reorientation of theological ethics.

Finally, I have begun to explore the political import in Hegel and Bonhoeffer's respective uses of the first person pronoun, showing how they understand their own inquiries to be conditioned by the text. I note Hegel's suggestive use of the first person singular as an enactment of the 'natural' human, while showing how his first person plural is elsewhere allied to a prejudiced account of other cultures as 'primitive'. This is contrasted with Bonhoeffer's explicit use of the pronominal 'we' in his attempt to criticism judgement rendered against the Bible's account of pre-fallen humanity, so attending to the divine Word that comes through such ambiguous figures. I have also gestured towards the way Bonhoeffer's later claim to the *Aufhebung* of the knowledge of good and

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[149] Hegel speaks of the need for the 'cleavage of the simple [*Entzweiung des Einfachen*]'. That division is not recalcitrant, as he goes on to speak of the 'simple unity [*einfache Einheit*] of the concept'. *PhG* §18, alt. §795.

evil remains a critical response to Hegel, with implications for English trans-
lation. This leads Bonhoeffer to claim that truly Christian ethics requires nega-
tion towards a renewed form of life that combines simple unity of obedience
with the assumption of *Schuld*. In providing the background for such variation,
this chapter has shown the demanding task required of lecturers who would
take up Hegel's and Bonhoeffer's attempts to address a contemporary, fallen
humanity – 'us'.

Part Two

The Substitution of Christ

Chapter 3

Disruption of the Word: Christ as Counter-*Logos*

One can legitimately ask *who* only after the self-revelation of the other to whom one puts the question has already taken place, after the immanent logos has already been sublated.

    – Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Christology Lectures

This chapter considers Bonhoeffer's polemic against Hegel's alleged reduction of Christ to 'Idea'. In his 1933 Christology lectures, Bonhoeffer states that the most refined example of a 'docetic' tendency can be found in Hegel's work. He specifies that while Hegel does not claim Christ's appearance is mere illusion, the distinction between 'Idea' and 'Appearance' becomes an opposition that should be avoided in Christology. Bonhoeffer therefore narrates a direct confrontation between the *Menschenlogos*, 'human *logos*', and the *Gegenlogos*, Christ as 'counter-*logos*'. This confrontation seems perpetual, given Bonhoeffer's radicalisation of Christ's posture *pro me*.

Although Bonhoeffer depicts Christ as the *Logos* that disrupts human thought projects, I argue that he does not present a figure altogether 'against reason'. Rather, Bonhoeffer's Christ 'counters' human forms of classification that conceive of divinity and humanity, or indeed idea and appearance, outside the unity of Christ's person. The *Menschenlogos* includes reason's attempt to 'self-negate', which Bonhoeffer identifies as one of Hegel's tactics. Even though the dialectic is narrated as a contest of wills, Bonhoeffer gestures towards a properly Christological use of reason to emerge from the confrontation, an endeavour that invites closer comparison to Hegel's project.

I argue, therefore, that Bonhoeffer's *Menschenlogos-Gegenlogos* dialectic should be set alongside his statements of a renewed form of reason, even *Wissenschaft*, for which Christ is the 'hidden centre'. Relatedly, I trace how Bonhoeffer later employs 'structural' language in his account of 'the one Christ-reality'. This move has led critics such as André Dumas to express concern over how Bonhoeffer seems to follow Hegel in construing Christ as a principle. In Dumas' words, 'the incarnation is in danger of becoming one of the ongoing structures of becoming, and of being universalized as it is depersonalized'.[1]

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[1] André Dumas, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Theologian of Reality,* trans. Robert McAfee Brown (London: SCM Press, 1971), 233.

Hegel's own Christology has been criticised along similar lines, that is, for minimising the unique encounter between persons.[2]

These charges will be answered, in part, through close readings of Hegel's relevant texts. I will identify Hegel's attempt to honour the singularity of Christ as well as his articulation of a form of necessity that is not opposed to freedom. I also question the charge that Hegel offers a modalist account, while acknowledging that he overcorrects in the effort to challenge 'externalised' forms of knowing in Christology such as historical-rationalist 'proofs' and the evidence of miracles. Finally, I follow a recent argument that a *Logos*-Christology is the inception of Hegel's philosophical work. Such a case fits the overall interpretive framework that Hegel develops a logic derived from Christology rather than attempting wholesale theological revision. If this is indeed Hegel's task, then Bonhoeffer can be seen to criticise episodes of estrangement, even contest disciplinary priority, without merely depicting Christ as 'anti-reason'. Christology is therefore inseparable from the work of *Wissenschaft*, even if this is another case of 'revelation in hiddenness'.

A. Idea and Appearance: A Classification that Divides?

This first section considers Hegel's prioritisation of the Idea in his account of the person of Christ. In light of charges that Hegel does not honour the singularity of Christ, I first show the uniqueness he grants to Christ's Appearance, then explain his decided shift to the Johannine farewell discourses. In particular, I argue that Hegel's concern with a certain 'fetishisation' of Christ, with its implications for a crudely external form of ecclesial authority, lead him to emphasise the way of knowing exercised by the spirited community. While the shift is understandable for his contextualised philosophical enquiry, it can have deleterious effects on the theological witness that the church is the 'body' of Christ. Bonhoeffer, writing as an ecclesial theologian, begins his criticism at this point.

I. Hegel on the Relation of Idea and Appearance

In the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, there are four pertinent aspects to the distinction between Idea [*Idee*] and Appearance [*Erscheinung*] in Hegel's treatment of Christ.[3] First, the Idea is the way in which the human person rises above the merely natural state. As shown in Hegel's treatment of Genesis, life according to nature is 'evil' and isolated, requiring the elevation that comes

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[2] Hegel's Christology is called 'the victory of structure over event' in O'Regan, *Anatomy*, 202.

[3] 'Idea' and 'Appearance' are capitalised in order to indicate Hegel's technical use of these terms, particularly his emphasis on their singularity.

through consciousness of the Idea. The latency of the 'image of God' means that separation between divine and human nature is not final, 'rather the truth is their identity'. Alluding back to the 'primal' state he perceives in Genesis, Hegel claims that the human spirit thus holds an 'exigency for reconciliation'. It is this implicit truth that unfolds into the consummation of Christianity, namely, the 'transfiguration of finitude' accessible to all people.[4]

Second, the Idea is external to the person. As that which must '*come to*' the subject, the Idea transcends attachment to narrower determinations.[5] It is not ultimately alien, but calls forth what is implicit in the nature-spirit compound that is the human subject. Hegel does not speak of the Idea as a foreign *imposition*, although it may first appear this way to natural consciousness. It is properly understood as an *evocation*, drawing forth what is latent in the finite human subject. Such trans-temporal consciousness – 'elevated above all locality, nationality, condition, life-situation' – has radical implications for human equality, with slavery becoming unconscionable.[6]

Third, the Idea is not abstract but given in a single, concrete Appearance. As Hegel states, 'the unity [of divine and human nature] should disclose itself in a wholly temporal, completely common worldly appearance in one particular man'.[7] It can only be human, for it is only the human that is *Geist* in the sensible order; instances such as the burning bush do not count. Moreover, the Appearance goes beyond language as Hegel emphasises that this figure is not merely a teacher, whether of morality or even of the Idea; rather, he is 'the immediate certainty and presence of divinity'.[8] Such immediacy makes this a 'concrete' occurrence in which both divine and human natures 'set aside their abstraction vis-à-vis each other'.[9] In other words, particularity cannot be spoken of 'in general', for that would not provide the bold, defining encounter required: 'the unity in question must appear for others as a single, exclusive man'.[10] Hegel underlines this claim by drawing attention to logical construction: '[The Idea exists] in this individual just as the singular exists as a predicate in a particular judgement'.[11]

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[4] *LPR III,* 173–4; *VPR III,* 134.

[5] *LPR III,* 170; *VPR III,* 131.

[6] *LPR III,* 170; *VPR III,* 131.

[7] *LPR III,* 171; *VPR III,* 131.

[8] *LPR III,* 171; *VPR III,* 132.

[9] *LPR III,* 174; *VPR III,* 135.

[10] *LPR III,* 181–2; *VPR III,* 136.

[11] *LPR III,* 173; *VPR III,* 133. Earlier, he reiterates *das Est,* 'the Is', several times, reinforcing the identification of divine and human through an allusion to Luther's defence of the real presence.

Hegel specifies that the Idea is not conveyed in multiple incarnations. 'In one, all', he asserts, remarking that 'in several, divinity becomes an abstraction'.[12] He then addresses the foil of multiple incarnations with an expanded rationale:

God appears as a single person to whose immediacy all sorts of physical necessities are attached. In Indian pantheism a countless number of incarnations occur; there subjectivity, human being, is only an accidental form, and in God it is only a mask that substance adopts and changes in an accidental way. God as Spirit, however, contains in himself the moment of subjectivity and individuality; his appearance, accordingly, can only be a single one, can take place only once.[13]

This statement shows the work a critic has to do in suggesting that so long as the Idea remains, the Appearance is replaceable. Such an interpretation is nevertheless ventured by Hodgson, who seeks to 'extend' Hegel's work by claiming that the exclusivity of the figure of Christ is not required by Hegel's philosophical principles, which evidently precede theological claims. Hodgson regards Hegel's attempt at differentiation from the 'several' of Indian religion to be merely accommodation of 'normative Christian doctrine', a concession later readers can expand in light of postmodern, pluralist consciousness.[14] He thus prises apart the Idea of divine-human unity and a single, determinative Appearance in his representation of Hegel's work.[15]

Hegel's commitment to normative doctrine leads to his own criticism of docetism in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, delivered in the same decade as the *Philosophy of Religion* series. Here he comments on Christ's particularity more directly:

It is not enough that the concrete moment in God should be known, for it is also necessary that this representation of God should be known as tied to humanity; it should be known that Christ was an actual man. That is the tie with humanity in its *thisness* [*als Diesen*]. The moment of being *this one* is the great moment of shock in the Christian religion; it is the binding together of the most shocking antithesis.[16]

This statement is followed by the observation that the 'greatness of the Idea could only emerge after the initial Appearance', that is, the development of

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[12] *LPR III,* 173; *VPR III,* 132–3. The notion of several incarnations in 'Indian' thought is thus superficial, that is, 'counter to the concept of individual subjectivity'.

[13] *LPR III,* 183; *VPR III,* 138.

[14] Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, 161–2.

[15] It is worth noting that this interpretive move conditions Hodgson's editorial decisions, making the current English critical edition differ from that which Bonhoeffer read. For instance, Hodgson gives the English title 'Incarnation' to Lasson's chapter 'The God-Man and Reconciliation'. He claims that Hegel rarely uses the latter hyphenated term – that on which Bonhoeffer insists – preferring terms such as 'appearance', 'becoming', or 'unity'. *LPR III,* 221n1. Hodgson's broader interpretative stance, that Hegel is 'reconstructing' Christian theology, should be taken into account in evaluating such editorial decisions.

[16] *LHP III,* 27; *VGP 4,* 14–15.

doctrine in the spirited early church.[17] Hegel plots his bold statement of Christ 'in thisness' between the two alternate positions of gnosticism and Arianism. In gnosticism, Hegel sees that the immediate presence of the individual is 'etherealized into the form of the spiritual'.[18] In Arianism, Hegel notes that the individual is acknowledged but is not linked to the 'self-determining of the divine Idea', that is, the *Logos*.[19] Between these two views, Hegel claims that early theologians held to a unity of 'divine and human nature' in this individual, which therefore 'entered the consciousness of the church'.[20]

Fourth, and finally, the Idea conveys that although the Christ event is concrete, it neither proves too much on its surface nor remains a brute, meaningless contingency. Hegel's distinction between Idea and Appearance is motivated in part by his argument against a form of 'empirical-rationalist advocacy' that sought unambiguous historical proofs.[21] Hegel instead makes clear that Christ's Appearance, specifically its content as 'the unity of the finite and the infinite', can be confirmed in consciousness only through the inner 'witness of the Spirit'.[22] He connects this biblical phrase to his own discipline by claiming that it is philosophy's task not to leave this internal testimony mute.[23] Hegel thus makes a strong claim to overcome the merely 'empirical' reading of the human Christ that even heretics acknowledge.

Nevertheless, Hegel's 'witness of the Spirit' tends to awaken awareness of the divine nature within that which is already perceived as human. For instance, his treatment of Jesus' mere humanity, compared to that of Socrates, seems to suggest that natural perception can grasp the human 'side' while spirited perception then awakens to the divine.[24] The following passage describes the awareness of the religious subject, which is to say, recipient of the outpouring of the Spirit:

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[17] *LHP III,* 27; *VGP 4,* 14–15.

[18] *LHP III,* 28; *VGP 4,* 16.

[19] *LHP III,* 28; *VGP 4,* 16.

[20] *LHP III,* 29; *VGP 4,* 16.

[21] The term comes from O'Regan, *Heterodox Hegel,* 215.

[22] *LPR III*, 191; *VPR III*, 148–9. *Geist* will be left in the common English translation 'Spirit' when Hegel employs such evident references to biblical phrases and Christian doctrine.

[23] 'Philosophy must explain that this is not merely a mute inner witness but also is present in the element of thinking'. *LPR III*, 191; *VPR III*, 148–9.

[24] As he claims slightly earlier, 'Christ is a man like Socrates, a teacher…who brought men to the awareness of what the truth really is and of what must constitute the basis of human consciousness. But according to the higher mode of contemplation, the divine nature has been revealed in Christ'. *LPR III*, 216; *VPR III*, 170.

The condition of the mere man is changed into a condition that is thoroughly altered and transfigured by the Spirit, so that the nature of God is disclosed therein, and such that this truth obtains immediate certainty in accord with the mode of appearance.[25]

As this statement reveals, Hegel makes an overarching claim to unity between the natures but he assumes that the human nature is understood while the divine nature is hidden. Bonhoeffer's account of unity overtly resists such advance categorisation, interpreting the scriptural statement that Christ came 'in the likeness of the flesh' as an irreducible instance of 'revelation in hiddenness'. Given such assumed classification, Bonhoeffer will emphasise the need for disruptive revelatory encounter with the whole person of Christ in order to understand not only God, but humanity itself.

II. Noli me Tangere: Hegel on Christ's Departure

In light of Hegel's broader argument against miraculous verification, his attempt to downplay Christ's sensible presence should be understood as a polemic against attempts to read too much from the surface of historical events. His target is what he terms a 'spiritless' mode of argumentation, likely a reference to then-contemporary interest in the historical study of Jesus' life and the attempt to derive proofs from his miracles. Refusing the 'ditch' assumed by G.E. Lessing's heirs, Hegel seeks to affirm the historical nature of Jesus of Nazareth while rooting confirmation of 'the Christ' in a spirited form of knowing:

The history of his teaching, life, death, and resurrection [has] taken place; thus this history exists for the community, and it is *absolutely adequate to the Idea*. This is what must be regarded as the crucial point; this is the verification, the absolute proof of a single individual; this is what is to be understood as the witness of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit, the indwelling Idea, that has attested Christ's mission, and this is the verification for those who believed and for us [who possess] the developed concept.[26]

Hegel's shift to the 'witness of the Spirit' seeks to avoid the tendency to lay the burden of proof on Christ's historical performance of miracles. Nevertheless, he does not settle with a Spirit devoid of history, seeking rather 'the relation of sensible confirmation and sensible occurrence, taken both together, to Spirit, to the spiritual content'.[27]

In Hegel's larger project of epistemology and political philosophy, the concern with 'spiritless' argument can be traced back to his criticism of the external authorities of a merely 'positive' religion. In a 1795 essay, he highlights the broadly participatory ownership of a *Volksreligion,* an ideal inspired by the

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[25] *LPR III*, 217; *VPR III*, 171.
[26] *LPR III*, 242–43; *VPR III,* 185–86.
[27] *LPR III,* 250; *VPR III,* 192.

harmony of the ancient Greek *polis*.[28] In contrast to this, Hegel sets the positivity of Judaism and many expressions of Christianity, which offer 'a virtue grounded on authority (which is either meaningless or a direct contradiction in terms)' rather than 'a free virtue springing from man's own being'.[29] Nothing contributes to an external, 'positive' authority in religion, he continues, so much as an appeal to miracles, which inappropriately became the sole reason for reverencing Jesus.[30]

Returning to the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion,* Hegel can be seen to acknowledge the importance of miracles in the formation of the community while still relativising their importance.[31] Citing Jesus' criticism of a faith that is utterly dependent on signs and wonders, Hegel observes that a certain curiosity about miracles 'presupposes doubt and disbelief'.[32] In this section, he is interested in the movement towards certainty, which requires a genuine faith that 'exists in the Spirit'. Only that would allow the community to believe in Jesus even when the sensible appearance no longer provides confirmation.[33] Such faith also avoids an opposition between sensible externality and consciousness, a 'fundamental separation' that 'brings with it the possibility of error, deception, and lack of the education necessary to form a correct conception of a fact'.[34] Hegel is not abandoning historical facts so much as seeking their fuller, more truthful perception.[35]

It is in the polemic against an overreliance on the miraculous 'proofs' in the confirmation of Jesus' identity that Hegel characterises spirited knowing, for which 'sensible history exists in essence only as accomplished – sublated [*aufgehoben*] to the right hand of God'.[36] A great deal depends on Hegel's claim that Christ's sensible presence is 'sublated'. The theological problem is evident when Hodgson glosses Hegel's *Aufhebung* in this instance as 'an annulling of [Christ's] sensible presence, yet a preservation of his real presence and its transfiguration into the modality of Spirit'.[37] 'Modality' is, of course, a highly contestable term given its ready association with the heresy of that

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[28] See Andrew Shanks, *Hegel's Political Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 27.

[29] G.W.F. Hegel, 'The Positivity of the Christian Religion', in *Early Theological Writings,* trans. T.M. Knox (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 71.

[30] Hegel, 'Positivity', 78–79.

[31] He states that they provide not 'immediate verification' but 'relative verification'. *LPR III,* 243; *VPR III,* 186.

[32] *LPR III,* 243; *VPR III,* 186.

[33] *LPR III,* 245; *VPR III,* 188.

[34] *LPR III,* 250; *VPR III,* 192.

[35] *Pace* Marsh's claims that Bonhoeffer's commitment to the historical concreteness of Jesus, and not just his historically redemptive benefits, differentiates him from Hegel, who seems 'indifferent' on the former. Marsh, *Reclaiming Dietrich Bonhoeffer,* 102.

[36] *LPR III,* 246; *VPR III,* 189.

[37] *LPR III*, 301, n. 32.

name. It is one of many reasons that Bonhoeffer and other theologians preserve traditional doctrinal claims of Christ's having been 'raised' or having 'ascended'.[38]

Although Hegel's focus clearly shifts to the form of knowing brought about by the indwelling Spirit, his associations of this Spirit and the Son show that he is not a mere modalist.[39] For example, he observes that although Christ is dead and his sensible body has been raised, his promissory statements of presence entail that '"with you, in you", he is the Holy Spirit'.[40] Hegel continues by oscillating between statements that the community is Spirit and that Christ is in its midst.[41] Moreover, he notes the fullness of the presence borne by the Spirit, stating that 'God as Spirit appears only as "triune": he is his manifestation, [his] self-objectification while remaining identical with [himself] in his objectification; eternal love'.[42] These statements reinforce the thicker doctrinal 'presupposition' that lies behind Hegel's reference to *Geist*, calling into question the charge of modalism.

The foils of empirical-rational 'proofs' and merely 'positive' authority should be kept in mind when reading Hegel's frequent allusions to Jesus' farewell discourses. Emphasising the need for Christ to go away along with the promise that the Spirit will guide the disciples into all truth, he uses the term 'sublation' with reference to the sensible immediacy of the man who is at the same time the 'divestment of the divine'.[43] The formation of the community is then glossed as occurring when 'the transition from externality to internality receives – a Comforter, who can come only when sensible history in its immediacy has passed by'.[44] I propose that such claims can be summarised as an emphatic statement of the *Noli me tangere* – Jesus' words to Mary not to cling to his bodily form in light of the ascension. The phrase is apt insofar as Hegel resists both empirical 'proofs' of divinity and the 'fetishism' of a certain appearance.[45] It should be used advisedly, however, for Hegel does not comment on the resurrection appearances themselves.

The lack of resurrection commentary has caused some critics to claim that this credal moment lacks importance for Hegel's thought. For instance, O'Re-

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[38] Hodgson offers the other options Hegel might have chosen, including *aufgestanden, erhoben, aufgegangen. LPR III*, 301, n. 32.

[39] O'Regan claims that Hegel offers a 'dynamic, narrative modalism' in *Heterodox Hegel*, 137–39.

[40] *LPR III,* 237; *VPR III,* 180.

[41] *LPR III,* 238; *VPR III,* 183.

[42] *LPR III,* 240; *VPR III,* 184.

[43] *LPR III*, 189–90 / *VPR III*, 147–8.

[44] *LPR III*, 214 / *VPR III*, 168–9.

[45] Hegel 'equally refuses atheism's fetishism of absence'. O'Regan, *Heterodox Hegel*, 199.

gan asserts that in Hegel's account the post-resurrection encounters are 'excised and replaced – one might say elided'.[46] O'Regan's more recent work intensifies the charge to that of a 'pneumatological displacement' of the risen body: the Spirit becomes the 'deep ground' of the other Trinitarian persons, 'relativizing them ontologically'.[47] In apparent tension with this description, O'Regan elsewhere states that Hegel carries over a 'cross-contracted' vision, with reconciliation remaining unfinished.[48]

It would be better to render Hegel's relative lack of interest in the resurrection accounts as an 'ellipsis' rather than a replacement, much less a *dis*placement. While both suggest a gap, an ellipsis marks a background that is simply not taken up at present. It is Hegel's prerogative as a philosopher to draw 'eclectically' from the doctrinal deposit. Still, he does acknowledge the resurrection at key points. Although a philosophy of religion is not accountable to the comprehensiveness involved in biblical commentary or systematic theology, he makes occasional reference to the creedal article:

I need only to recall the well-known form of this perception: it is the resurrection and ascension. This exaltation, like everything that precedes it, has appeared for immediate consciousness in the mode of actuality. … God as reconciled, as love, and this exaltation of human nature to heaven, where the Son of Man sits at the right hand of the Father, [where] the identity of divine and human nature and the glory of the latter appear to the spiritual eye in the highest possible way.[49]

One of the reasons Hegel quickly moves on from this widespread belief is that, considered alone, it gives only a 'one-sided' account. He is not indifferent to this historical claim in Christian doctrine, but wants to do reparation for a lesser-emphasised claim in some then-contemporary habits of thought. His focus is therefore fixed on the epistemological implications of the transition from the one risen body to the many to whom, or rather *as* whom, reconciliation extends.

With such motivation in view, Adams argues that Hegel's 'change of subject' from Christ to the Spirit is not a displacement. Although a key biblical metaphor for community is not cited, Adams argues that:

the logic of Paul's talk of the body of Christ as the community's participation in God's life is exactly the logic that Hegel is describing: a radical explosion of agency from the single body to the infinitely dispersed body – infinitely dispersed across space (many bodies) and

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[46] O'Regan, *Heterodox Hegel,* 214–15.

[47] O'Regan identifies Hegel's model for such displacement as Joachim of Fiore. O'Regan, *Anatomy,* 195–97, 261.

[48] O'Regan, *Anatomy*, 188, 196.

[49] *LPR III*, 207–8; *VPR III*, 163.

time (many generations). This interpretation of Hegel's remarks about subjectivity avoids any sense that the community is competing with Jesus Christ for agency.[50]

This quotation captures the more expansive sense of *Geist* employed by Hegel. Nevertheless, it raises a question that Bonhoeffer will press: what is lost when a trope, or indeed a body, becomes logic? Does Christ remain the directive 'head', indeed the 'sacred head sore wounded', of a social body marked by suffering? Bonhoeffer will call Hegel's 'explosion of agency' into question by pronouncing Jesus' starkly counter-cultural, even counter-ecclesial, commands, as I will show in Chapter Five. Before considering these lines of interrogation, however, I turn to Bonhoeffer's criticism that Hegel's distinctions harden into opposition.

III. Bonhoeffer's Charge of Docetism

The question of the 'historical' Jesus was also significant during Bonhoeffer's time, as was a line of 'Hegelian' readings that sought to think through the division between a Jesus of history and a Christ of faith. In the 1933 Christology lectures, Bonhoeffer claims that then-contemporary interest in the historical Jesus was limited by a preconception of history that reduces the 'event' that is Christ.[51] A competing line of interpretation to such historical-critical reduction was revealed in the linkage of allegorical exegesis with the methods employed by 'any Hegelian'.[52] In correspondence with Bonhoeffer, Karl Schmidt offers a representative paraphrase of Hegel's *Philosophy of History*: 'make whatever you will out of Jesus historically and exegetically, the only question is what the idea is'.[53] This portrayal can be compared with O'Regan's claim that for Hegel the historical Jesus is to be surpassed for the Christ of faith.[54] In either case, Hegel's attempt to hold together Idea and Appearance is deemed insufficient.

Such a division helps to indicate why Bonhoeffer begins his lecture on docetism by criticising the distinction between the 'idea' of divine-human unity and the singular 'appearance' of Christ in history. On first reading, it can seem as though Bonhoeffer is criticising philosophical classification altogether. This is particularly so when he places the idea-appearance distinction among pairs of terms with long resonance in the history of thought:

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[50] This is part of Adams' broader claim that it is 'easy to think Hegel is abolishing distinctions rather than overcoming false oppositions'. Adams, *Eclipse,* 203–4, cf. 193.

[51] *DBWE 12,* 336; *DBW 12,* 320.

[52] Karl Schmidt wrote Bonhoeffer in 1936, asking how trends in allegorical exegesis of the Old Testament were different from the methods employed by any Hegelian. *DBWE 14*, 259; *DBW 14*, 243.

[53] Schmidt's paraphrase is based on Hegel's treatment of the Roman world. See *DBWE 14*, 259; *DBW 14*, 243.

[54] O'Regan, *Heterodox Hegel*, 191.

It can be demonstrated that [in] every abstract doctrine of God and in every concept of re-demption, there is at bottom the same presupposition, namely, the opposition between idea and appearance [*der Gegensatz von Idee und Erscheinung*]. The appearance of the human being is his individuality, and the idea of the human being is his human nature. The appear-ance is that which is accidental, and the idea is the substance.[55]

Bonhoeffer's reference to 'concepts of redemption' contextualises this passage amidst his acknowledgment of the good intentions that give rise to such distinction. In this case, he refers to the early church's attempts to unite humanity through a common essence or nature so as to be comprehensively recipient of Christ's redeeming work.

Such well-intentioned classifications can harden into oppositions, however. As discussed earlier, Bonhoeffer's willingness to engage philosophical terms is tempered by his awareness that the transferral of concepts can 'burst the framework' of the new host discipline. In the Christology lectures, he seeks to guard the integrity of Christ's human nature against being portrayed as merely a 'garment' or 'stained-glass window'.[56] That is precisely the way in which divisive categories can render him, however: 'Jesus as a human being is acci-dental, as opposed to [*gegenüber*] the substance that is God'.[57] Bonhoeffer is not challenging the propriety of these descriptive terms for other endeavours, for which they may well serve; he is attacking their uncritical reception into Christology.

When Bonhoeffer is against docetism, then, he is against a set of philosoph-ical classifications insofar as they can be held independently from the singular hypostatic union. Such terms of classification preconceive the personal union that is Christ rather than being derived from it. Bonhoeffer makes the anteced-ent status of such thinking explicit: 'Thus there is a philosophical presupposi-tion in docetism. If one does not rid oneself of this presupposition – about idea and appearance – one will never be free of docetism in some form'.[58] This citation helps to show the character of the 'reason' against which Bonhoeffer sets the person of Christ: his term *Menschenlogos* is shorthand for classifica-tions-become-division that effectively 'break down' the irreducible union of natures.

Bonhoeffer identifies this idea-appearance presupposition in several expres-sions, naming Hegel after a long course of Greek philosophical categories. He singles out Hegel's refinement among others who hold the docetic presupposi-tion, making clear that Hegel's language of appearance [*Erscheinung*] is not mere illusion [*Schein*].[59] Moreover, Bonhoeffer distinguishes Hegel from his

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[55] *DBWE 12,* 335; *DBW 12,* 319. The terms 'idea' and 'appearance' will not be capitalised in Bonhoeffer's usage to indicate his use of a broader foil.

[56] *DBWE 12,* 333; *DBW 12,* 317.

[57] *DBWE 12,* 335; *DBW 12,* 319.

[58] *DBWE 12,* 335; *DBW 12,* 319.

[59] *DBWE 12,* 337; *DBW 12,* 321.

reception by thinkers such as A.E. Biedermann, a mid-nineteenth century He-gelian Reformed theologian whom Bonhoeffer charges with rendering Jesus' historical reality as 'incidental'. Biedermann attempts to clarify the 'ambigu-ous' relationship between person and principle, a limitation he sees in Hegel's project.[60] Sceptical of such later clarifications, Bonhoeffer returns to Hegel as his primary interlocutor, whose work he terms the most 'brilliant exposition' of docetism, acknowledging Hegel's philosophy as the way in which 'the con-cept of idea versus appearance has been brought to fulfillment [*Vollendung*]'.[61] It is, of course, ironic for Bonhoeffer to claim that Hegel's account of consum-mation is in fact a divided form of thought.

Bonhoeffer's criticism of the idea-appearance distinction in his docetism lecture can be understood in part through his appraisal of Greek philosophical influence on doctrine. He claims that the antithesis between idea and appear-ance is typical of Greek thought, which is therefore more susceptible to docetism than Jewish thinking. The latter, he observes, lacks the presupposi-tion opposing the two.[62] Bonhoeffer's criticism of the divisive use of Greek thought forms does not mean that he denies early theologians the right to spir-ited interpretation, a move Hegel warned against. Nevertheless, his rendition of Chalcedonian doctrine has it function 'negatively', cancelling out specula-tion over 'natures' to focus attention on the whole person. This entails an op-position to 'preserving clearly what belongs to God and what to humanity'.[63] Such a claim fits with Bonhoeffer's shorthand distinction between a focus on the 'how' question in Christology at the expense of the 'who' question that is personal address – and so the origin of properly theological thought. His re-sistance to the 'how' question should not be overstated, for Bonhoeffer main-tains several orthodox assumptions about the two natures and the *communica-tio idiomatum*. Nevertheless, Chalcedon, in Bonhoeffer's estimate, has 'gone beyond the "how" question'.[64] Here he turns against his background of liberal Protestant perceptions of Chalcedonian language as a subjection of Christology to Greek thought. For Bonhoeffer, the creed is itself a liberation from such conceptual constrictions.[65]

The adoption of Chalcedon's negative function leads Bonhoeffer to a series of criticisms against both Luther and his own contemporaries. For instance, he

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[60] Claude Welch, 'Introduction' in *God and Incarnation in Mid-Nineteenth Century Ger-man Theology: Thomasius, Dorner, Biedermann* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 17.

[61] *DBWE 12,* 337 alt.; *DBW 12,* 321.

[62] *DBWE 12,* 337; *DBW 12,* 321.

[63] *DBWE 12*, 346; *DBW 12*, 332.

[64] *DBWE 12*, 353; *DBW 12*, 340.

[65] This point is made by Bernd Wannenwetsch, 'The Whole Christ and the Whole Human Being' in *Christology and Ethics,* ed. F. LeRon Shults and Brent Waters (Cambridge: Eerd-mans, 2010), 79.

claims that Luther's discussion of ubiquity does what is 'forbidden by Chalcedon' in setting out two distinct natures with their respective sets of attributes that are then communicated.[66] Bonhoeffer also singles out Albrecht Ritschl's Christology insofar as it places Christ under the 'value-judgement' of the community, going on to say that while liberal theology has a great deal to say about Jesus' humanity, this too is bound by a pre-existing ideal rather than being derived from the gospel witness itself.[67] Bonhoeffer's argument against a 'pre-existing ideal' again shows his resistance to a theological tendency to claim ideas independently from their roots in Christian doctrine and its attendant historical conditions.

Bonhoeffer's claim that Greek thought is more susceptible to docetism than Jewish thinking shows the influence of his teacher Adolf von Harnack. Bonhoeffer's theological debt to Harnack is profound, as he acknowledges multiple times.[68] Significantly for the present study, Bonhoeffer's relationship to Harnack shows his willingness to persistently engage a thinker whom he acknowledges as susceptible to the charge of heterodoxy. A short account of Harnack's position, briefly compared with Hegel's own, is helpful for understanding Bonhoeffer's own presupposition in handling Greek categories.

Harnack's *History of Dogma* distinguishes the original 'gospel of Jesus Christ' from later Greco-Roman philosophical categories, including the conceptions of Hellenistic Jews.[69] Harnack describes a certain 'depotentiation' that reflection brings to the original gospel event, one furthered by its 'settlement on Greek soil'.[70] He even suggests an analogous relationship between the development of Catholic doctrine and gnostic 'hellenizing' trends.[71] Looking back to the vitality of the first century, before and as the New Testament is written, Harnack begins his *History of Dogma* with critical questions for the early stages of Greco-Roman influence:

How, and by what influence was the living faith transformed into the creed to be believed, the surrender to Christ into a philosophic Christology…prophecy into a learned exegesis and theological science, the bearers of the spirit into clerics … the 'spirit' into constraint and law? There can be no doubt about the answer: these formations are as old in their origin as the detachment of the Gospel from the Jewish church.[72]

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[66] *DBWE 12*, 343; *DBW 12*, 329.

[67] *DBWE 12,* 337; *DBW 12,* 321.

[68] The young lecturer attended Harnack's home seminars throughout the 1920s, complemented by regular personal interactions. Bonhoeffer's appreciation is expressed in his delivery of Harnack's eulogy. See Rumscheidt*, '*Significance', 211.

[69] Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma, Volume I,* trans. Neil Buchanan (Edinburgh: Williams & Norgate, 1894), 57.

[70] Harnack, *Dogma I,* 53.

[71] Harnack, *Dogma I,* 226–27.

[72] Harnack, *Dogma I*, 46.

Bonhoeffer shares his teacher's resistance to Greek philosophical categories while similarly emphasising the retrieval of the Gospel narratives, particularly Jesus' social teachings.

Harnack's trajectory diverges from Hegel significantly, as revealed by a brief comparison with the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. In that work, Hegel is critical of attempts to return to a primitive 'purity' of the early church and is certainly critical of Jewish thought.[73] He therefore criticises the attempt to return to 'the plain strand of God's Word' in the New Testament which requires an 'unravelling' of the doctrinal system 'determined by means of the Idea and according to the Idea'.[74] As a rhetorical climax, Hegel observes that the scriptural text itself undercuts a return to the 'original' gospel accounts:

> It can almost be said that if our intention is to lead Christianity back to its first Appearance, then we are leading it back to the standpoint of spiritlessness, for Christ himself said: "The Spirit will only come after me, when I am gone."[75]

Hegel asks pointedly why those in his own time would claim to 'bring spirit to bear on the letter while denying the same right to the church fathers'. He then makes his case for doctrinal development.[76]

B. Hegel's 'Trinitarian' Logic

This section considers the overall structure of the third part of Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, beginning with the second of his three 'elements'. This element is related to the issue of an alleged Idea-Appearance divide in that the 'Son' as 'other being' seems only a passing moment in the overall scheme. To temper a strong interpretive account of displacement, I show that for Hegel the second and third 'elements' are not sequential events in the life of the Godhead so much as they are logical implications of the Trinitarian relationship. Particularly, I trace his interest in the epistemological significance of the outpouring of the Spirit.

I. The Passing of the Son's 'Other-Being'

Along with Hegel's discussion of the singular, historical appearance of Christ, the figure of the Son of God appears to function as a structuring principle within the lecture series. In a summary statement, Hegel speaks of three moments, or elements, in 'concrete representation': first, there is the 'essence' of

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[73] For Hegel the conceptual oneness of Jewish thought is not yet complete in spirit. See *LPR III,* 172; *VPR III,* 133.
[74] *LHP III*, 24*; VGP 4,* 11.
[75] *LHP III,* 26; *VGP 4,* 14–15.
[76] *LHP III,* 24; *VGP 4,* 12.

God, the one who 'himself *is* his activity'; second, there is the production of 'objectivity', 'distinction', and 'finitude': the Spirit gives testimony 'that God has a Son'; third, as with the Son, 'the Spirit objectifies itself as the unity of the first and the second moments'.[77] Hegel elaborates that this third moment is the point at which the distinction of the second is 'sublated [*aufgehoben*]'. Even so, as a relationship of 'eternal love' the two remain independent – 'it expresses an identity into which the extremes are not absorbed'.[78]

When it comes to the second element, it is not the hypostasis of the Son, but the economics of his 'other-being' that is at stake. 'For in the Idea', Hegel claims, 'the other-being of the Son is a transitory, disappearing moment, not a true, essentially enduring, absolute moment'.[79] What is transitory is Christ as known before the coming of the Spirit and the Eucharistic rite; in short, prior to indwelling the community. These subsequent acts, in which the indivisibility of the Trinity is all the more evident, give rise to a form of knowledge on which Hegel draws for his philosophical account. As noted earlier, Hegel often claims a close relationship between Christ and the Spirit, as shown in his statement that 'Christ is for Spirit'.[80]

Although Hegel uses the term 'moments', his final claim to unity reveals that these are not a strict sequence in which one 'person' is replaced by the other. It is possible for religious expression to stick with only one, as shown in Hegel's example of how Catholicism majors on the second moment – an objectified form that lacks a spirited way of knowing.[81] His foil of Catholicism is most clearly described in his comments about the Eucharist, which will be treated in the following chapter.

Before treating the sacraments, it is crucial to clarify the placement of the Son within the overall structure of Hegel's 'consummate religion'. Such clarification requires attention to different editorial practices in the English and German critical editions. In the translation of the Lasson edition with which Bonhoeffer worked, the three main sections are entitled the Kingdom of the Father, of the Son, and of the Spirit. It is typical, in the English volumes edited by Hodgson, to similarly associate each of three parts with a person of the Trinity. In the more recent composite volume, Hodgson shifts to headings of the First, Second, and Third 'Elements', though still associating, for instance, the final element with the Spirit. In an editorial note on the material's order, he offers his interpretation of these headings:

The idea of God 'develops' (for the consummate religion, at least) in terms of the three moments of the Trinity – in representational language, the 'persons' of the Father, Son, and

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[77] *LPR III*, 252–53; *VPR III*, 196–97.
[78] *LPR III*, 253; *VPR III*, 197.
[79] *LPR III*, 265; *VPR III*, 203.
[80] *LPR III*, 263; *VPR III*, 202.
[81] *LPR III*, 253; *VPR III*, 197.

Spirit; in conceptual language, the moments of divine self-identity, self-differentiation, and self-return. These yield the three 'elements' that constitute the substance of Hegel's speculative redescription of the Christian religion.[82]

This editorial remark has been recently called into question by Adams, who claims that Hodgson's headings obscure the source material. Adams challenges the common interpretation that Hegel seeks to redescribe Christian theology in a strong sense, that is, to map 'conceptual language' on top of 'representational language' in a one-to-one relation.[83]

Questioning Hodgson's claim to correspondence, Adams argues that the three elements are 'enumerations of logical steps, not events in the inner life of God'.[84] Rather than depicting God as undergoing a journey through separation to return to a unified, or 'mature', state, Adams claims that Hegel is working from different aspects of Trinitarian doctrine, namely, 'talk of pure activity, talk of separation, and talk of unity', while assuming 'that this talk is guided by a logic that can, with some care, be investigated and identified'.[85] If Hegel is pursuing a primarily logical investigation, this entails his relative disinterest in a theological account of the reconciliation between Father and Son.[86]

Insofar as Hegel treats Jesus' final words on the cross, his interest in completion is focused on how human knowing is conditioned by the claim 'it is finished'. He writes that in order to affirm that the subject should come into restored relation as a 'child of God', one must affirm 'the Idea that reconciliation in and for itself is finished in the divine Idea'.[87] Hegel continues that reconciliation is said to make its 'Appearance' to human consciousness, which can then take the truth as certain.[88] This certainty leads to a doctrinal presupposition such that Christology is not itself investigated but used as a departure point for enquiry. In other words, Hegel does not reason out the process of reconciliation, particularly insofar as it may involve Father and Son. As Adams

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[82] Hodgson, 'The Lectures of 1824', in *LPR III-CR,* 185n65.

[83] This is contrasted with the German critical edition arranged by Walter Jaeschke, in which the sections are simply titled First, Second, and Third Elements, all set beneath the larger category of 'concrete representation' – a category that only covers the Son in Hodgson. Moreover, Adams notes that Hodgson adds the title 'Spirit' to the Third Element heading with no warrant in the source material. See the comparative chart in Adams, *Eclipse,* 189–91.

[84] Adams, *Eclipse,* 200.

[85] Adams, *Eclipse*, 200.

[86] Adams, *Eclipse*, 210.

[87] *LPR III*, 331; *VPR III*, 198–199. Adams observes an echo of Luther's translation of Jesus' word of completion from the cross in the Passion narrative. Adams, *Eclipse*, 210.

[88] *LPR III*, 331; *VPR III*, 198–99. Adams comments that Hegel does not claim the truth to be certain, but rather that the community 'takes the truth to be certain'. Adams, *Eclipse*, 211.

remarks, 'the claim about reconciliation is already operative before any think-ing gets underway'.[89]

II. 'Geist or God'? Suspicions of Pantheism

Critics have questioned whether Hegel's emphasis on a unitive account of knowing leads to the conflation of the divine actor with an all-too-human *Geist*. As the preceding exposition has shown, Hegel makes a close association be-tween God and reasoned human exchange. Much of this is expressed by his claim that the exploration into truth, a process that can only be vindicated in its exposition, lies in 'apprehending and expressing the true not as *substance* but rather even more as *subject*'.[90] This philosophically-freighted statement en-tails that Hegel 'refuses to think the being of God independently of thinking the thinking of human beings'.[91] Adams goes on to acknowledge that the ques-tion of whether God remains 'truly other' for Hegel cannot be answered satis-factorily because of Hegel's 'opaque ontology'.[92]

Interpreters of Hegel frequently resolve this opacity towards the community of 'mindedness', over and against traditional notions of a divine interlocutor. Alexandre Kojève's introductory lectures to Hegel, delivered shortly after Bonhoeffer's dissertations, claim as much: 'the divine interlocutor is fictive', for everything takes place within the *savant*.[93] In a more recent example, Pinkard claims that Hegel turns from 'the transcendent metaphysical God of orthodox Christianity' to 'what is divinely immanent within human life itself as the human community has come to understand itself'.[94] Other critics oscil-late between *Geist* as subject and *Geist* as God. For example, Taylor poses the equivocation '*Geist* or God' several times, also using the representative term 'cosmic spirit'.[95] Hodgson and Brown state that the *Weltgeist* is 'a form of ab-solute *Geist* or God', continuing that 'God is the ontological ground, but this

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[89] Adams, *Eclipse*, 213–14.

[90] *PhG*, §10. Hegel states this as a different direction from Spinoza's account of unifying 'substance'. See Taylor, *Hegel*, 87.

[91] Adams, *Eclipse*, 15.

[92] Adams therefore suggests a shift towards the question of how divine action is related to human action. Adams, *Eclipse,* 15, 37.

[93] The lectures were delivered from 1933–39 in Paris. Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel* [1947], ed. Raymond Queneau (Paris: Gallimard, 1968), 459.

[94] He continues that '[w]hat we take as *sacred* – the divine – are the things that for us have come to have absolute value (that is, in Hegel's words, what "exists in and for itself")'. Terry Pinkard, *Hegel's Phenomenology: The Sociality of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 219–20.

[95] At the same time, he gives a nuanced treatment that shows differentiation on several levels. Taylor, *Hegel*, 80–87.

ground is of such a nature that it requires actualization in the "thick" community of human *Sittlichkeit* (ethical life) because the triune God is absolute *inter*subjectivity'.[96]

Such interpretations compel a closer examination of Hegel's controversial claim to 'God existing as community'. The syntax is important to this provocative, frequently misrepresented phrase. Logically, it challenges the opposition of divine and human agency without conflating them. This is shown by Hegel's choice of the term 'as' and the fact that subject and predicate are not reversed.[97] Alongside Hegel's syntax, I have argued that it is important to acknowledge his Lutheran profession. Admittedly, appeals to orthodoxy were necessary at the time, for Hegel's daring formulae and 'opaque ontology' led to accusations of pantheism. Hegel knew the professional costs of such a charge, having witnessed the 'pantheist controversy' while in seminary and having endured the attack himself at various times.[98] Hegel's lectures therefore include his defence against the association of pantheism with 'identity-philosophy'. He argues not only that such a view is not his own, but that '[i]t has never occurred to anyone to say that everything, all individual things collectively, in their individuality and contingency, are God – for example, that paper or this table is God. No one has ever held that'.[99] Hegel's frustration with this criticism leads him to say that philosophy not only has to become polemical but it has to begin from the exposition of primary elements.[100] This is part of the reason why the approach of the current study involves detailed exposition, rendering Hegel on his own terms before engaging the interpretations of others.

Bonhoeffer took up this longstanding association of Hegel with pantheism in his prison correspondence. In a letter to Bethge dated July 16, 1944, Bonhoeffer offers the 'philosophical closing line', abruptly classifying Kant as a Deist, Fichte and Hegel as pantheists. While the charge requires further investigation, the intent of these broad stroke labels is to show that 'the autonomy of human beings is the goal of thought'. As this is an element of the world 'come of age', Bonhoeffer observes that there is no going back behind this goal to a medieval 'heteronomy, in the form of clericalism' – a concern similarly

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[96] Brown and Hodgson, 'Editorial Introduction', *LPWH I*, 13.

[97] 'The false opposition between spirit and community, and thus between God and community, is overcome in a logic in which spirit is a predicate of community, and community is a predicate of God. It is vital to observe that it is *not* a logic in which God is a predicate. The logic is not reversible: it has a single directionality'. Adams, *Eclipse*, 208.

[98] Pinkard notes several episodes, culminating in the historical irony that Schelling was appointed Hegel's successor, with a mandate 'to stamp out the dragon seed of Hegelian pantheism'. Pinkard, *Hegel*, 30–31, 257, 528, 559.

[99] He goes on to distinguish even 'Oriental' religion and 'Spinozism' from this charge, providing more precise labels for their claims. *LPR I*, 123; *VPR I*, 273.

[100] *LPR I*, 127; *VPR I*, 276.

voiced by Hegel. His point is that intellectual integrity demands a new 'nonreligious' interpretation: 'Before God, and with God, we live without God'.[101] In short, Bonhoeffer does not seek a new 'pantheist controversy'; he uses the label to signal his acknowledgement of a modern *Geist*, articulated in part by Hegel, as the new context for Christian theology.

C. Bonhoeffer's Account of the Whole and Present Christ

Hegel's 'elements', considered in relation to the persons of the Godhead, have raised the perennial theological question of whether God remains an 'interlocutor' to the community indwelt by the Spirit. Given Hegel's strong shift to the third element, Bonhoeffer's confrontational presentation of Christology is understandable. In this section, I show how Bonhoeffer shares with Hegel an account of the insufficiency of the *an sich*, although he departs from his predecessor by lingering on, indeed radicalising, the posture of Christ *pro nobis*. Finally, I trace Bonhoeffer's emphasis on the freedom of Christ over and against Hegel's claim to a unity of rational necessity and freedom.

I. Christology from an sich to pro nobis

Bonhoeffer's lectures focus on the subject of Christology, in distinction to the third part of Hegel's philosophy of religion that works with a broad Trinitarian structure. Located in terms of Hegel's 'elements', Bonhoeffer primarily deals with 'other being', the so-called 'kingdom of the Son'. Given this difference, it is worth noting Bonhoeffer's own arrangement and emphases before identifying a common feature between the two lecturers.

Bonhoeffer's lecture series is delivered in two parts: the 'present' [*gegenwärtige*] Christ and the 'historical' [*geschichtliche*] Christ. A description of the 'present' Christ shows Bonhoeffer's distinction from Hegel's statement that the witness of the Spirit is basic to the community's *Geist,* for Bonhoeffer claims that the church's witness is that for which Christ is 'present in history… *Nunc et hic*'.[102] Bonhoeffer draws on one of Luther's sermons to claim that the ascension means Christ has come closer than in his previous historical appearance.[103] This is not to divide the two, however; Bonhoeffer's unitive purpose is clear when he insists that even this larger structural pair is to be thought

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[101] *DBWE 8*, 477–79; *DBW 8*, 530–34.

[102] *DBWE 12*, 310; *DBW 12*, 291–2.

[103] 'When he was on earth, he was far away from us here. Now that he is far from earth, he is near to us.' Martin Luther, 'Sermon on Ascension Day' (1523). *WA* 12:562, 25–6; cited in *DBWE 12*, 312; *DBW 12*, 293.

together, beginning the second part with the claim that 'the Christ who is present today is the historical Christ'.[104] Such temporal transposition is the positive corollary of Bonhoeffer criticism of Hegel's alleged split between 'Idea' and 'Appearance'.

Bonhoeffer states that Christ's 'presence' is entailed by his posture *pro me*, to be distinguished from his being *an sich*. The interest in thinking Christ beyond a kind of self-enclosure is clear: 'I can never think of Jesus Christ in his being-in-himself [*An-Sich-Sein*] … Christ is not in-himself [*an sich*] and also in the community, but the Christ who is the only Christ is the one present in the community *pro me*'.[105] These terms echo Hegel in asserting the insufficiency of the *an sich*, as if the first element could be taken alone. Although Bonhoeffer speaks of the 'in itself', however, he does not care to continue with Hegel's technical terms, likely because he is suspicious of the apparently self-reflexive language maintained through Hegel's *für sich* and *an-und-für sich*.[106]

Given his Augustinian-Lutheran depiction of sin, Bonhoeffer avoids diction that implies a kind of self-enclosure or incurvature. He tends to depart, therefore, from Hegel's Aristotelian trajectory in favour of theological-historical states: primal, sinful, revelatory. In thinking of the God-human, the Christ, Bonhoeffer would want to avoid these philosophical associations all the more. Instead of the second element in Hegel's trajectory, the *für sich*, he opts for Luther's *pro me* to render Christ's posture towards each individual within the community. Bonhoeffer amplifies the present communal encounter through speaking of the *pro nobis*, or otherness as *für-andere-Dasein*. He is working with a radical version of Luther's emphasis on the presence of Christ *pro me*, a theme that Kierkegaard also develops.[107] As Ziegler argues, this theme is linked to Bonhoeffer's arguments against a 'necessity' to the incarnation and for the 'external' quality of the Word.[108]

Bonhoeffer next claims that the Christ who is present is the 'whole Christ'. This term invokes Lutheran polemics against the *extra Calvinisticum,* that is, the claim that a part of Christ is 'reserved' from the sacramental encounter. Along with his interest in the sacrament, Bonhoeffer's reference to the 'whole Christ' functions in these lectures to resist a division between history and later

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[104] He immediately goes on to deconstruct the distinction between the 'Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels' and the 'Christ of Paul'. *DBWE* 12, 328; *DBW* 12, 311.

[105] *DBWE 12*, 314; *DBW 12*, 296.

[106] Hegel will speak of Christ's singularity on this trajectory: Christ is to be distinguished from other finite beings who do not exist 'in and for themselves'. *LPR III,* 173; *VPR III,* 133.

[107] On this connection see Philip Ziegler, 'Christ for Us Today: Promeity in the Christologies of Kierkegaard and Bonhoeffer', *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 15, no. 1 (January 2013), 25–41.

[108] Ziegler states that Bonhoeffer 'with a worried glance towards Hegel, is constrained to argue' for God's freedom in the incarnation. Ziegler, 'Promeity', 32, 39.

communal faith or, relatedly, appearance and idea: 'It is the Christ of history, the whole Christ, whom we ask and who answers'.[109]

Such encounter is the only truthful beginning point for theology. Thought should begin *from* the God-human union rather than from pre-understood categories of divinity and humanity. Insofar as Hegel tends to align Christ's human nature with natural perception and divine nature with the spiritual, Bonhoeffer sees such classification as an incipient opposition to resist in speech derived from the hypostatic union. The following statement shows Bonhoeffer's insistence on the hybrid form of the 'human-God' before any other Trinitarian 'element':

Who is with us here and now? The answer is: the human-God [*mensch-Gott*] Jesus. I cannot know who the human Christ is if I do not simultaneously think of the God-Christ and vice versa. God in his timeless eternity is *not* God. Jesus Christ in his humanity, limited in time, is *not* Jesus Christ. Instead, in the human being Jesus Christ, God is God.[110]

This provocative statement is elaborated when Bonhoeffer comments on the 'likeness of the flesh'. He asserts that this biblical phrase 'is not God veiled in the human being; instead, the God-human as whole is hidden'.[111] Such a claim shows Bonhoeffer's maintenance of concealment in revelation, an enduring dynamic that evokes faith, rather than an Idealist 'revelation in openness'.

In summary, Bonhoeffer would find common cause with Hegel's resistance to empirical-rationalist proofs of Christ's deity. The difference lies in his emphasis on the 'whole' Christ's agency in self-revelation in and through the witness of the Spirit. Bonhoeffer places such emphasis in order to resist divided forms of thought: whether between idea and appearance or between the natures perceived as divine or human. The narratival language of the exalted and humiliated states provides him with a way of maintaining witness to the whole Christ. Bonhoeffer therefore claims that the 'stumbling block' – the biblical idiom for his term *Gegenlogos* – is not that God takes human form, but that of 'the God-human's humiliation'.[112] Again, the humiliation is not that of the divine nature, but the whole Christ's submission to the ambiguity of history, the 'incognito'.

II. Resisting Rational 'Necessity'

As will become evident in the *Menschenlogos-Gegenlogos* dialectic, Bonhoeffer emphasises the God-human's 'offense' to reason over and against the claim that the incarnation was a rational 'necessity'. This is shown in Bonhoeffer's criticism of the notion that God's historical appearance in history is 'essential',

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[109] *DBWE 12*, 310; *DBW 12*, 291.
[110] *DBWE 12*, 313; *DBW 12*, 294.
[111] *DBWE 12*, 313, alt.; *DBW 12*, 294–5.
[112] *DBWE 12*, 314; *DBW 12*, 295.

which he claims is to make a principle from that which is impossible or 'in-conceivable' [*Unbegreiflichkeit*]. Bonhoeffer therefore criticises a broader his-torical schema in which Christ's appearance is related to prior historical figures and their attendant conceptualities, rather than being the startling *novum* that expresses God's free grace.[113]

Along with the attempt to single Christ out in historical process, Bonhoeffer seeks to give an account of divine freedom and the contingency of interper-sonal encounter. Necessity, which he finds embedded in Hegel's language of the Idea, constrains a theological commitment to divine mercy:

> For with this [idea-appearance] distinction such Idealism abolishes the first premise of all theology, that God, out of mercy freely given, truly became a human being, rather than be-coming, out of necessity, the realization of some human principle.[114]

Before investigating Bonhoeffer's polemic, it is important to observe that, on Hegel's terms, freedom and necessity are not mutually exclusive. Pannenberg argues that freedom cannot simply be invoked against Hegel's appeal to neces-sity.[115] Significantly for this enquiry, Pannenberg criticises Wilhelm Lütgert, who supervised Bonhoeffer's *Habilitation,* for a crude interpretation on this count. He takes issue with Lütgert's claim that Hegel could not account for the simplest 'Our Father' encounter as his God was idea rather than person. Pan-nenberg claims that the only way to make sense of such 'crass ignorance' is by recalling that accusations against Hegel are often made by means of 'a set of logical deductions from a polemic construction'.[116] Bonhoeffer came to know better, for it is noted in the Hegel seminar that for Hegel the freedom of *Geist* 'is a process in which necessity has been incorporated'.[117] In the words of one contemporary interpreter, 'Hegel never subordinates God – or reason – to any alien necessity'.[118]

Nevertheless, theologians have often charged that Hegel's God is severely constrained in encounters such as prayer or predestination. Bonhoeffer's re-mark on the 'Our Father' in the Hegel seminar reveals his concern with the historical limitations to divine action. In his view, for Hegel it is not 'thy will be done' but 'thy will is done'.[119] While Bonhoeffer does not go so far as to say prayer is impossible for Hegel, he does see the encounter to lack the open,

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[113] *DBWE 12,* 325; *DBW 12,* 307–8.

[114] *DBWE 12,* 338; *DBW 12,* 322. A series of exclamatory markings can be found in Bonhoeffer's linkage of incarnation and necessity in *NL-VPR I,* 161.

[115] Pannenberg refers to Hegel's *Science of Logic* in which, he paraphrases, '"freedom" is called "the truth of necessity" which has its form in the concept, i.e. in the subject'. See Pannenberg, 'Significance', 164.

[116] Pannenberg, 'Significance', 170–1.

[117] *HS,* 35.

[118] Houlgate, *Hegel,* 253.

[119] *HS,* 107.

divine personal agency that motivates intercession. He therefore seeks to em-
phasise divine agency anew vis-à-vis Hegel's *Geist*, indeed, to rearticulate
Christ's and the Holy Spirit's 'majestic' bearings within the community.

The claim to majesty raises the question of predestination, of God's right to
act as 'arbiter' over the community. Hegel opposes a doctrine of election, sin-
gling out what he takes to be the Calvinist doctrine that few are chosen, which
he calls an 'unhappy fate'.[120] Against such alleged randomness, Hegel speaks
of an 'exigency for reconciliation' embedded in each subject and ready to be
called forth. This signals a point of departure for Bonhoeffer who, along with
Reformed interlocutors such as Barth, pronounces the divine freedom for elec-
tion. In Barth's case, this involves responding to Hegel's concern with a robust
Christology and an election that extends beyond the 'few'. Hegel's merely dis-
misses the Reformed tradition on this point.

Bonhoeffer responds with a focus on how divine freedom is recurrently ex-
ercised in the community. Rather than giving a discourse on election, his claim
for freedom against rational necessity emerges in a section on how Christ is
present as Word.[121] Bonhoeffer states that this form of presence allows revela-
tion to a certain person at a certain time rather than being an idea that is acces-
sible to all. The verbal encounter, particularly through preaching in the com-
munity, is thus expressive of 'both the contingent character of [God's] revela-
tion and his commitment to humankind'.[122] This leads Bonhoeffer to revisit his
earlier appropriation of Hegel's concept of objective *Geist*, giving primacy to
Christ's presence as preaching over, even *against,* the 'objective *Geist* of the
community'.[123] While Hegel might be pressed to concede that preaching is a
conduit of *Geist,* Bonhoeffer's recovery is understandable as the act of preach-
ing is hardly named as constitutive, or indeed disruptive, in Hegel's description
of the community. As the next chapter will explore, however, it is through the
divine Word in preaching that constricting forms of human reason can be dis-
rupted – and oriented anew.

D. Christ Against Reason?

This section traces how Christ is treated by both Hegel and Bonhoeffer as
Logos, 'Word' and, relatedly, 'reason'. I first trace the way in which Hegel
takes the *Logos* as a starting point for his philosophical project, noting that
although this is a point of meeting between divine and human reason, he

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[120] *LPR III,* 173; *VPR III,* 133.
[121] This is one of a three-fold presence in Bonhoeffer's first part of the lectures. The
others are *Christus als Sakrament* and *Christus als Gemeinde*.
[122] *DBWE 12,* 317; *DBW 12,* 298–9.
[123] *DBWE 12,* 317; *DBW 12,* 299.

acknowledges the initial 'monstrosity' of the God-human one. I then show how Bonhoeffer places the *Menschenlogos*, with which he identifies Hegel's claim to rational necessity, into confrontation with Christ, whom he styles the *Gegenlogos*. Acknowledging Bonhoeffer's insistence that Hegel gives in to a one-sided resolution – the assimilation of the God-human *Logos* by the all too human – I nevertheless show that his criticism is not against reason *tout court*.

I. The Logos as Inception of Hegel's Philosophy

Hegel's early 'theological' writings show his departure from ecclesial practices, particularly those that seem to demand passive obedience. Nevertheless, they reveal an enduring interest in the person of Jesus Christ. Although these essays from the 1790s mark Hegel's turn away from the work of an ecclesial theologian, Graham Ward argues that they reveal a *Logos* Christology as the site from which he comes to speak philosophically.[124]

Hegel's 1795 essay 'Life of Jesus' begins with direct allusion to the prologue of John's gospel. Ward comments that these opening lines invoke the neo-Platonic notion of the *logos spermatikos*, enriching the Kantian view of reason that otherwise informs the essay.[125] The interest in a pervasive *Logos* becomes the basis for Hegel's emerging philosophical project to develop a 'mythology of reason' that provides the basis for a new *Volksreligion*.[126] In a significant but fleeting reference, Ward connects Hegel's *Logos*-based insistence on mediation to Bonhoeffer's own claim to 'the Son of God the Mediator' who creates a 'breach' with the immediacies of the world.[127] While Ward is right to point out how Hegel and Bonhoeffer are both critical of claims to immediacy, their accounts of that mediator differ significantly, as shown in Bonhoeffer's confrontation of the *Menschenlogos,* with which he identifies Hegel's project, by the *Gegenlogos*.

Before proceeding to Bonhoeffer's material, two observations about Hegel's ensuing use of Christology are in order. First, Hegel is often more interested in depicting how a form of thinking about Christ's two natures can be redeployed in thinking about other pairs – a so-called Chalcedonian logic. Insofar as Bonhoeffer pursues Christology, he resists such transposition even if he might be otherwise sympathetic to such a strictly philosophical venture. Second, Hegel's

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[124] Ward's reading, in contrast to divisions in schools of thought between the *Phenomenology* and the *Logic*, uses Hegel's early 'theological' works and the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. Ward, 'Logos', 271.

[125] Ward, 'Logos', 274.

[126] This goal is stated in the 1796–97 essay, 'The Earliest Programme for a System of German Idealism'. Authorship of the essay is uncertain but it displays common interests held by Hegel and Hölderlin. See Ward, 'Logos', 279.

[127] Ward cites from *Discipleship* without elaborating on Hegel's and Bonhoeffer's differences on this point. Ward, 'Logos', 285n7.

later writings show that he also depicts Christ in a confrontation with forms of human understanding. His philosophical account of the *Logos* is therefore not about immediate apprehension. As Hegel states in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*:

God appears in sensible presence; he has no other form than that of the sensible mode of spirit, which is that of an *individual human being* … Now this is the monstrous reality whose necessity we have seen.[128]

This final sentence needs to be parsed carefully. The 'monstrosity' [*Ungeheure*] refers to the scandal the God-human poses to 'imagination and understanding'.[129] Hegel acknowledges the affront in Christ's Appearance to typical human modes of thinking. The 'necessity' of this Appearance, meanwhile, indicates that it is not ultimately against reason, but rather evokes a more robust form of thought. Finally, the claim 'we have seen' is tied to Hegel's statement that this 'appearance of God' only occurs as being *for* a given community.[130]

II. Bonhoeffer's Menschenlogos-Gegenlogos Dialectic

In contrast to Hegel's brief mention of the 'monstrosity' of Christ, Bonhoeffer presents a life-and-death struggle between the 'human-logos' [*Menschenlogos*] and the 'counter-logos' [*Gegenlogos*].[131] *Menschenlogos* stands for those human systems of classification that provide a structure into which Christ is placed. Such forms of thought begin from an idea of natures in reconciliation for which Christ's hypostasis is a 'piece of evidence' rather than serving as its presupposition. The *Menschenlogos* is also characterised as 'immanent' knowledge or that which is 'within history', Bonhoeffer continues, arguing that it is not possible 'to fit the Word made flesh into the Logos classification system [*Logos-Ordnung*]'.[132] Note that Bonhoeffer does not style the *Gegenlogos* as a purely divine element, whether reason or revelation. Rather, the *Logos* that is this inseparably God-*human* person confronts human reason. It is highly significant that Bonhoeffer does not speak of the *Gottlogos*. For him, the divine-human unity precedes the confrontation with human thought.

Although Bonhoeffer does not make explicit reference to Hegel's master-slave dialectic, he is also constructing a life-and-death struggle that cannot be satisfied by initial one-sided dominance. In Hegel's *Herr-Knecht* dialectic from the *Phenomenology*, slavery is the settlement to emerge from a struggle between two figures that is relinquished on the cusp of death. Bonhoeffer does

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[128] *LPR III,* 177; *VPR III,* 137.

[129] This is stated directly in *LPR III,* 182; *VPR III,* 136.

[130] *LPR III,* 177; *VPR III,* 137–8.

[131] 'Counter-logos' is the improved translation of the current critical edition. A previous translation referred to the *Gegenlogos* as 'anti-Logos'. See Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Christology*, trans. John Bowden (London: Collins, 1966), 29.

[132] *DBWE* 12, 302; *DBW* 12, 282.

use the term 'lordship' [*Herrschaft*] to describe the presumption of the *Menschenlogos*.[133] His particular struggle passes *through* death, however, as the *Menschenlogos* kills the *Gegenlogos* only to be confronted anew on the other side of the grave.[134] Here Bonhoeffer's insistence on thinking from the God-human unity comes to the fore, as this struggle is not that between finite and infinite or human and divine: 'The become-human [*Der Mensch-Ge-wordene*] must be hung on the cross by the human Logos [*Menschenlogos*]'.[135]

Hegel's thought is singled out in Bonhoeffer's narration of this contest. As the following citation reveals, Bonhoeffer is well aware of the cunning of reason in his predecessor's account:

> The Logos repeats its old question, that of how this demand can be met within history. Thus the Logos stays with the question of 'how'. The Logos sees that its lordship [*Herrschaft*] is being threatened from outside. It meets the demand made upon it by negating itself. That is the last thing it has the power to do. It is what Hegel did in his philosophy. Thus what the Logos does under attack from the other Logos represents not philistine self-defence but rather a great insight into its power of self-negation [*Selbstverneinung*], for self-negation signifies the self-affirmation [*Selbstbejahung*] of the Logos. So it appears that the attack on the final presupposition has failed, for the Logos has assimilated the counter-Logos into itself.[136]

There is a clear acknowledgment here that any claim to divine-human unity for Hegel is always a 'negative unity' rather than a reality immediately accessible to the human mind.[137] Nevertheless, Bonhoeffer's final line makes clear that he sees Hegel's divine-human reconciliation as 'one-sided', an ultimate assimilation by the *Menschenlogos*.

As a result of this verdict, Bonhoeffer overrides Hegel's claim to a form of reason based in revelation in three ways. First, Bonhoeffer's characterisation of the 'immanent Logos',[138] with which he includes Hegel's philosophy, shows him operating with the kind of spatial metaphor that Hegel seeks to move beyond in his conceptual thought.[139] Second, Bonhoeffer recounts how *Vernunft*, 'reason', is subjugated: the only remaining question – 'who are you?' – is that which is asked by 'horrified, dethroned human reason [*Vernunft*]'.[140] Here he

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[133] *DBWE 12*, 302, alt.; *DBW 12*, 282.

[134] *DBWE 12*, 305; *DBW 12,* 286.

[135] *DBWE 12*, 305–6; *DBW 12*, 285–6.

[136] *DBWE 12*, 302, alt.; *DBW 12*, 282.

[137] Pannenberg notes that critics often miss that Hegel's talk of unity or identity between the finite and infinite is never immediate; it is always 'mediated by the negation and superseding of the finite'. See Pannenberg 'Significance', 162.

[138] *DBWE 12*, 303; *DBW 12*, 283–4.

[139] In criticising the adoption of Hegel by process theologians, David Brown notes that 'what they forget is that the root meanings of "immanent" and "transcendent" are based on spatial imagery, and hence that their meaning is not primarily conceptual at all'. See David Brown, *Continental Philosophy and Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), 54.

[140] *DBWE 12*, 302; *DBW 12*, 282.

employs the term that Hegel claims to have a unitive power beyond the limits of *Verstand*, 'understanding'. A third example of Bonhoeffer's disregard for Hegel's technical language comes when he describes the problem with a historical scheme that preconceptualises the coming of Christ: 'The Godhead is already known before its revelation, the truth is already known as absolute Idea'.[141] Reference to a time 'before revelation' runs roughshod over the way in which Hegel's 'absolute Idea' seeks to challenge both sequential thinking and an enduring split between human thinking and divine revelation. Having judged that revelation is not given its due in Hegel's philosophy, however, Bonhoeffer renders it thus.

As Bonhoeffer seems to issue a thoroughgoing challenge to reason, it is important to note the rationality – *Logos*, even *Wissenschaft* – that he nevertheless identifies with Christ throughout the lecture series. Rather than depicting Christ as against reason *tout court*, Bonhoeffer affirms Christology as 'the invisible, unrecognized, hidden centre of science [*Wissenschaft*]'.[142] Language of the hidden centre that comes from 'without' shows that in *Wissenschaft*, as in the church's witness, Christology is always a dialectic. After all, Bonhoeffer began his lectures by stating that it is *in proclamation* that the church holds its silence.[143] In Bonhoeffer's account, it is enquiry characterised by Chalcedonian reticence.

The apparent placement of Christ 'against reason' is further qualified by an ambiguous statement at the close of Bonhoeffer's lecture on docetism. He is recorded to claim that 'the rupture [*Riß*] in every kind of docetism is its closeness to rationalism.[144] Interestingly, this line may be falsely noted, for the student Pfeiffer records that 'what is so captivating [*das Bestrickende*] is the nearness to rationalism'.[145] The alternate notation suggests that Bonhoeffer may not merely assert his polemic without acknowledging the appeal of a 'rational' Christology.

III. Thinking After Confrontation: Toward a Christological Logic

Bonhoeffer depicts the *Menschenlogos* as a system of classification that divides a holistic account of Christ's person by, for instance, defining the two natures in advance. Such an account of reason also constrains the freedom of

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[141] *DBWE 12,* 333, alt.; *DBW 12,* 317. The indefinite article in the English translation 'as an absolute Idea' does not appear in the original.

[142] *DBWE 12*, 301; *DBW 12*, 281. The language of hiddenness, which might imply immanence, is combined with a claim to 'externality': Christology only becomes the centre of science as it comes 'from outside'.

[143] In the opening lecture Bonhoeffer states that 'in proclaiming Christ, the church falls on its knees in silence before the inexpressible, the *arrēton*'. *DBWE 12,* 300; *DBW 12,* 280.

[144] *DBWE 12,* 338; *DBW 12,* 322.

[145] *DBW 12*, 322n86.

the God-human one by 'pre-conceiving' him. In this final subsection I argue that although Bonhoeffer criticises Hegel for one-sided resolution towards an all-too-human *Logos*, he also seeks to render human reason as conditioned by Christology – or, indeed, the person of Christ. After the confrontation of the *Gegenlogos*, Bonhoeffer does not merely turn to voluntarism. In fact, his gestures towards Christ as the centre of *Wissenschaft* invites closer comparison with Hegel's project.

Although Bonhoeffer does not always deal with Hegel's technical terms in depth, his makes a similar use of the terms *aufheben*, 'to sublate', and *Voraussetzung*, 'presupposition', to articulate human thought after confrontation. These terms appear when Bonhoeffer seeks to trouble the line between academy and church with the question of Christology. As the following citation reveals, he is not abandoning the claims of reason, here largely in terms of *Wissenschaft*, but relocating them:

> The ultimate question for critical thinking is that it *must* ask *who* but it *can* not. That means that one can legitimately ask *who* only after the self-revelation of the other to whom one puts the question has already taken place, after the immanent logos has already been sublated [*ist aufgehoben*]. That is, the question of *who* can only be asked on condition that the answer has already been given. And this in turn means that the Christological question can only be asked, as a scientific [*wissenschaftlich*] question, within the sphere of the church [*im Raum der Kirche*], and the presupposition of it is the fact that Christ's claim to be the Word of God is a just claim.[146]

This statement issues a multi-pronged polemic. Most significantly, Bonhoeffer asserts that truly *wissenschaftlich* enquiry should not be set against the church's faith claim, for it is derived from it. Bonhoeffer is working between Harnack and Barth, arguing for a new unity between scholarly enquiry and ecclesial testimony.[147]

The citation above shows Bonhoeffer employing *aufheben*, which I again render as 'sublation'. Contextual care has to be exercised in the translation of this term in order to avoid the assumption that Bonhoeffer imports Hegel's technical usage wholesale. As noted, his appraisal of Hegel's *Logos* is that its movement remains 'immanent': undergoing *self*-negation and *self*-affirmation, this version of the *Menschenlogos* evades fatal confrontation with the *Gegenlogos*. It is understandable, then, that even when Bonhoeffer's immediate discussion engages Hegel, his translators avoid the standard English rendition of Hegel's *aufheben*. Thus, the human *Logos* cannot be the presupposition,

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[146] *DBWE 12*, 303, alt.; *DBW 12*, 283–4.

[147] As background, in a letter from Adolf von Harnack to Bonhoeffer dated December 22, 1929, he claims that 'our theological existence is additionally threatened by contempt for academic theology and by unscientific theologies'. The line is an allusion to the historian's debate with Karl Barth in the early 1920s. See *DBWE 10*, 196–7, alt.; *DBW 10*, 160.

Bonhoeffer argues, for it is 'dead, condemned, superseded [*tot, gerichtet, aufgehoben*]'.[148]

Were the immanent *Logos* to be merely negated and supplanted, however, that would jeopardise Bonhoeffer's affirmations of *wissenschaftlich* enquiry – and the possibility of preservation, even a qualified 'elevation', as the church becomes the true home of knowledge. He has the difficult task of articulating a recognisable form of human reason that has undergone both mortification and vivification. To that end, I argue that Bonhoeffer's use of the verb *aufheben* should more clearly indicate such double or triple sense – abolition, preservation, elevation – that he elsewhere makes plain. Such a translation must, of course, acknowledge his post-Hegelian recoveries, particularly his insistence on the Christ who freely disrupts the human *Logos*. In other words, if 'to sublate' becomes the translation for Bonhoeffer's account, it must be clearly performed *upon* human reason. As he puts it, Christ's self-revelation is the event through which the 'immanent Logos has been sublated [*ist aufgehoben*]'.[149]

Attempts to avoid the term 'sublation' in translation can lead to strained interpretations of Bonhoeffer's thought, as shown in his treatment of faith. In a later essay on baptism, Bonhoeffer states that faith as a revelatory event means that '*das Ich* is entirely superseded [*aufgehoben*] – "I…no longer I" (Gal. 2:20!)'.[150] The English editorial note claims that *aufheben*

does not seem to be used in this instance in a technical Hegelian sense, as is often the case in Bonhoeffer's writings. Rather, the more literal "to supersede" is used here, meaning "to take the place of; replace or succeed".… Christ, therefore, supersedes the self, that is, causes the self to be set aside and then takes the place of it.[151]

It is questionable whether this interpretive decision is a more 'literal' rendition. More to the point, such a strong interpretive line indicates an enduringly 'competitive' construal of Christ and the self. Granting that the self has to be confronted in its 'incurvature', the answer should nevertheless gesture towards some form of continuity.

Turning briefly to the use of the term *Voraussetzung*, 'presupposition', there is further similarity between Hegel's and Bonhoeffer's projects. For Hegel, 'positing' conveys the attempt of the individual to 'set forth' the divine Idea through action or piety. Such subjective 'positing' remains 'one-sided' unless its presupposition is first recognised to be based on an Idea that precedes and enfolds the subject: the prevenience of the divine nature 'in and for itself'.[152]

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[148] *DBWE 12*, 302; *DBW 12*, 282.

[149] *DBWE 12*, 303, alt.; *DBW 12*, 283–4.

[150] *DBWE 16*, 558; *DBW 16*, 571.

[151] *DBWE 16*, 558n48.

[152] Hegel illustrates this complex claim through Kant's moral theory, namely, that a person can do good only on the presupposition of alignment with a moral order. The act may

Following from this, the work of reconciliation is to proceed not as a claim derived from the subject alone, which is nothing in itself, but from the deeper ground of a unity already accomplished.

Although Bonhoeffer remains suspicious of Hegel for reasons noted above, his project shares a similar aim to root thought in the Christ event, which alone forms the inquirer's 'presupposition'. Bonhoeffer claims that the person of Christ, thought in Chalcedonian reticence, must be the *Voraussetzung,* 'presupposition', for thinking; this in contrast to treating Christ as the *Beweisstück,* 'piece of evidence', provided to reinforce prior human conceptuality.[153] Bonhoeffer's statement is couched in his broader resistance to a division between Christ's person and reconciling work. Nevertheless, he shows a desire to think from the hypostatic union in a manner that resembles Hegel's differentiation between 'positing' and 'presupposing'.

E. The 'Christ-Reality' and the Unities of Thought

I have shown that Bonhoeffer opposes speech about the distinction between the 'idea' and the 'appearance' of Christ in much the way that Luther resists talk of natures conceived in advance. This is one of the extended ways in which Chalcedon carries on its negative function, as Bonhoeffer puts it, cancelling speculation over the natures that begins elsewhere than the unity of *this* person. It is hard to imagine, then, Bonhoeffer making reference to a 'universal incarnational principle', as one critic renders Hegel's treatment of religion.[154] The interpreter must, however, reckon with a series of passages in which Bonhoeffer points to the 'Christ-reality' as the unification of what others have thought apart. Given Bonhoeffer's polemics against Hegel in the Christology lectures, it is highly significant that in the *Ethics* he speaks of the divide between 'idea and reality', as well as that between 'necessity and freedom', to indicate a fallen state of knowing.[155]

While Bonhoeffer resists an apparently pre-determined 'idea' of Christ, he does not shy from experimenting with forms of thought evoked by Christology. In *Ethics*, Bonhoeffer deploys a Christological argument against a dualistic conception of reality held by what he terms 'pseudo-Lutheranism'.[156] Against

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not lead to prosperity, but it nevertheless goes beyond the arbitrary act of a subject: 'the good will thrive in and for itself'. *LPR III,* 175–6; *VPR III,*136.

[153] *DBWE 12*, 301, alt.; *DBW 12*, 281.

[154] This principle is the presupposition that stands at the 'origin of religious consciousness *per se*'. Yerkes, *Christology of Hegel*, 164.

[155] *DBWE 6*, 308; *DBW 6*, 310.

[156] 'In pseudo-Lutheranism the autonomy of the orders of the world is proclaimed against the law of Christ.' This is one iteration of a longstanding 'two realms' [*Zwei Räume*] mode

this 'two-realm' view, he asserts that there is 'only *the one realm of the Christ-reality* [*Christuswirklichkeit*]'.[157] The attendant unities of the 'Christ-reality' show that Bonhoeffer is after the same ground as Hegel, even if he judges his predecessor's system to be an insufficient answer:

> Thinking in terms of two realms understands the paired concepts worldly-Christian, natural-supernatural, profane-sacred, rational-revelational, as ultimate static opposites …. This thinking fails to recognise the original unity of these opposites in the Christ-reality and, as an afterthought, replaces this with a forced unity provided by a sacred or profane system that overarches them.[158]

Bonhoeffer adds a parting shot at Hegel's apparently self-reflexive terms, stating of the individual concepts that '[a]ll this does not exist "in and for itself."' The matter is different, he continues, 'when the reality of God and the reality of the world are recognised in Christ', for then, *inter alia*, 'the natural' and 'reason' are 'seen as included in God from the beginning'.[159] In a similar vein, Bonhoeffer alludes to Chalcedon in articulating the 'two kingdoms' doctrine: the *Zwei Reiche* is a unity that 'as long as the earth remains, must never be mixed together, yet never torn apart'.[160] He will go on to speak of the 'form of Christ' as a means of narrating the relation between ecclesial and other political bodies in the world-historical arena – work that will be considered in Chapter Six.

Bonhoeffer's unitive claims for the Christ-reality brings to mind Hegel's attempts to think of pairs in a relation of both distinction and inseparability. As noted above, Adams presents Hegel as employing a 'Chalcedonian logic'.[161] To further specify Hegel's reception of Chalcedon, his logic bears resemblance to Luther's polemic against thinking of Christ's attributes according to pre-conceived 'natures'. To take one example, in the *Phenomenology* Hegel states that there is a certain 'clumsiness' in the expression '"*unity* of subject and object" or of "the finite and the infinite"'.[162] The problem is that the respective components 'mean what *they are outside of their unity*, and therefore in their unity, they are not meant in the way that their expression states them'.[163]

Bonhoeffer's use of Christological patterns of thought to speak of reality more broadly has raised concern among critics, who liken him to Hegel in a peculiarly Lutheran trajectory. Dumas acknowledges Bonhoeffer's criticism of

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of thinking that has taken various forms throughout Christian history. *DBWE 6*, 56; *DBW 6*, 41.

[157] *DBWE 6*, 58; *DBW 6*, 43–44.

[158] *DBWE 6*, 59; *DBW 6*, 45.

[159] *DBWE 6*, 59; *DBW 6*, 45.

[160] *DBWE 6*, 112; *DBW 6*, 102. Clifford Green identifies the allusion in *DBWE 6*, 112n39.

[161] Adams, *Eclipse,* 6, 22–23.

[162] *PhG*, §39.

[163] *PhG*, §39.

Hegel over human autonomy and the anonymity of *Geist*, but argues that a danger remains in the claim to 'Christ-reality':

> So we must say that there is a Lutheran emphasis in Bonhoeffer (similar to that found in Hegel) that troubles us here, in which the incarnation is in danger of ceasing to be the word of revelation *to* reality and of being transformed into the ongoing structure *of* reality. Only in an eschatological sense can it be claimed that theology is a patent ontology.[164]

Dumas adds that while Hegel lacked a differentiated eschatology, Bonhoeffer maintained this distinction with, to take one example, the penultimate-ultimate schema in *Ethics*. More recently, Marsh has questioned the apparently monistic tone of Bonhoeffer's *Ethics*, asking whether the work perpetuates the loss of distinction previously criticised in Hegel.[165] Marsh judges that Bonhoeffer qualifies unity as preserving distinction, and is therefore best described as speaking of a 'shared reality' rather than a 'necessary identity'.[166]

I raise Bonhoeffer's uses of Christology in this more 'structural' sense to temper his criticism of Christ as 'idea'. Clearly, Bonhoeffer does not reject the notion that Christology can condition reflection on other matters, so that, for instance, the *Logos* might be the inception of a philosophical project. What Bonhoeffer's criticism does provide is a constant check on the way that distinctions, such as idea-appearance, can calcify into oppositions and then be mapped back onto their source. Insofar as Christ is first spoken of as a whole, present person, Bonhoeffer presents him as the underlying unity of, *inter alia*, revelation and reason. Such unity cannot merely be 'thought through', for he insists that it is also faith's perception. Nevertheless, I have argued, his Christological claim is not to be sequestered from the work of a 'science of logic'.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown how Bonhoeffer's charge of a 'docetic' tendency identifies the kind of philosophical classification that divides what Christology would keep united. Although Hegel's distinctions are the most refined in a long line of attempts, Bonhoeffer nevertheless attributes such a 'docetic' tendency to him. A distinction between idea and appearance, just as that between divine and human natures, does not serve Bonhoeffer's intent to articulate the whole and present Christ. Bonhoeffer therefore develops his account by pronouncing what Hegel diminishes: Christ's enduring posture *pro nobis* in contrast to the

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[164] Dumas, *Theologian of Reality*, 235.
[165] Marsh, *Reclaiming Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 104.
[166] Marsh points out that Bonhoeffer uses *hineingenommen* rather than *aufgehoben*. He also states that this unity is mediated by the specific person of Christ rather than the self or the body *per se*. Marsh, *Reclaiming Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 105–6.

sublation into *Geist*; Christ's freedom for 'arbitrary' encounter rather than meeting the demands of universalising necessity.

Having presented Bonhoeffer's confrontational language of Christ as the *Gegenlogos*, I have complicated his criticism of Hegel in two ways. First, I have argued that Bonhoeffer's purpose is to re-introduce process into thinking derived from the Christ figure. He thus does not remain with a Christ that counters human reason *tout court*; rather he appeals to a 'Christ-reality' that should be reflected in the structures of thought. This move requires vocabulary for the human thinking that emerges from such confrontation, and his diction invites closer comparison to Hegel's project. Second, as several critics have noted, Bonhoeffer develops his own uses of the 'idea' of Christ, which is to say, a Christological form of thinking. In the later *Ethics*, he deploys a Chalcedonian formula to overcome dualities of thought between, for example, the two kingdoms or, indeed, revelation and reason. This is not ultimately in contradiction to Bonhoeffer's sharp polemic on behalf of Christ as whole and present. Rather, it indicates that the *Gegenlogos* is also the one in whom all things are held together.

Chapter 4

That Insistent *Est*: Christ as Preaching and Sacrament

> The church's answer to [the understanding] of Christ as *doctrina*, as generalised truth, is to
> maintain that Christ is sacrament, which means that in his essence, he is not *doctrina*. This
> refutes the error that Christ is only an idea and does not exist in both history and nature.
> – Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Christology Lectures

The previous chapter treated what Bonhoeffer was against in his Christology
lectures, namely, a 'docetic' tendency in Hegel's presentation of Christ that
effectively divides the appearance of the historical figure from the idea of di-
vine-human unity. I argued that although Hegel does not offer a strictly modal-
ist account, his emphasis on the Johannine farewell discourses and Christ's
statements of departure entail a strong turn to the Holy Spirit's permeation of
communal *Geist*. Hegel was thereby developing his interest in an expressive
Volksreligion that is not dependent on external authority, while also arguing
against an overemphasis on historical proofs surrounding Jesus' life. This
background helps to explain Bonhoeffer's strong Christology, an attempt to
retrieve 'hypostatic density' in the foreground of a 'pneumatic' field.

The present chapter turns to the theme of Christ's presence as Word and
sacrament. A key emphasis for Luther, as for Bonhoeffer after him, is that God
is always mediated to the community: the living Christ is a 'real presence' as
preached Word and sacrament. I argue that a key aspect of Bonhoeffer's Chris-
tologically intent reception of Hegel's thought is a retrieval of the preached
Word as sacrament in its own right. Although Bonhoeffer takes up many of the
same emphases as Hegel, such as the primacy of truth over feeling and the
continual need for mediation between members, there remain a series of depar-
tures: Hegel examines the transmission of doctrine by the spirited community,
whereas Bonhoeffer argues that Christ is not doctrine but presence; Hegel's
philosophical interest leads him to an account of the self-sufficient 'Idea',
whereas Bonhoeffer emphasises the contingency of 'address'; Hegel's criti-
cism of 'positive' religion and his desire for a broadly-based *Volksreligion* lead
to ambivalence about the material elements of worship, whereas Bonhoeffer
dwells on the Word's material expressions. These differences show that Hegel,
for all his emphasis on mediation, may well be subject to Luther's criticism of

theologians who speak of the 'bare God', or 'God merely as such' – a line to which Bonhoeffer alludes in the Hegel Seminar.[1]

This chapter also provides a fuller contextualisation of Bonhoeffer's reception of Hegel within some Lutheran-Reformed polemics of the time. I show that Bonhoeffer's theology of the Word is significantly influenced by Karl Barth, who throughout the 1920s criticised elements of Hegel's thought as an outworking of an error in Lutheran Eucharistic theology. While Bonhoeffer is sympathetic to Barth's criticism, he also appreciates the vigorous defence of Luther's *est* by his colleague Franz Hildebrandt. Bonhoeffer's shared emphasis on the *est* reveals that his recovery of the Word does not draw him wholly into the 'Barthian circle'.

If Hildebrandt's use of Hegel is relatively uncritical, even emphatic, Bonhoeffer's contrasting caution does not mean utter abandonment. My account of Bonhoeffer's eclectic reception of Hegel therefore stands as an alternative to Michael DeJonge's claim that Bonhoeffer rejects Hildebrandt's project. DeJonge states that 'Bonhoeffer's rejection of classical Lutheran speculation implies a rejection of Hildebrandt's Hegelian-Lutheranism'.[2] While agreeing that Bonhoeffer does not go so far as Hildebrandt, I argue that Bonhoeffer joined him in thinking with Hegel against aspects of Barth's criticism.

Before proceeding, it is worth noting the different arrangements of Hegel's and Bonhoeffer's lecture material. As an exercise in the philosophy of religion, Hegel speaks of the different stages of the 'consummate' or 'revelatory' community, from origin to existence and realisation. Bonhoeffer's exercise in Christology, meanwhile, is ordered through the 'form' of Christ as Word, as sacrament, and as community. Note that Bonhoeffer's heading is singular: these are not plural *Gestalten*, but a single tri-fold form. Each component must be taken into account as elaborations of Bonhoeffer's early Hegel-inspired refrain, 'Christ existing as community'.

A. Reformed-Lutheran Debates in the 1920s

The theology of Word and sacrament is an area where Bonhoeffer's engagement with Reformed-Lutheran arguments have particular bearing. In this section I recount Barth's criticism of the Lutheran tradition and the defence mounted by Bonhoeffer's colleague Franz Hildebrandt. As a brief background, Bonhoeffer and Hildebrandt first met in Seeberg's seminar one day before

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[1] Lehel, *HS*, 29.

[2] Michael DeJonge, 'The Presence of Christ in Karl Barth, Franz Hildebrandt and Dietrich Bonhoeffer', Dietrich Bonhoeffer Yearbook, no. 4 (2009–10), 113. See also Hans-Jürgen Abromeit, *Das Geheimnis Christi. Dietrich Bonhoeffers erfahrungsbezogene Christologie* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991), 206f.

Bonhoeffer's dissertation defence.[3] Bethge remarks that 'their friendship was spiced by a lifelong private feud: Hildebrandt attacked Bonhoeffer for his dubious mixture of Hegelian and Barthian categories, and Bonhoeffer counterattacked by criticizing Hildebrandt's dependence on Harnack'.[4] This chapter takes its cue from Hildebrandt's characterisation, showing how Bonhoeffer's variations on Hegel are, in part, a reaction to Barth's criticism of Lutheran Eucharistic theology. Although Bonhoeffer is not as thoroughly committed to Hegel's work as Hildebrandt, he nevertheless sides with his fellow Lutheran in defending an emphatic *est*.

I. Karl Barth's Criticism of the 'Predicate of Identity'

Throughout the 1920s, Barth levels a Reformed criticism of Luther's view of the Eucharist, particularly in light of its alleged outworking in Hegel and Feuerbach. Barth criticises Luther's claim that all doctrinal clarification is paraphrase of the *hoc est corpus meum*. The *est* is an affirmation that lacks the Reformed 'but', Barth's shorthand for the assertion that the finite cannot contain the infinite – *finitum non capax infiniti*. Barth's position is worth elaborating for a study of Bonhoeffer's reception of Hegel given the importance of Barth's influence, not only during this decade but throughout Bonhoeffer's career.[5]

Barth states his objection in a 1923 exposition and criticism of Luther's doctrine of the Eucharist.[6] He identifies three levels of signification in Luther's 1519 position: the symbolic bread and wine, the action of eating and drinking, and the reception of Christ's 'real presence'. With the latter Barth claims that the union is so emphasised that 'the promised becomes possession, the likeness becomes identity'.[7] He continues that Luther's identification of the two is no mere 'slip in logic, but the purpose which manifests itself with compelling inner necessity in the whole intent of Luther's doctrine of the Lord's Supper'.[8]

Barth goes on to observe variance in Luther's position, claiming that Luther argues against neither transubstantiation nor consubstantiation. Rather, the Reformer emphasises real presence, focusing his attack on those who make either

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[3] Bethge, *Bonhoeffer*, 138.

[4] Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 138. Wolf-Dieter Zimmermann pitches Hildebrandt as an Idealist influenced by Friedrich Brünstad over and against Bonhoeffer as a dialectical theologian. Zimmermann, *I Knew Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 78.

[5] For a good recent account of the relation between Barth and Bonhoeffer's writings, as well as their correspondence and personal contact, see van 't Slot, *Negativism of Revelation?* 35–55.

[6] Karl Barth, 'Luther's Doctrine of the Eucharist', in *Theology and Church: Shorter Writings 1920–28*, trans. Louise Smith (London: SCM, 1962).

[7] Barth, 'Luther's Doctrine', 99.

[8] Barth, 'Luther's Doctrine', 99.

position regarding how this occurs 'a necessary article of faith and law'. Luther's criticism of over-precision in describing the change of the bread is grounded in his insistence on Christ's three words of institution. Barth narrates Luther's various defences, whether consubstantiation or the doctrine of ubiquity, as 'only paraphrase of the "This is my body" [*Hoc est corpus meum*] which for him settled the whole matter'.[9] Barth mocks 'the passion with which he nailed himself to these three letters when he wrote them with chalk on the conference table at Marburg', claiming that the basis of faith must be higher than mere insistence on this phrase's grammatical construction.[10] He identifies this as the 'predicate of identity' in Luther's later writing.[11]

Barth claims that Luther never understood the emerging Reformed objection to his position, identifying both a Reformed emphasis on the ascension and an 'objection of the threat to the glory of God involved in the acceptance of a definite given object of contingent revelation'.[12] In conclusion, he claims that while Reformed theology could go a long way with Luther,

when the *last* word falls, the Lutheran *Yes* may be crossed with the Reformed *But* – not with *No* – to complete and explain it, remembering that when the *last* word falls, that road is a closed circle. The point *from which* Luther began is again reached; the point where identity again becomes likeness, where the critical question must again arise so that the divine answer may be and may remain the truth.[13]

Barth thus tries to reopen the dialectic, claiming that had Luther opened again what he closes with 'identity', Ulrich Zwingli – in his 'undialectical assertion' that consisted of 'only the *But* without the *Yes*' – would have been unable to oppose him.[14] As it is, Barth looks to Calvin, who speaks both *Yes* and *But*, thus showing a way out of the 'historical cul-de-sac'.[15]

Barth's criticism of Luther's doctrine is closely related to his concerns with both Hegel and Feuerbach. In a 1920 lecture, Barth notes that the most important Lutheran doctrine to impress Feuerbach was that of the incarnation along with, relatedly, the Eucharist. He claims that Luther's 'enthusiastic over-emphasis' in locating deity in 'the man Jesus', along with the insistence that the Eucharistic bread 'must be fully the glorified body of the ascended Christ', led to an orthodoxy in which 'the predicate of the divine glory belonged to the humanity of Jesus as such and in abstraction'.[16] Barth continues that this en-

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[9] Barth, 'Luther's Doctrine', 109.

[10] Barth, 'Luther's Doctrine', 110.

[11] Barth, 'Luther's Doctrine', 110.

[12] Barth, 'Luther's Doctrine', 108.

[13] Barth, 'Luther's Doctrine', 110–111.

[14] Barth, 'Luther's Doctrine', 111.

[15] Barth, 'Luther's Doctrine', 111.

[16] Barth makes specific reference to the Lutheran doctrine of 'idiomatic communication' in the 'majestic nature' of the risen Christ in his essay 'Feuerbach', 230.

thusiasm overrides the Reformed *finitum non capax infiniti* and opens the possibility for a reversal of distinctions between heaven and earth, God and humanity, 'forgetting the eschatological boundary'. In a parting shot, Barth claims that 'Hegel in exploiting this possibility perhaps simply demonstrated how good a Lutheran he was, how consistent to his professed adherence'.[17]

Barth's criticism of Hegel, within a larger challenge to Lutheranism, continues in his later writings. In his work on the Reformed confessions, he states a concern with direct Christological immediacy, which can lead to a speculative materialism that leaves no distinction between nature and God.[18] Meanwhile, in the *Göttingen Dogmatics* he identifies the *genus majestaticum* as the 'heart' of Lutheran Christology.[19] He notes that this idiomatic theological teaching about the relation between the divine and human makes possible a certain type of thought, which the German 'temper' [*Gemüt*] takes in two directions. One of these is an 'inclination to the apotheosis of the historical given', as Barth remarks that the passage from Luther's teaching to Hegel is not so long as it appears.[20]

In summary, Barth is clearly concerned with the loss of a boundary between God and humanity. To this end, he criticises Luther for falling into an undialectical assertion of the *est*, forging an 'identity' between the real, whole presence of Christ and the material elements. This is a threat to divine glory in that it ties God to a contingent article without qualification. Barth's critical line against Luther and select heirs prompts a blunt counter-argument that draws on Hegel to reiterate Luther's insistence on the force of the *est*.

II. Franz Hildebrandt's Defence of the Est

Franz Hidebrandt takes issue with Barth's position in his doctoral dissertation, *Est: Das Lutherische Prinzip*. In that work he champions Hegel as a contemporary proponent of Luther's position at Marburg.[21] Hildebrandt follows Hegel in emphasising receptive belief over and against the 'objective' priestly act of consecration attributed to Catholicism.[22] Nevertheless, Hildebrandt resists overcorrection towards bare subjectivity by adopting Hegel's characterisation of the 'Reformed' position as a 'spiritless' recollection of the past.[23] He ends

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[17] Barth, 'Feuerbach', 230.

[18] Karl Barth, *Die Theologie der reformierten Bekenntnisschriften* (1923) (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1998), 286-87.

[19] Karl Barth, *Unterricht in der christlichen Religion, Vol. III* (1925–26) (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1985), 53. My thanks to Carsten Card-Hyatt for this reference.

[20] The other direction is that of the Romantics with their 'passionate desire' for immediacy. Barth, *Unterricht*, 56–57.

[21] Franz Hildebrandt, *Est: Das Lutherische Prinzip* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1931), 58.

[22] Hildebrandt, *Est*, 58

[23] Hildebrandt, *Est*, 60.

this section by claiming that Lutherans and Hegelians occupy a theoretical common ground against the way the question is posed by both 'Catholic' and 'Reformed' theologians.[24]

Hildebrandt writes that the statement 'only in faith' becomes the ground of 'objectivity' rather than a barrier to it.[25] In his account, the Eucharistic element does not remain in the brute materiality of *Rindfleisch* – colloquially 'beef' or more literally 'cattle-flesh' – but rather becomes *Geistfleisch*, 'spirit-flesh'. Hildebrandt states that the distinction is better rendered in the German differentiation between *leiblicher*, 'bodily', and *leibhaftiger*, 'embodied'.[26] This is the manner in which God can be present and, while necessarily apprehended in the heart, no merely 'spiritual' entity.[27] Hildebrandt regularly places Lutheranism between opposed pairs, stating that it remains with neither 'spirit' nor 'body' in isolation.[28] The summary is set in a Hegelian key: 'reality is called here no longer *Ding-lichkeit*, but rather in the pregnant sense, *Wirk-lichkeit*; objectivity is alone to be understood from faith and the spirit'.[29]

Hildebrandt's interest in overcoming the object-subject divide nevertheless maintains the importance of personal encounter, a similar commitment to Barth and Bonhoeffer. For instance, Hildebrandt employs the Pauline counsel to 'discern the body', emphasising the 'living personal unity' of Christ, while speaking of 'Christ himself, who is in his "personal *Daseinsform*"'.[30] To this end, he also seeks to overcome divisions between the 'earthly' and the 'transfigured' body as well as those between the 'person' and 'work' of Christ.[31] Finally, Hildebrandt claims that emphasis on the person of Christ overcomes the whole 'realist' manner of posing the question: 'Human and God do not stand opposed as subject and object, rather as "I" and "You"'.[32] This leads him to state, in an emphasis familiar to Bonhoeffer, that a Christ 'in himself' [*an sich*] is of 'no use'. Citing Luther, Hildebrandt testifies to a Christ 'for you' [*für euch*].[33]

Hildebrandt goes beyond Bonhoeffer in his explicit adoption of Hegel's terms for art for a contemporary Lutheran position. For instance, he states that

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[24] Hildebrandt, *Est*, 64.

[25] In contrast, the Reformed position becomes the barrier [*Grenz*] to such objectivity. Hildebrandt, *Est*, 60.

[26] Hildebrandt, *Est*, 60–62.

[27] Here he cites Luther's reference to the devil as a mere spirit, 'without flesh or bone'. Hildebrandt, *Est*, 60.

[28] Hildebrandt, *Est*, 61.

[29] Hildebrandt, *Est*, 64.

[30] Hildebrandt, *Est*, 59. The final citation is taken from Georg Lasson, *Grundfragen der Glaubenslehre* (Leipzig, 1913).

[31] Hildebrandt, *Est*, 59, 82.

[32] Hildebrandt, *Est*, 82.

[33] Hildebrandt, *Est*, 82.

Reformed theology does not overcome the viewpoint of *Vorstellung*, 'representation', which makes it difficult to conceptualise 'real presence'.[34] Hildebrandt thus contrasts the Reformed 'representational' view, rendered in the shorthand *significat,* with the Lutheran 'concept' as rendered in the *est*.[35] He even states that the Hegelian formulation of a 'higher "reason"' [*höhere "Vernunft"*] is anticipated in Luther's Marburg struggle against base 'reason'.[36] Moreover, Hildebrandt follows Hegel in stating that philosophy and religion have a common object, claiming that philosophy works towards the Idea as 'result'. In particular, Hegel's use of the proofs of God's existence are seen to be intelligible in light of the Lutheran *finitum capax infiniti*. Proceeding from here, Hildebrandt argues that the finite is not 'for itself' [*für sich*], but rather must be 'sublated [*aufgehoben*] in the infinite'.[37] There is a necessary movement from the 'barrier of bare "existence"' towards the kingdom of God.[38]

From the angle of religion or theology, Hildebrandt claims that in the Lutheran framework the glory of God leads from the infinite to the finite. He states that thinking this 'concrete unity' is the original question of Christology, one that must unfold and be settled in the Eucharist debate, that is, 'the Idea of God-humanity'.[39] This leads to his clearest statement of alliance to Hegel and an 'Idealist' project:

> But that is the exact meaning of the "*cur deus homo*": that God does not remain "in himself" ["*an sich*"], but rather goes out in his "Other-Being" and through this comes to himself. That is the step from Hellenism to Christianity, from heathenism to Christian Idealism: that the Idea [*Idee*] becomes historical reality in "this" human. That finally is the step from Reformed scepticism to Lutheran philosophy: that the *finitum capax infiniti* and faith in the Logos become flesh is the beginning of all human knowledge [*Erkenntnis*].[40]

The statement gathers up several prior references to John's gospel to claim that the *Logos* is the centre of reality.

Hildebrandt directly links the Johannine *Logos* to Hegel's project, claiming that 'Lutheran speculation gives visibility back to John's Gospel'.[41] The fourth evangelist's opening claim, in which Christ is described as 'being rightly, truly, naturally God, *a priori*', indeed, 'described as Creator and also creature as in a

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[34] Hildebrandt, *Est*, 72.

[35] 'Est und Significat' is the first section heading under *Vorstellung*. Hildebrandt, *Est*, 64–66.

[36] Hildebrandt, *Est*, 75.

[37] Hildebrandt, *Est*, 76.

[38] Hildebrandt, *Est*, 76.

[39] Hildebrandt, *Est*, 77.

[40] Hildebrandt, *Est*, 83.

[41] Hildebrandt, *Est*, 66. The likeness of Hegel's project to John's gospel is also drawn in Adams, *Eclipse*, xviii, 224.

flash of lightning' becomes, Hildebrandt states, the *petitio principii* of all theology, the Word of God that is the basis of the *Hoc est corpus meum*.[42] In contrast, Bonhoeffer claims that Hegel's thought does not manage to get beyond a merely human 'logos' in the end. Rather, Hegel's method of self-negation does not escape the incurvature of human reason and only serves to affirm itself. As I have shown in the previous chapter, Bonhoeffer therefore employs the *Gegenlogos* in an attempt to confront human reflection anew, reinstating process into Christological reflection. The present task is to consider what this means for doctrinal transmission and the event of the sermon.

B. Christ as Doctrine, Christ as Address

This section turns to the process of verbal transmission in the community. I first trace Hegel's articulation of doctrine, showing it as an act of the community indwelt by the Holy Spirit and so an expression of reconciling *Geist*. Bonhoeffer's own presentation of Christ as Word is then presented, with a particular focus on his Luther-inspired 'sacramentalising' of the sermon. I argue that Bonhoeffer's key difference from Hegel can be found in his turn away from processes of doctrinal transmission in order to emphasise preaching as Christ's present address. This move is a further instance of Bonhoeffer's intent, signalled already in *Sanctorum Communio*, to recover the 'Word before *Geist*'.

I. Hegel on the Doctrinal Construction of Community

Hegel's concerns over 'external' forms of authority and a tendency to 'fetishise' the figure of Christ lead him to sideline Christ's distinctive agency in the process of doctrinal transmission. This occurs in two ways: first, Hegel's emphasis on spirited doctrinal development leads him away from the notion that Christ addresses people directly in 'contingent' encounters; second, when Hegel speaks of doctrinal education he makes no mention of the verbal encounter of preaching, a stark contrast with the 'exclusive', even sacramental character Bonhoeffer grants to it. I will treat each of these decisions in turn.

First, Hegel's construal of doctrinal development leads him away from claims to communal reception of the external 'Word of Christ'. This is most starkly expressed when he states, 'the community in itself is what produces this doctrine, this relationship. The latter is not something produced from the word of Christ, so to speak, but through the community, the church'.[43] Hegel's statement must be parsed carefully, for it would be misleading to see this as reference to a purely 'immanent' human plane. While Hegel wants to highlight the

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[42] Hildebrandt, *Est*, 65–66.
[43] *LPR III,* 254; *VPR III,* 198.

communal role in doctrine, this is the community which the Spirit indwells. He notes this first with relation to the belief that perceives Christ as God: 'the community begins with faith, but on the other hand faith is produced in it by the Spirit'.[44] Hegel then elaborates by explicitly naming the different form of 'production' brought about by Pentecost:

> The first question is: What does this spirit know? It is itself an object [for its own knowing] because it is spirit. Now what is its content, what is its doctrine? Its content is that this objective spirit likewise posits itself, realizes itself in the community; it now posits itself subjectively, or is subjectively posited, just as it was objectively posited.[45]

Such citations show the complexity of the *Geist* at work after Pentecost. At times Hegel specifies the Holy Spirit, but otherwise the dividing line between human community and Spirit of God is precisely what he seeks to challenge. Suffice it to say that there is no purely human production; doctrine as a 'social construct' presupposes the agency of the divine Spirit. So too the larger social *Geist* to unfurl from the church into a Protestant state.

In his reaction to trends in 'objectification', Hegel does not provide Christ with an ongoing 'external' position. He acknowledges that it is possible to remain primarily with the 'representation of the Son', but that this would be to remain with the more 'objectified' form of religion he attributes to Catholicism. Such an objectification can also, he notes, apply to the Spirit, such that there is 'greater stress on sensible perception than on spiritualization, and the Spirit essentially became an object'.[46] Against these tendencies, Hegel employs a theatrical metaphor to speak instead of how the 'Spirit exists *for* Spirit' as the spectator of a drama has herself objectified in the form of a chorus on stage.[47] God as Spirit takes up this mediatorial task to ensure the human community is never 'self-raised':

> Thus this inverted moment [the third] is that the infinite Spirit does not abide in itself in an objective way but rather brings forth Spirit in itself because it begets itself in self-consciousness. … For it is one-sided to view faith in the form of subjectivity in such a way that the community, the individual self-consciousness, raises itself up and is the productive factor. All activity is mediated; what is to be brought forth must already exist in and for itself.[48]

Hegel's statement demonstrates the claim that the community's production of doctrine not only avoids historical proofs, and so the one-sidedness of sensible immediacy, but also a merely human definition of itself. The history of the Christ event that has achieved reconciliation, with the attendant outpouring of the Spirit, inaugurates the community and so remains its 'presupposition'.[49]

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[44] *LPR III,* 248; *VPR III,* 191.
[45] *LPR III,* 252; *VPR III,* 196.
[46] *LPR III,* 253; *VPR III,* 197.
[47] *LPR III,* 246; *VPR III,* 189.
[48] *LPR III,* 253–54; *VPR III,* 197.
[49] *LPR III,* 254–55; *VPR III,* 194–95.

Second, although Hegel acknowledges the importance of the teaching office, his emphasis on doctrine as a 'presupposition' obviates the verbal event of the preached word. Hegel's use of the term 'presupposition' is thoroughly rational, implying a verbal, didactic process. He explicitly states that faith is 'not *feeling*'; rather, it is 'an *object* of consciousness, and this antecedent truth alone is the ground that determines feelings'.[50] Hegel criticises a dependence on feeling as it 'locks particular subjectivity within itself', remaining overly susceptible to the 'natural' will; on the contrary, 'Spirit conquers feeling, purifies and determines it'.[51] These terms call to mind Hegel's ongoing dispute with Schleiermacher, his colleague at the University of Berlin, whom he took to prioritise feeling over reason. Incidentally, it is a characterisation of Schleiermacher that Bonhoeffer also holds.

In order to discipline such feelings, Hegel acknowledges the importance of the teaching office to develop the consciousness first intuited in the Spirit's witness. He states:

> [Doctrine] *is*, it exists, it has value, it is acknowledged and immediately presupposed. But it does not exist in a sensible fashion…rather, spiritual truth exists only as *known*, and the fact that it also *appears* includes the fact that the mode of its appearance is precisely this, that it is taught. The church is essentially the teaching church.[52]

The church has clear verbal authority in forming subjects. In Hegel's continuing focus on the spirited form of knowing, he relieves his enquiry from the question of the church's historical use of textual resources, whether scripture and its commentaries or the theological tradition of writings. This is in part because of his basic commitment to a strong emphasis on the witness of the Spirit – 'a mediation that annuls all mediations' – rather than on merely 'contingent' grounds or authority.[53] The primary issue for him is to state that the church's doctrine is 'cultivated by present Spirit', and as such, holds authority over its development.[54]

Hegel's concern with external authority and miracles, characteristic of 'positive' religion, particularly Catholicism, leads him to emphasise community production over reception. This is a key point of difference with Bonhoeffer, who will focus on the latter. Hegel seeks to avoid appealing to 'contingent, indifferent, external [occasions], subjective in character, just as an accidental incident stirred an individual's heart'.[55] Rather, 'the faith of the community rests solely on reason itself, on *Geist*, i.e. a mediation that annuls all mediations. Hence it is necessarily expressed as a faith of many, engendered by

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[50] *LPR III,* 258; *VPR III,* 200.
[51] *LPR III,* 259; *VPR III,* 200.
[52] *LPR III,* 264; *VPR III,* 202–3.
[53] *LPR III,* 258; *VPR III,* 199.
[54] *LPR III,* 259–60; *VPR III,* 201.
[55] *LPR III*, 258; *VPR III*, 199–200.

God'.[56] With this last line, Hegel cites Adam's first recognition of Eve as a pattern: 'the divine Idea that exists in itself is in man, [who is its] image; this image is God – "*Geist* of my *Geist*" – a testimony to God'.[57]

Faith is not feeling, Hegel argues with Schleiermacher again in view, but a 'form of objective truth' and therefore 'the ground that determines feelings'.[58] Even in the ongoing interpretation of texts 'Nothing [is simply] created from itself: it is the *Geist* of the community as a whole [that creates]. [The] doctrine of the church [is] not produced in the church but is cultivated by the present *Geist*'.[59] Such development, though, is not to suggest that doctrine is incomplete and must be passed off to merely human actors. Rather, '*doctrine* is developed in the community itself only as something already presupposed and complete'.[60] Such completion shows it to be a divine given, a revelation, which then unfurls both in the church's consciousness as well as 'through the cultivation of thought and philosophy'.[61]

This expansive ideal, particularly in Hegel's sense of movement beyond clergy and ecclesial ritual, relegates the instigating divine address into the background as human subjects become 'the active expression of *Geist*'.[62] As Hegel concludes his section on faith and doctrine, he speaks of an 'altered relation' to the church's origin. If Christ's own word, and indeed his polemical teachings, present earlier forms, so too with the early age of the Spirit:

> It is no longer the case that [the human] is elevated to absolute significance by the outpouring and decree of the Spirit, but rather that this significance is something that is known and acknowledged. It is the absolute capability of the subject, both within itself and objectively, to share in the truth, to come to the truth, to exist in the truth, to attain to the consciousness of truth. This consciousness of doctrine is here presupposed and present.[63]

As an outworking of this presupposition, there is a rare mention of the act of preaching in Hegel's characterisation of the way Catholics externally dispense the articles of religion. He states that lay persons are 'excluded from the self-knowledge of doctrine' and therefore 'conduct themselves receptively' vis-à-vis the clerical office through which the church is 'the external proprietor and dispenser of the means of grace'.[64] The pejorative account of 'pure receptivity' shows Hegel's critical distance from Bonhoeffer's adoption of Luther's em-

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[56] *LPR III*, 258; *VPR III*, 200.

[57] *LPR III*, 258; *VPR III*, 200.

[58] *LPR III*, 258; *VPR III*, 200.

[59] *LPR III*, 259; *VPR III*, 201.

[60] *LPR III*, 263; *VPR III*, 202.

[61] *LPR III*, 263; *VPR III*, 202.

[62] *LPR III*, 268; *VPR III*, 208.

[63] *LPR III*, 268; *VPR III*, 208.

[64] Hegel wryly comments that this is why the service is called a 'Mass'. LPR *III,* 271; *VPR III,* 210–11.

phasis on receptive hearing before the divine Word. Bonhoeffer's differenti-
ated theology of the Word allows him to speak both of receptivity to the divine
Word as the reality of the church precisely as a means to a critical position vis-
à-vis clericalism.

Hegel certainly acknowledges the flaws in communal transmission. Indeed,
his claim to the subject's 'absolute capability' stands in sharp contrast to his
disappointment in the church's teaching office in his day. In the final section,
'The Passing Away of the Community', Hegel claims that the community will
endure in spite of its teachers, otherwise he would end on a discordant note.
He states that those entrusted to transmit doctrine have abandoned those for
whom truth can only exist as representation, those who lack an 'ever-insistent
reason', and those who have trouble controlling their impulses. The teachers
have instead 'found their satisfaction in finitude, subjectivity, and precisely
therefore in vanity'.[65] As such, they cannot serve the people, leaving religion
in such a state that it must 'take refuge in philosophy'.[66] The movement from
doctrinal transmission within the church community to its necessary refuge in
the philosophy faculty reveals Hegel's view of disciplinary priority at the re-
cently founded University of Berlin.

Hegel had significant personal reasons to marginalise preaching. His deci-
sion not to pursue the pastorate had many aspects, ranging from the poor qual-
ity of the Tübingen instructors to the influence of his close friends Schelling
and Hölderlin, but the low marks he received for his sermons were a contrib-
uting factor.[67] Commenting on this latter fact, Hodgson links Hegel's omission
of the preaching event in his *Lectures* to a negative personal experience.[68]
Hodgson goes on to suggest that Hegel's replacement of the proclamation of
the Word with a 'sacramental understanding of divine presence' gives his phi-
losophy an 'ecumenical cast'.[69] This is an unnecessary, likely harmful sacrifice
for the goal of ecumenism, as Bonhoeffer's contrasting account will show. He-
gel's intense personal rivalry with Schleiermacher, a renowned preacher in
Berlin, is another likely factor in Hegel's disinterest in proclamation. Such bi-
ographical background does not entirely explain Hegel's lecture choices, of
course. After all, Hegel had a bad experience of public speaking in general,
which would certainly have made his career as a professor difficult.[70] Such

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[65] *LPR III,* 296; *VPR III,* 231.

[66] *LPR III,* 296; *VPR III,* 231.

[67] See Pinkard, *Hegel,* 21–28, cf. 282. The observation that Hegel stopped attending
church while in Frankfurt is not incidental. See Dorrien, *Kantian Reason and Hegelian
Spirit,* 166–67.

[68] Hodgson, 'Introduction', in *Theologian of Spirit,* 37.

[69] Hodgson, 'Introduction', in *Theologian of Spirit,* 37.

[70] In a May 1816 letter inquiring about a post in Heidelberg, Hegel makes the point that
he had improved from his old style of lecturing. Shortly thereafter, he received a letter of
interest from the University of Berlin, but one which expresses doubts about whether Hegel

experience did not stop Hegel in his chosen vocation, however; he loved the work of teaching philosophy and persisted with it. As a result, his tortured oral delivery actually came to coincide with his content, at least in the Romantic appropriation of his persona.[71] His neglect of the preached encounter, then, should be related more to his emerging vocational and institutional priority.

In any case, Hegel tends to shift doctrinal transmission to the philosophers, an 'isolated order of priests' within the university. This turn to the deliberative lecture hall is one reason why he does not delve into the preaching event, leaving aside the kind of rhythmic efficacy that Reformation thinkers have long placed in the preaching of the Word. This is the witness that Bonhoeffer seeks to recover in his Berlin lectures a century later.

II. Bonhoeffer on the Present Address of Preaching

In the Christology lectures, Bonhoeffer's section entitled 'Christ as Word' offers his broader theology of the Word before focusing on the event of preaching. He begins in a manner reminiscent of Hegel, emphasising 'truth' over *Gefühl*, 'feeling', signalling his suspicion of Schleiermacher's project.[72] Moreover, Bonhoeffer observes that the *logos* is a point of meeting:

> Because the human being has a logos, therefore God encounters the human being in the logos. Therefore the human being [is] the Homo Sapiens. The truth of the human logos therefore originates in the Word, because the Word alone communicates clear and unambiguous meaning. …The Word interprets itself according to its nature. This clarity and consonance is the reason why it is universally valid.[73]

Reference to the *logos* as the encounter between God and human reason bears resemblance to the inception of Hegel's own philosophical project.

Having made two similar expressions to Hegel, Bonhoeffer makes a sharp turn, qualifying that 'the logos of God is not to be identified with, or analysed by, the human logos'.[74] He then asserts that there are two mutually exclusive

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had the 'skills' required to give appropriately 'lively presentations' to the students. A 'deprecatory' tone to the letter is noted in Pinkard, *Hegel,* 327–330.

[71] Pinkard remarks that although Hegel's lecture style irritated many, his followers 'were inclined to take his monotonic delivery – punctuated by gasps, coughs, and stutters – to be a sign of his great "interiority", of the depths of his genius struggling to bring those dark, difficult thoughts to the light of day, rather than being the expressions of an anxious man doing something that he loved but which also burdened him with no small amount of agitation and anxiety'. Pinkard, *Hegel*, 327.

[72] *DBWE 12,* 315; *DBW 12,* 297. For more on the relation to Schleiermacher, see Christiane Tietz, 'Friedrich Schleiermacher and Dietrich Bonhoeffer' in Frick, ed., *Bonhoeffer's Intellectual Formation*, 121–144.

[73] *DBWE 12,* 316; *DBW 12,* 298.

[74] *DBWE 12*, 316; *DBW 12*, 297–98.

'structures' of the Word, the first of which is 'idea' [*Idee*].[75] With this characterisation, Bonhoeffer argues against two related notions: an atemporal aspect and a susceptibility to human possession. Here as elsewhere Bonhoeffer works with a composite foil and does not name his opponent. However, it is likely that Bonhoeffer's resistance to an 'idea' that is 'eternally at rest within itself' has Hegel's account in view. Recall that Bonhoeffer states elsewhere in the Christology lectures that Hegel's philosophy, with its idea-appearance classification, is one of the most sophisticated expressions of a resolutely human *logos*. Moreover, Bonhoeffer's criticism of an idea that is directly accessible to any person, who need 'only take possession of it', recalls Hegel's account, forged as it is by opposition to the selectivity implied by the doctrine of predestination.

In contrast to his characterisation of the all-too-human 'idea', Bonhoeffer presents the Word as *Anrede*, 'address'.[76] Rather than being at the prerogative of human thought, Bonhoeffer asserts that the Word-as-spoken 'is wholly subject to the freedom of the one who speaks. By nature it is a one-time event, a new event every time'.[77] This spoken encounter is what leads to the formation of the community. Rather than an idea that 'remains essentially within itself', Bonhoeffer claims that the Word as address 'is only possible as Word between two persons, as address and answer [*als Anrede und Antwort*], responsibility'.[78] Hegel would certainly acknowledge Bonhoeffer's claim that 'truth happens only in community between two persons'; indeed, this is the socialising move that Bonhoeffer adapts from Seeberg's use of Hegel.[79] Nevertheless, Bonhoeffer's emphasis on the address of the present Christ retrieves the resurrected agency of the *Gottmensch* that Hegel largely neglects.

Bonhoeffer's emphasis on the freedom of God in address and answer is reminiscent of Barth's later response to Hegel. In *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, Barth poses the well-known question of whether Hegel could do for Protestantism what Aquinas did for Roman Catholicism.[80] Although Barth sees Hegel to accept the 'positive and historical nature of revelation', affirming an emphasis on the uniqueness of Christ, he nevertheless argues that 'with Hegel God and man can never confront one another in a relationship which is actual and indissoluble, a word, a new word revelatory in the strict sense, cannot pass between them, it cannot be uttered and cannot be heeded'.[81]

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[75] *DBWE 12,* 316; *DBW 12,* 298. Once again, Bonhoeffer's usage of 'idea' remains uncapitalised to indicate that his broader foil goes beyond Hegel's use of the term.

[76] *DBWE 12,* 316, alt.; *DBW 12,* 298.

[77] *DBWE 12,* 316; *DBW 12,* 298.

[78] *Verantwortung*, 'responsibility', is related to *antworten*, 'to answer'. DBWE *12,* 316, alt.; *DBW 12,* 298.

[79] *DBWE 12,* 317; *DBW 12,* 298.

[80] Barth, *Nineteenth-Century*, 384.

[81] Barth, *Nineteenth-Century*, 419.

Rather, in Barth's characterisation, 'when God manifests himself the philosopher of religion has already understood him'.[82] This calls into question God's sovereignty and freedom, leading Barth to reclaim the doctrine of predestination.[83]

Bonhoeffer is not strictly Barthian, particularly insofar as Barth goes on to criticise Hegel for indicating that 'the church is necessary for God himself, for in it he can be the mind of the church'.[84] While Bonhoeffer wants to preserve God's freedom, notably through the language of 'address', he also wants to remain closer to Hegel by rooting his enquiry in the church, the community that has the 'mind of Christ'. Bonhoeffer's theology of the Word then conveys the way in which Christ will both reveal himself and hide, as he retrieves that notion of 'hiddenness' that has little place in Hegel's revelatory religion. This reclaimed prerogative is summarised in the claim that 'Christ is not timelessly and universally accessible as an idea; instead he is heard as Word only there where he allows himself to be heard'.[85] This emphasis neither renders God inaccessible nor results in the kind of Barthian 'split vision' that Bonhoeffer seeks to counter by affirming the *est*. Rather, the acknowledgement of contingency serves to accentuate the God-human one's 'commitment to humankind'.[86]

An explicit discussion of preaching arises in Bonhoeffer's final paragraph of the section 'Christ as Word'. Here he further distinguishes his account from Hegel by retrieving the 'exclusive status' of the sermon in Reformation thought.[87] Bonhoeffer specifies this status through the Lutheran claim that Christ is truly given in the preached Word, which is to say that preaching itself holds sacramental status.[88] In this way, Bonhoeffer's approach mirrors the way in which Luther has been said not to 'verbalise' the sacrament but rather 'to sacramentalise the Word', insofar as he held that the preached Word is truly able to *give* Christ.[89]

Bonhoeffer's high view of the preaching event stands in relief to Hegel's notion of the 'objective *Geist*' in which the preacher is embedded. Bonhoeffer

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[82] Barth, *Nineteenth-Century*, 419.

[83] Barth, *Nineteenth-Century*, 420.

[84] Barth, *Nineteenth-Century*, 420.

[85] *DBWE 12*, 317; *DBW 12,* 298.

[86] *DBWE 12*, 317; *DBW 12,* 298–99.

[87] *DBWE 12,* 317–18; *DBW 12,* 299.

[88] Bonhoeffer refers to preaching as though it were a dominical sacrament in the following statement: 'Christ's presence is limited to preaching and sacrament. Why do we have precisely these sacraments? The Protestant church answers, because they are actions instituted by Jesus Christ.' *DBWE 12,* 319; *DBW 12,* 301.

[89] This phrasing of an idea attributed to Regin Prentor is taken from a section entitled 'the Sacrament of Preaching', in Gerhard O. Forde, *The Preached God: Proclamation in Word and Sacrament*, ed. Mark Mattes and Steven Paulson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 90.

asserts that Christ's presence is not the 'objective *Geist* of the community out of which it preaches, but rather his presence is preaching'.[90] As Bonhoeffer's previous treatment of objective *Geist* was a partial affirmation, this statement is not a crude dismissal of Hegel's notion. As noted in my treatment of *Sanctorum Communio*, it is 'individual *Geist*' Bonhoeffer seeks to preserve: first, the distinct 'mind' of Christ, from which follows the individuation of his addressees within the community.

Bonhoeffer's claim to the spoken Word as sacrament is underscored in his later Finkenwalde lectures on homiletics, in which he makes reference to both the '*est* of the sermon' and the '*est* of the Lord's Supper'.[91] Both encounters offer 'the same measure of reality', though in a different form.[92] The Word and sacrament are thus very closely aligned: 'the word is something real; there is a *sacramentum verbi* (*sacramentum audibile*)'. As noted about the earlier Christology lectures, and in pronounced difference to Hegel's omission of the preached word, Bonhoeffer draws on Luther's 'hypostatization of the Word', the *sacramentum verbi*.[93] While Bonhoeffer stresses the importance of a preacher's assurance in the present Christ, though, this is not to be presumed without commitment to 'pure doctrine', the preaching of the 'simple, clear, unanimous word of the gospel'.[94]

Bonhoeffer's emphasis on the preached Word and its reception, drawn from the Lutheran confessions, had significant implications for the practice of his homiletics classes. Oral delivery was only to be heard, while analysis was relegated to sermon manuscripts.[95] In Bethge's recollection:

It initially seemed strange to his students that their sermons, however hesitant and inadequate, were treated in all seriousness as the expression of the true and living voice of Christ. Nothing, insisted Bonhoeffer, is more concrete than the real voice of Christ speaking in the sermon.[96]

Although this emphasis led to rumours of 'enthusiasm' at Finkenwalde, Bonhoeffer continued to recognise the academy as providing a corrective to sermons, even if it never rendered the pulpit obsolete.[97] As a result, alongside church confessions Bonhoeffer delved deeply into exegetical literature, and his papers from that time contain several Greek word studies.[98]

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[90] *DBWE 12,* 317; *DBW 12,* 299.

[91] *DBWE 14,* 514; *DBW 14*, 508.

[92] *DBWE 14,* 515; *DBW 14*, 508.

[93] Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 443.

[94] *DBWE 14,* 514 n108.

[95] This would at times result in the brisk dismissal of a class at the close of a sermon. Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 442.

[96] Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 441.

[97] Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 444.

[98] Bethge, *Bonhoeffer*, 430, 453.

Bonhoeffer's Finkenwalde lecture series on homiletics highlights the magisterial presence of Christ in preaching. He states, 'In the proclaimed Word, Christ steps into the congregation, which is waiting for and calling on Christ … In the proclaimed Word, [Christ takes up his congregation], as the Word of the Father that took away the sins of the world'.[99] Such presence entails confrontation, *Gegenlogos*. As Bonhoeffer states, the preached Word is not merely instruction or goal; rather, 'the clear Word of Christ brings the Spirit and breaks our will'.[100] The confrontational language calls to mind Bonhoeffer's early paper on the 'majesty' of the Holy Spirit in Luther's works, another theological distinction of this divine actor that bears comparison with Hegel's reconciling social field.

Bonhoeffer's recovery of the preached Word shows him working with both Hildebrandt's Hegelian-Lutheranism and Barth. Bonhoeffer makes an unqualified affirmation of Christ's 'whole presence', adapting Luther as Hildebrandt before him, to claim 'this is the human Word to which you should point and say, this is God!'[101] His rationale shows an employment of Luther's insistence on whole presence, which he then chastens through dialectic:

I cannot point to the human being unless I am pointing to this Jesus. Christ is in the church as the spoken Word in the form of both sermon and sacrament. … I could not preach if I did not know that I am speaking *God's Word*, and I could not preach if it were *I* who is supposed to be speaking God's Word.[102]

Bonhoeffer's claim to the concurrence of both divine and human words shows his Barthian influence, although he does not abandon the Lutheran instinct which draws him, as Hildebrandt, to Hegel's thought.

The unique pedagogical context of Finkenwalde is noteworthy in tracing the biographical trajectory that runs alongside Bonhoeffer's emphasis on preaching. In contrast to Hegel's departure from seminary for an increasingly certain sense of vocation as a professor in the modern university, Bonhoeffer becomes increasingly disillusioned with the academy as he knew it – no doubt in connection with its subservience to the Third Reich. As a result, his instruction becomes increasingly based within the ecclesial institution. This move is especially evident in his founding role as an instructor at Finkenwalde, tellingly named the 'preacher's seminary', in which he led a small group of men through

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[99] *DBWE 14,* 513; *DBW 14*, 506.

[100] *DBWE 14,* 513; *DBW 14*, 506. He uses terms from the Greek New Testament to express the difference made by this address, distinguishing the *anthropos psychikos* and *anthropos pneumatikos*.

[101] *DBWE 12*, 318; *DBW 12,* 299–300. Hildebrandt cites Luther's claim that 'this is the human being to whom you should point and say, this is God!' in *Est*, 82. Luther's original text is '*Hic homo est deus, hic deus est homo*', taken from 'The Babylonian Captivity of the Church'. See *DBWE 12*, 318n44.

[102] *DBWE 12*, 318; *DBW 12*, 300.

a semi-monastic rule of life. Of course, his teaching there drew on a lifetime's experience of sermon delivery and reception.

C. Christ as Sacrament

Having traced Hegel's and Bonhoeffer's pronounced differences on the place of the preached Word in the community, this section treats their respective views on the Lord's Supper. I first examine Hegel's polemic against hastily-drawn Catholic and Reformed foils, as well as his interest in seeing Lutheran Eucharistic 'knowing' expand outwards into a state marked by 'cultivation'. Then Bonhoeffer's treatment of the Eucharist is shown to make recurrent reference to the 'hiddenness' of Christ. He also rejects 'Reformed' questions that do not proceed from the unity of Christ's person. Nevertheless, Bonhoeffer makes the somewhat surprising acknowledgement of the 'relative right' in Hegel's secularisation of the Lord's Supper.

I. Hegel on Consciousness and Consumption

Hegel has already set his enquiry in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* apart from an interest in ecclesiastical history. This move is related both to his challenge to the historical verification of proofs and his focus on forms of knowing. In discussing the community's doctrine, he states that the 'empirical aspect of such production, by means of church gatherings, councils, etc., does not concern us here'. Continuing his dissociation from those who sought confirmation in historical 'proofs', he notes that 'this content is to be justified by philosophy, not by history; what the Spirit does is no history [*Historie*]'.[103]

The ensuing representation of confessional differences over Eucharistic theology is brief and inadequate for readers with a theological interest.[104] Hegel neither differentiates intra-confessional positions, notably combining Calvin and Zwingli in the Reformed type, nor considers Orthodox or Anglican positions. He is less interested in a confessionally descriptive exercise than in a taxonomy that can frame his account of knowing.[105]

Hegel first presents the Catholic position as that of 'severe objectivity'. The host is venerated 'as such, even when not partaken of'.[106] He draws an analogy with Catholic doctrine, which is a matter for 'obedience' rather than 'insight'

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[103] *LPR III,* 254; *VPR III,* 198.

[104] Hegel's views of the other traditions are called 'too superficial and pejorative' in Yerkes, *Christology*, 211.

[105] Hodgson notes that this is virtually the only section of the lectures where Hegel distinguishes traditions, as his philosophy generally shows a 'transconfessional' posture. Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, 192.

[106] *LPR III,* 271; *VPR III,* 210.

and leads to clericalism.[107] Later Hegel notes that the priest's consecration entails that 'Christ is present in the host in a sensible, bodily, unspiritual way', and thus 'the divine' is eaten in an 'empirical fashion'.[108] Externality prevails in a manner reminiscent of the 'positive' Christianity targeted by his early writings. The essence of such religion consists in 'lip service, external actions, inner feelings, and a historical faith'.[109] On the theme of sacraments, Hegel sees Catholic clericalism to mean that reconciliation for the people is only 'external', in contrast to a Protestant polity in which priests have a primarily pedagogical function, while 'all in the religious community are equal before God as the present *Geist* of the community'.[110]

While Hegel's view of Catholicism varies somewhat throughout his life, he consistently casts it as a 'paradigmatically unmodern form of Christianity'.[111] This is due in part to the atmosphere of anti-Catholic sentiment during his upbringing in Württemberg. Hegel becomes more open to the tradition in his youth, but his post-Jena years see him return to a dismissive view of it, an attitude partly driven by his battles with Catholic 'old Bavarians' as well as Schlegel's actions as a Catholic convert.[112]

Turning to the other pole, Hegel represents the Reformed confession as immersed in subjectivity. He portrays it as 'a memorial, an ordinary psychological relation', continuing that it is caught in the 'prose of the Enlightenment and of mere understanding, and in the contingency of subjective particularity'.[113] Elsewhere Hegel states that the Reformed view is a 'spiritless, merely vivid recollection of the past – not the divine presence, no actual spirituality'.[114] Remarkably, this depiction conflates the views of Zwingli and Calvin, although it is clearly more like the former.

Stepping back from these two foils, Hegel claims that Catholic and Reformed traditions each attempt to articulate the antithesis between God and humanity. He states that the various 'churchly representations are themselves attempts at a resolution of this antinomy, this implicit and explicit antithesis between the divine and the finite'.[115] In one rendition, he refers to them as three

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[107] *LPR III,* 271; *VPR III,* 210.

[108] *LPR III,* 274–75; *VPR III,* 213–14.

[109] This characterization is seen to parallel Judaism as an alleged religion of 'sacrifices, ceremonies, and a compulsory faith'. Hegel, 'Positivity', 79.

[110] Pinkard attributes this citation to Hegel in 1808, during his first term as rector in Nuremberg. The dating should be taken as approximate, however, for the words come from what has been called Hegel's 'philosophical propaedeutics'. Hegel, *Werke 4*, 68; cited in Pinkard, *Hegel*, 293.

[111] Pinkard, *Hegel*, 293.

[112] Schelling's treatment by Würzburg bishops and Hegel's own earlier argument with Catholic philosophers in Jena are further factors in Pinkard, *Hegel*, 292–293.

[113] *LPR III,* 272; *VPR III,* 211.

[114] *LPR III,* 275; *VPR III,* 214.

[115] *LPR III,* 273–74; *VPR III,* 212–13.

representations which together constitute the 'major moments in the existence of the community' – a parallel to the larger structure of the lecture series.[116] The antithesis is finally overcome in a third tradition through the Spirit's enactment of 'an internal repetition of the life, passion, and resurrection of Christ in the members of the church'.[117] The natural will dies away through confession and repentance, exchanged for 'glorification and majesty' in the sacrament.[118]

It is, unsurprisingly, the Lutheran view of the Eucharist which offers this true union of 'objective' and 'subjective'. Hegel conveys this by locating consecration at the moment of partaking, ingestion 'in the faith and spirit of each one himself'.[119] Hegel renders the act as *Genuß*, 'consumption', a word that evokes physical satisfaction and enjoyment.[120] However, his acknowledgement of the physical is regularly qualified by claims to the action and indwelling of *Geist*, such as when Hegel claims that the Last Supper is the site 'where the consciousness of reconciliation with God is given to man in a sensible, perceptible fashion – the indwelling and lodging of *Geist* within'.[121] He wants to make clear that his is no mere religious 'positivity': 'Hence the sensible as such must be validated, transformed or transubstantiated into the divine substance itself; the two become one'.[122]

The existence of the community is 'completed' by partaking in the presence of God. Hegel elaborates:

It is a question of precisely the conscious presence of God, of unity with God, the *unio mystica*, the self-feeling of God, the feeling of his immediate presence in the subject. This self-feeling, however, since it exists … presupposes a movement, a sublation of difference, so that a negative unity issues forth.[123]

The claim to God's 'self-feeling' in the subject and the 'sublation of difference' calls into question the ensuing personal identity of the believer – the individual *Geist* that Bonhoeffer seeks to preserve. It is thus worth noting that Hegel's longstanding opposition to 'external' modes of validation is meant to counter precisely the subjugation of personal agency. As Hodgson notes, Hegel's language of 'mystical union' is that through which 'single individuals make themselves their own'.[124] This can be compared with Hegel's analogy between eat-

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[116] *LPR III,* 275, *VPR III,* 213–14.

[117] *LPR III,* 269; *VPR III,* 208.

[118] *LPR III,* 269; *VPR III,* 208.

[119] *LPR III,* 272; *VPR III,* 211.

[120] As observed in Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, 191.

[121] *LPR III,* 274; *VPR III,* 213

[122] *LPR III,* 271; *VPR III,* 210.

[123] *LPR III,* 275; *VPR III,* 214.

[124] This is conveyed in the term *Sichzueigenmachen*, which is used in *LPR III,* 270; *VPR III*, 209. See Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, 192.

ing and 'cultural development' in the *Phenomenology*, which depicts an individual student in the process of 'living off that inorganic nature and in his taking possession of it for himself'.[125]

Such appropriation in 'sensible communion' passes beyond the language of 'representation' in much religious teaching to an 'immediate certainty'.[126] As Hegel will go on to speak of the 'progressive spiritualization of the subject', it should be recalled that *Geist* is not incorporeal for Hegel, nor is it a sphere to be distinguished from rationality. In other words, his terms of union do not merely repeat the subjectivist error he identifies in Reformed views.

II. Bonhoeffer on the Eucharistic Est

Bonhoeffer's treatment of the sacrament begins with further insistence on the animating force of the divine Word. Assuming that Eucharist and Word are intertwined, Bonhoeffer nevertheless distinguishes the reception of bread and wine. He begins the section entitled 'Christ as Sacrament' by stating that 'Christ is wholly Word, and the sacrament is wholly Word', going on to add that 'the sacrament is different from the Word in that it has its own right to exist in the church as sacrament'.[127] It is that Word which is 'in the form of *Natur*', engaging human beings 'as Word in bodily form'.[128]

Perhaps because the section on the sacrament raises the issue of confessional differences, Bonhoeffer makes an aside about the way that doctrine, as 'idea', comes to obscure the present address of Christ. In contrast to Hegel's focus on the transmission of doctrine in the spirited community, Bonhoeffer draws a stark initial contrast to emphasise the presence of the Christ who speaks:

As Jesus Christ, the sacrament is essentially Word. The church's answer to [the understanding] of Christ as *doctrina*, as generalised truth, is to maintain that Christ is sacrament, which means that in his essence, he is not *doctrina*. This refutes the error that Christ is only an idea and does not exist in both history and nature.[129]

The division of 'idea' from 'history and nature' shows that Bonhoeffer's foil cannot be immediately associated with Hegel. Nevertheless, Hegel's interest clearly takes him in the direction of doctrinal transmission in the movement of *Geist*, without specifying the personal address of Christ. Hence Bonhoeffer's pronounced recovery in these lectures.

Just as Hegel made reference to the importance of believing reception, so Bonhoeffer states that 'whoever believes in the Word in the sacrament has the whole sacrament'.[130] Nevertheless, Bonhoeffer complicates belief by referring

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[125] *PhG*, 28. The link is drawn in Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, 191n21.
[126] *LPR III,* 271; *VPR III,* 210.
[127] *DBWE 12*, 318; *DBW 12*, 300.
[128] *DBWE 12*, 318; *DBW 12*, 300.
[129] *DBWE 12*, 319; *DBW 12*, 301.
[130] *DBWE 12,* 318; *DBW 12,* 300.

to the biblical language of the 'form of offense'. Rather than asking about the 'union' of divinity with humanity, Bonhoeffer claims that Christological enquiry should be much more about 'the hiddenness of the God-human who is present in his humiliated state'.[131] As with his wordplay regarding the 'how' and 'who' questions, Bonhoeffer counters enquiry into *Vereinigung*, 'union', with an emphasis on *Verhüllung*, 'hiddenness' – a dynamic that Hegel does not entertain. Moreover, Bonhoeffer preserves the 'humiliation' of Christ, even as the sacrament is administered by the 'exalted' Christ.[132]

Bonhoeffer's treatment of Luther's texts raises the question of confessional differences, of which he shows himself well aware. Indeed, Bonhoeffer's markings indicate he questioned Hegel's statement that Eucharistic differences are more cultic than doctrinal. In facing the range of confessional questions, Bonhoeffer first explicitly aligns himself with Luther's claim that nothing needs to be said beyond the words of institution. That is, the phrase *hoc est corpus meum*, 'this is my body', assures the church of the whole and present Christ. As Bonhoeffer renders Luther's interest, 'everything depends on the concurrency and presence of the human being Jesus Christ in his church'.[133] This is in contrast to his depiction of the Reformed view of the sacrament, where the *Logos* 'remains extra, outside it'.[134]

Bonhoeffer next offers an extended treatment of Luther's doctrine of ubiquity and, indeed, the *genus majestaticum* against which Barth had written. He argues that these views do not entail that the presence of Christ falls into human possession, as Barth suggests. Rather, Bonhoeffer quotes Luther's specification that Christ is given only in the Word-sacrament when received in faith. This qualification helps to challenge the tenuous trajectory Barth draws from Luther to Hegel to Feuerbach.[135] After exploring Luther's doctrine of ubiquity and 'ubivolipresence', Bonhoeffer criticises them for entertaining 'the Reformed question within Lutheran theology', that is, the 'how' question that analyses Christ's constitution rather than asking 'who' he is as a unified person.[136]

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[131] *DBWE 12,* 319–20; *DBW 12,* 302.

[132] *DBWE 12,* 319; *DBW 12,* 301.

[133] *DBWE 12,* 320; *DBW 12,* 302.

[134] *DBWE 12,* 320; *DBW 12,* 302.

[135] Barth's trajectory is challenged for its lack of historical data in Forde, *Preached God*, 73.

[136] Bonhoeffer lets the 'conceptual *aporia*' lie here, stating this as a better response than to attempt Schleiermacher's resolution on the terms of the 'how' question. *DBWE 12*, 322; *DBW 12*, 304.

D. Christ as Community: Outlining the Revelatory Body

This final section considers the communal body that is formed through Word and sacrament. I first trace a key reason Hegel avoids the biblical language of the 'body of Christ', showing that he depicts doctrinal transmission, as well as the forms of knowledge and authority shown in Eucharistic consumption, leading towards broader political 'cultivation'. However sympathetic Bonhoeffer is to this extension, his interest in ecclesial distinction leads him to foreground the term 'body' when he comes to his final section of the tri-fold form, 'Christ as Community'. In a later work, Bonhoeffer will go on to qualify his use of Hegel's 'God existing as community' by speaking not only of the church as body of Christ but distinguishing Christ as head, although he still acknowledges the 'relative right' in Hegel's secularisation of the claim to real presence.

Hegel's omission of the term 'body of Christ' for the confessional community likely has to do with his view of how revelation unfolds beyond the church. A key characteristic that Hegel attributes to Protestantism is the resourcing of an expansive, general *Bildung*, or 'cultivation'. While this theme will be treated in the ensuing chapter, a few remarks from Hegel's personal correspondence are broadly representative. First, in 1810, as rector of a Nuremberg *Gymnasium,* Hegel resisted religious control over lower schools because he saw this as a subordination of teaching to the clerical estate.[137] After defending a reform-minded school against closure, an initiative led by a Catholic official, Hegel remarked to his colleague Friedrich Niethammer about the grateful public response, which he took to reveal that Protestants 'esteem their institutions of *Bildung*' as highly as the churches. He continues:

Protestantism does not so much consist in any particular creed [*Konfession*] as in the spirit of reflection [*Nachdenken*] and higher, more rational *Bildung*, not the training for this or that type of usefulness. One could not have attacked them at a more sensitive spot then their institutions of study.[138]

This remark is part of a chain of correspondence that reveals Hegel's enduring view on the role of church and educational communities.[139] An 1816 letter to Niethammer underscores this difference:

Our safeguard is thus not the aggregate of council pronouncements, but is rather only the common *Bildung* of the community. Our more immediate safeguard is thus the universities and general institutions of instruction. All Protestants look upon these institutions as their Rome and council of Bishops. … The sole authority [for Protestants] is the intellectual and

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[137] Pinkard, *Hegel*, 291.

[138] *Briefe* I, #169; *Letters*, 227; cited in Pinkard, *Hegel*, 292n69.

[139] Pinkard comments that from Hegel's involvement in the ongoing Bavarian disputes during his time in Nuremberg, 'Hegel never wavered again in his assessment of Protestantism and the way in which it, and not Catholicism, embodied the tendencies in the secular-religious ideals of modern life'. Pinkard*, Hegel*, 293.

moral *Bildung* of all, and the guarantors of such *Bildung* are these institutions … *general* intellectual and moral *Bildung* is what is holy to Protestants. To Catholics, however, it is something optional, since what is sacred is in the church, which is separated off in a clergy.[140]

The remark does not so much indicate what German Protestants believed at the time. In Pinkard's words, it is an expression of what Hegel took as 'the internal, logical dynamics of the Protestant commitments'.[141] It is a bold and counterintuitive statement given how Protestant thought has emphasised the sole authority of scripture from its inception.

Bonhoeffer explicitly draws on the biblical witness to frame his treatment of Word and sacrament by the claim to the church as body of Christ. He begins by stating that the 'presence of Christ as Word and sacrament' is to 'Christ as community' just as 'reality' is to 'form'.[142] Indeed, the church is the creature of the Word and only as such is it uniquely able to understand the revelation of the Word of God.[143] Bonhoeffer presses past the nuance of the term 'as', echoing the Eucharistic *est* in the statement that 'the community is itself Word of God'.[144] In relating the reality of the sacrament to the form of the church, he then states that the Word takes bodily form in this way. Here too he abandons 'reserve' by stating that:

It is not a mere *image* [*Bild*]; the community is the body of Christ [*die Gemeinde ist Leib Christi*]. It is so in reality. The concept of the body as applied to the community is not a functional concept referring to the members but is instead a concept of the way in which the Christ exists who is present, exalted, and humiliated.[145]

Bonhoeffer refers to 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 5, noting the way in which the latter treats the body as distinct from the head while emphasising their unity.[146]

In a 1935 Finkenwalde lecture, Bonhoeffer refers again to the 'body of Christ' to qualify his Hegel-inspired phrase 'Christ existing as community'.[147] He continues to draw the relation between Christ and community very closely: 'he who is the community [*Gemeinde*] itself is also its Lord. But not the heavenly head of the earthly body, but also as the head wholly connected with the earthly body'.[148] Bonhoeffer then speaks of the relation between Christ and church members by using the term *Gegenüber*, 'juxtaposition' or literally

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[140] *Briefe* II, #309; *Letters*, 328; cited in Pinkard, *Hegel*, 294n73.

[141] Pinkard, *Hegel,* 294.

[142] *DBWE 12*, 323; *DBW 12*, 305.

[143] *DBWE 12*, 323; *DBW 12*, 305–6.

[144] *DBWE 12*, 323; *DBW 12*, 305–6.

[145] *DBWE 12*, 323; *DBW 12*, 306.

[146] These biblical texts are noted in several students' notes, with Wolf-Dieter Zimmermann explaining that the separation of the members from the head in Ephesians is 'not originally Paul's', though not 'in contradiction' to the apostle's view. See *DBWE 12, 323n66*.

[147] See *DBWE 14, 449; DBW 14, 438*.

[148] *DBWE 14, 450; DBW 14, 438–9*.

'over-against'.[149] Although the translator's term 'juxtaposition' does not convey the oppositional force of the German term taken alone, it suits the context in which Bonhoeffer adds connection by drawing on the deutero-Pauline language of the body – a vital connection with anatomical difference. The trope of the 'head' as that which wills and directs the body is crucial for Bonhoeffer's account, which seeks to convey the closeness of Christ's presence while emphasising his primary role in the speech event of preaching.

More significantly for the purpose of this study, Bonhoeffer speaks of such juxtaposition by referring to both identity and non-identity. Along with calling the relation between head and body a juxtaposition, he terms it a 'non-identity' [*nicht-Identität*].[150] This opposition to a 'philosophy of identity' is tempered somewhat as Bonhoeffer continues that there is both 'identity and non-identity of the subject with the community'.[151] These are not two parts that fit together, but two wholes set in juxtaposition. Such statements bring Bonhoeffer close to that acknowledged hallmark of Hegel's own thought, the 'claim to combine the seemingly uncombinable'.[152] The attempt to unify two 'wholes' that appear in opposition is also shown in Bonhoeffer's claim to entire presence that simultaneously preserves an eschatological coming: 'Christ is wholly in the community and yet the one-who-will-return'.[153]

Bonhoeffer's retrieval of language of the 'body of Christ' does not dispense with Hegel's claims about the scope of Protestantism. A tone of qualified appreciation is evident in Bonhoeffer's comments the ethical implications Hegel draws from the Lord's Supper, as recorded in a 1939 letter to Theodor Litt.[154] Commenting on Litt's account of 'Protestant historical consciousness', which treats the relation between Christian faith and the world, Bonhoeffer acknowledges Hegel's vision:

Here also lies, then, the relative right of the Idealistic, particularly the Hegelian system: for what else does it mean that the Hegelian philosophy of religion comes to its point in the doctrine of Christ's real presence in the Lord's Supper other than the greatest secularisation precisely of *this* Christian truth?[155]

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[149] *DBWE 14,* 450; *DBW 14,* 438–9.

[150] *DBWE 14,* 450; *DBW 14,* 438–9.

[151] *DBWE 14,* 451; *DBW 14,* 439.

[152] Taylor's phrase refers to Hegel's argument for 'an identity between identity and non-identity' in his 1801 work *The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's Systems of Philosophy.* See Taylor, *Hegel,* 48.

[153] *DBWE 14,* 451; *DBW 14,* 439.

[154] This letter is particularly valuable to this study because it shows Bonhoeffer self-consciously speaking to a philosopher 'as a theologian'. *DBWE 15*, 111–12; *DBW 15,* 112–14.

[155] Bonhoeffer is replying to Litt's *Der deutsche Geist und das Christentum* (1938) and *Protestantisches Geschichtsbewußtsein* (1939). *DBWE 15,* 112; *DBW 15,* 113.

Bonhoeffer continues that 'in turn the neglect of this origin of all Christian thought, namely, of the Word become flesh' is a 'relative wrong'. His critical verdict is sharp: Jesus Christ, 'the name that bursts asunder … Hegelian anthropology', must yet be named.[156]

Although Bonhoeffer claims, and maintains, the importance of naming Jesus Christ, his interest in Hegel's 'secularisation' of the unity expressed in the sacrament remains with him. As Oswald Bayer argues, in key places Bonhoeffer marginalises the sacrament's 'element and institution' in favour of a generalisable 'sacramental principle' of unity.[157] Bayer claims that this shows how Bonhoeffer remains 'under the spell' of Hegel's philosophy of religion.[158] In light of this criticism and the material that has just been surveyed, further work is required to identify how 'real presence' functions in Bonhoeffer's later writings, particularly with regards to the 'one Christ-reality'.

Conclusion

This chapter has set Bonhoeffer's treatment of Christ as Word and sacrament against the backdrop of Hegel's own. I have argued that Bonhoeffer's ecclesiology differs markedly from Hegel in his emphasis on the preached Word, which he, following Luther, speaks of as a sacrament. Hegel's focus on the communal transmission of doctrine does not take account of the confrontational aspect of the preached Word as the means of Christ's presence in community. Bonhoeffer's disruptive account of preaching, framed as it is by a theology of the Word that shares much with Barth, nevertheless preserves a Lutheran view of the 'whole' Christ present in the sacrament – that same doctrinal commitment from which Hegel develops his account of knowing. In short, the theme of Christ as Word and sacrament shows why Franz Hildebrandt called Bonhoeffer's work a combination of Barthian and Hegelian categories.

Bonhoeffer's critical appreciation for Hegel is further shown in his acknowledgement of the 'relative right' contained in Hegel's view of the Lord's Supper. Noting the Eucharist as the consummate point to Hegel's philosophy of religion, Bonhoeffer acknowledges it as the 'greatest secularisation' of Christian witness to the Word made flesh. At the same time, Bonhoeffer insists that the particular name, and indeed the body, of Jesus Christ is a glaring omission in Hegel's account. As the ensuing chapters will show, this has significant implications for the political aspects of Bonhoeffer's reception.

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[156] *DBWE 15*, 112; *DBW 15*, 113–14.

[157] Oswald Bayer, 'Christus Als Mitte: Bonhoeffers Ethik Im Banne Der Religionsphilosophie Hegels?' in *Leibliches Wort*: *Reformation und Neuzeit im Konflikt* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 260–61.

[158] Bayer, 'Christus als Mitte', 245.

Part Three

The Body of Christ After 'World History'

Chapter 5

From Revolution to Right? The Polities of Freedom

The concept of freedom is highly valued in German intellectual history as well (Idealism). But it requires further definition. Being free *from* something is experienced only in being free *for* something. – Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 'Thoughts on William Paton's *The Church and the New Order in Europe*'

Jesus' socio-ethical teaching, which is inextricably bound up with Christology for Bonhoeffer, comes to the fore in this chapter. Bonhoeffer's criticism of Hegel's 'docetic' tendency is shown to be linked to Hegel's relativisation the social ethic of the Sermon on the Mount. Hegel paints Jesus' teaching in French revolutionary colours, interpreting it as a necessary but 'passing' political doctrine. Bonhoeffer reacts consistently by seeking to recover the scriptural record of Christ's 'address' in order to condition political action in the present. Bonhoeffer therefore uses the Sermon on the Mount as the basis for his monastic community in pursuit of a new polity of freedom.

The argument of this chapter is twofold. First, I show Bonhoeffer's deliberate recovery of material Hegel had marginalised, namely, the then-contemporary political import of the Sermon on the Mount. Such retrieval is tied to Bonhoeffer's fuller reclamation of 'confessional space' after the church-state merger attempted in Hegel's time and ensuing 'Erastian' tendencies. Second, I argue that Bonhoeffer should not be styled as a 'revolutionary' over and against Hegel as a Prussian state apologist. The similarities in their post-revolutionary thought are therefore traced, revealing that they both affirm elements of the French Revolution while criticising its pursuit of 'absolute' freedom. I also read Bonhoeffer's statement that the Christ-community receives 'not recognition, but rejection' by the world in light of his Finkenwalde context as well as his earlier claim to ecclesial resistance as a mode of 'ultimate recognition' of the state's true vocation.

The historical conditions behind these two interpretations of Jesus' teaching are highly significant. Hegel lectured as a professor at the University of Berlin in the 1820s, serving as a civil servant in an institution that he considered the focal point of German culture. He also wrote at a time of Protestant confessional mergers and a new level of state integration following the Napoleonic incursions. Bonhoeffer worked as both a minister and university lecturer through the 1930s, but such civil service is alternately resigned and revoked

because of state-church conflict. As a result, Bonhoeffer comes to direct an illegal preacher's seminary, training students to reclaim Lutheran 'confessional space'.

Bonhoeffer's circuitous vocational course reveals the stark difference between his and Hegel's time, and he was acutely aware that he worked during a period of political and philosophical deficit. As Jörg Rades observes, Bonhoeffer saw Hegel's concept of 'authority [*Obrigkeit*]' as inadequate for a time in which the authority 'had turned against the people'.[1] Although this leads Bonhoeffer to unprecedented action against the state – the attempted assassination of its leader, over which Bonhoeffer deliberates while writing his *Ethics* – his target has to be differentiated from the state about which Hegel spoke. I therefore propose care in interpreting Bonhoeffer's claim that the Christ-community should expect 'not recognition, but rejection' in the world. Significantly, Hegel himself acknowledges the possibility of a *Geist*-less age, which could require the kind of oppositional stance taken by Bonhoeffer.

This chapter is critical to an account of Bonhoeffer's reception of Hegel because such an endeavour could be regarded with suspicion by those who cast Hegel as a Prussian state apologist whose philosophy laid the groundwork for the totalitarian state of Bonhoeffer's time. To take one well-known example, in the year of Bonhoeffer's death Karl Popper claimed that there was an 'identity' of Hegelian historicism and the philosophy of modern totalitarianism.[2] Popper casts Hegel as the 'first official philosopher of Prussianism', whose philosophy of identity served to justify the existing order, leading to 'an ethical and juridical positivism' in his time.[3] He goes on to assert the likeness between Hegel's 'world-historical personality' and an irrational dictator, as though Hegel was granting license to the latter.[4]

Turning to Bonhoeffer scholarship, Hegel has been taken to lay the groundwork for a Prusso-German state against which Bonhoeffer revolts. In one account, Bonhoeffer plays the role of 'reluctant revolutionary', attempting 'to break the dominant Hegelian paradigm' that is taken to accord with the National Socialist agenda.[5] Support for this narrative comes from Bonhoeffer's

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[1] Rades, 'Bonhoeffer', 7n11.

[2] Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies, Volume II, The High Tide of Prophecy: Hegel, Marx, and the Aftermath* (1945), 5th edition reprint (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), 22, 78.

[3] Popper, *Open Society*, 30, 41.

[4] Popper, *Open Society*, 61–63.

[5] In John Moses' account, Hegel is said to have 'resolved the tension-loaded dualism that characterized the life of states previously by postulating that the divine will was manifest on earth by monarchical states, and most clearly through the most powerful state'. Nevertheless, the author attributes a far richer social conceptuality to Hegel with respect to the church, one that had positive effects for Bonhoeffer: 'Bonhoeffer won from Seeberg, together with a firm grasp of Hegelian method, the concept of "Christ existing as community", in short, a highly

turn away from Seeberg's enthusiasm for nationalist expansion.[6] The association of Hegel with the *Machtstaat* is understandable in light of neo-Hegelian directions, as Andreas Grossmann admits.[7] Nevertheless, my argument joins Grossmann's 'plea for another Hegel' by showing the critical rational principle that Hegel brings to bear on state action. I argue that this aspect of his thought bears comparison with Bonhoeffer's own conviction that the state can forfeit its vocation as the upholder of right and reason.

A. The Sermon on the Mount as Revolutionary Teaching

This section traces Bonhoeffer's divergence from Hegel over the political contemporaneity of Jesus' teaching. I first show how Hegel's treatment of the Sermon on the Mount reveals his concern about political fanaticism. In particular, I examine his depiction of Jesus' message as a form of *sans-culottism* – a reference to the movement of French revolutionaries whose abstract appeal to freedom led, in Hegel's view, to *La Terreur*. Bonhoeffer is similarly interested in the revolutionary edge of Jesus' teaching, only in his case this is in order to break with his own contemporaries' theologies of the 'orders', which he saw to delimit the church's ethical range. This aim leads him to strong statements about the breach Jesus makes between his community and every natural or historical order, including the state. Nevertheless, I call into question the typical association drawn between Bonhoeffer and Kierkegaard on Jesus' 'revolutionary' teaching. Moreover, I show that Bonhoeffer's concern is with a fanaticism that Hegel could not foresee, one that coursed through the very lifeblood of the state.

I. Hegel on Jesus' Sans-Culottism

Hegel has an equivocal view of Jesus' teaching, articulating it as necessary and yet limited, even fatal, in its abstract appeal. This is shown by the early essay, 'The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate', in which Hegel characterises Jesus as a 'beautiful soul' who had to hold the Kingdom of God in his heart over and against allegedly corrupt Roman and Jewish cultures. In *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion,* Hegel states that the words of the Sermon on the Mount,

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refined comprehension of the church as the body of Christ functioning in human society'. See John Moses, *A Reluctant Revolutionary: Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Collision with Prusso-German History* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009), 10–13, 36–37.

[6] Hegel is set alongside Leopold von Ranke, with the latter's followers Erich Marcks and Max Lenz, on a trajectory towards the Third Reich. John A. Moses, 'Bonhoeffer's Germany: The Political Context', in *Cambridge Companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer,* ed. John de Gruchy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 6–8.

[7] Grossmann, 'Neo-Hegelianism', 249.

particularly the Beatitudes, are 'among the greatest that have ever been ut-
tered', a distinction he ties to their revolutionary potential.[8] Spoken within the
context of Roman rule over the Jewish people, the sermon offers 'a final means
of annulling all superstition and lack of freedom'. Hegel relates Jesus' social
teaching in dramatic terms:

> In all of this is found a language of inspiration that displaces all other human interests, erad-
> icating them completely – penetrating tones that shake everything up; and, as Hermes led
> souls forth from their bodies and thus out of the temporal sphere, so [these words are] ad-
> dressed to [those] who are done with the world and with whom the world is finished.[9]

Hegel's initial focus is on Christ's probing words regarding intention and the
disposition to love, which are tied to a break with establishment, most proxi-
mately with the Judaism of Jesus' time. He is clearly reading Jesus' words as
more the abolition than the fulfilment of the Law.

Hegel's tone turns increasingly critical as he considers the revolutionary ex-
cess that such teaching could provoke, particularly in light of the events he had
long been following in France. Drawing a term from the French Revolution,
Hegel describes Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom as 'sans-culottism'.[10] The
term alludes to the movement of peasants and labourers distinguished by wear-
ing trousers, *pantalons*, rather than the breeches, or *culottes*, of the nobility and
bourgeoisie, although members of the upper class showed their political sym-
pathies by going *sans culottes*. Significantly for Hegel's criticism, it is the
sans-culottes whose appeal to 'absolute freedom' set the stage for the Reign of
Terror, during which the death sentence was arbitrarily imposed on those sus-
pected of lacking revolutionary conviction.

For Hegel, the abstract nature of Jesus' call to equality is similarly unsus-
tainable and must come into fatal conflict with the state of that time. Violence
was the necessary response to Jesus' foment. In Hegel's words,

> freedom and equality were affirmed such that all spirituality, all laws, all talents, all living
> relations had to disappear before this abstraction, and the ordinances of the state had to come
> from elsewhere and be forcefully asserted against this abstraction.[11]

Considering the cross as the end of Jesus' early form of community, Hegel
highlights the 'civil dishonour' of his execution as 'a direct expression of a
complete revolution against all that is established and regarded as valuable'.[12]
Observing that the cross corresponds to the gallows of his own time, Hegel

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[8] *LPR III*, 185; *VPR III*, 144. Relatedly, Hegel's favourite passage, by his wife Marie's
account, was Matthew 5:8, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God'. He regu-
larly cited the verse in his lectures. See Pinkard, *Hegel*, 577.

[9] *LPR III*, 185; *VPR III*, 144–5.

[10] *LPR III*, 188; *VPR III*, 146n22.

[11] *LPR III*, 197; *VPR III*, 152–3.

[12] *LPR III*, 205; *VPR III*, 161.

states that as the 'positive content' of the execution is simultaneously the kingdom of God, it claims all 'inner loyalties' away from existing human corporate life.[13] In short, Hegel makes the counter-establishment aspects of the crucifixion a stark contrast to the ecclesial establishment. The church is a community *after* the cross, not a community *of* the cross.

The allusion to the French Revolution drives Hegel's qualification of Jesus' teaching in three ways. First, while acknowledging that the kingdom proclamation entails the breaking of familial ties, extended later into property relations, Hegel self-consciously avoids a more thoroughgoing challenge to the state itself.[14] Second, he notes that the 'contraction' of established orders back to the 'simple heart' involves a political retreat that can lead to fanatic violence.[15] Third, Hegel speaks of the teaching as given in the form or 'representation' to evoke feeling and, as such, is yet to be codified as doctrine.[16] Hegel claims that the distinctive qualities of Jesus' instruction 'in the church partly take on another character and partly are set aside'.[17] In brief, for Hegel the vital revolutionary potential of Jesus' teaching is a necessary but passing moment towards the Christian church as a constituent part of the realised state.

Before turning to Bonhoeffer, it is worth observing that Hegel's association of Jesus with the *sans-culottes* runs counter to his own historicist convictions. In the *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, Hegel criticises appeals made during the French Revolution to Greek and Roman historical precedents.[18] He asserts that '[e]ach age and each nation finds itself in such peculiar circumstances…that it can and must make decisions with reference to itself alone (and only the great individual can decide what the right course is)'.[19] In spite of this observation, Hegel's interest in the French Revolution leads him to an anachronistic portrayal of Jesus' teaching, diminishing the 'singularity' he elsewhere claims for the appearance of Christ.

II. Bonhoeffer on Jesus' Unbounded Community

Jesus' 'revolutionary' call appealed to Bonhoeffer as he sought to diverge from his contemporaries' focus on the theology of 'orders' grounded in creation. Bonhoeffer abandoned his own suggestive work on the orders around 1933.[20]

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[13] *LPR III*, 206; *VPR III*, 161–2.

[14] *LPR III*, 189, cf. 196; *VPR III*, 147, cf. 151.

[15] *LPR III*, 185; *VPR III*, 147–8.

[16] *LPR III*, 192; *VPR III*, 149–50.

[17] *LPR III*, 194; *VPR III*, 149. Along with doctrinal development, he makes the stronger claim that the 'natural will' is overcome such that 'the world is given an entirely different form'. *LPR III*, 211; *VPR III*, 166.

[18] *LPWH*, 21.

[19] *LPWH*, 21.

[20] He left this project just as the Lutheran theologian Walter Künneth was making the theme the foundation for his two-kingdoms doctrine. Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 459.

The more that periodicals sought a creation theology, with substantial works produced by Friedrich Gogarten, Paul Althaus, Werner Elert, and Emanuel Hirsch, 'the more disparaging Bonhoeffer's silence became'.[21] Bonhoeffer thought that another treatment of creation orders was not the theme that was needed, as it could all too easily serve the Reich's programme. In Bethge's account, Bonhoeffer saw 'that the time for considering a "theology of order" was over; the time for a "breakthrough theology" had come'.[22]

The search for a 'breakthrough' theology led to the 1937 publication of Bonhoeffer's well-known work *Discipleship* [*Nachfolge*]. In the work, he retrieves the counter-cultural posture of the community by accenting the moment at which Christ says '*Folge mir nach!*'[23] This is most memorably expressed in Bonhoeffer's famous line that 'every call of Christ leads into death'.[24] The political subtext for Bonhoeffer's exposition is directed against appeals to 'blood and soil' when he comments on Christ's call to turn the other cheek rather than to follow the law of retribution:

with this statement, Jesus releases his community from the political and legal order, from the national form [*völkischen Gestalt*] of the people of Israel, and makes it into what it truly is, namely, the community of the faithful that is not bound by political or national ties.[25]

By employing the language of breach, Bonhoeffer targets the claim to 'immediate' perception of ethical relations based on natural 'orders'. These bonds, he claims, have been utterly disrupted.

His goal is to reinstate the centrality of Christ, who is 'in the middle', having deprived people of 'every immediate connection' to given realities.[26] This breach, Bonhoeffer argues, is critical for the shape of ethical deliberation – and, indeed, philosophy:

If it were only a matter of weighing ideals against each other, then by all means a balance should be sought, which then could turn to the advantage of a Christian ideal, but this should never be one-sided. From the point of view of Idealism, or from the perspective of 'responsibilities' of life, it would be inexcusable to radically debase the natural orders of life by confronting them with a Christian ideal of life.[27]

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[21] Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 459.

[22] Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 459. Bethge makes reference to Bonhoeffer's work *Dein Reich Komme.*

[23] *DBWE 4*, 46; *DBW 4*, 32.

[24] This is the editors' literal rendering of the German *Jeder Ruf Christi fährt in den Tod. DBWE* 4, 87n11.

[25] *DBWE 4*, 132; *DBW 4*, 135.

[26] *DBWE 4*, 93–94; *DBW 4*, 88.

[27] *DBWE 4*, 94; *DBW 4*, 89.

In contrast to these foils, Bonhoeffer states that Jesus' call issues a break with all unmediated relationships, whether natural or historical, asserting that immediacy is a 'delusion'.[28] Although Bonhoeffer has more proximal targets, it is worth noting that in the 1933 seminar Bonhoeffer and his students followed Hegel's criticism of Schleiermacher on the 'immediacy' of sensed dependence.[29]

Bonhoeffer equivocates on the endurance of social 'orders' in light of Jesus' revolutionary call. On the one hand, he issues a polemic against contemporary Lutheran appeals to the orders of creation by speaking about how Jesus' call 'breaks the ties with the naturally given surroundings in which a person lives'.[30] On the other hand, Bonhoeffer's hesitancy about a larger scale social revolution becomes clear in two key sections: his warning against enthusiasm and his treatment of the Pauline counsel to vocational stability.

First, warning against enthusiasm, Bonhoeffer speaks of an 'ambiguity' that emerges in the section on 'hidden righteousness' in Matthew 6, following as it does on the previous chapter's treatment of the visibly 'extraordinary' quality of the Christian life. He claims that there is a great danger in those who go about 'despising and destroying the world order', an outcome brought about by 'enthusiasts' indifference to this age'.[31] These people, he warns, attempt to style Jesus 'as a *Schwärmer*, a revolutionary enthusiast who wanted to turn the world upside down, who instructs his disciples to leave the world and build a new world'.[32]

Second, reticence about overturning the broader social order is evident in Bonhoeffer's treatment of the counsel, found in 1 Corinthians 7:20–24, that Christians should remain in their vocations. This is the text that Max Weber noted as crucial to Luther's ambivalence about a change in social station.[33] Bonhoeffer picks up the Lutheran tradition by trying to synthesise Jesus' call, which cuts through the ties of occupation and family, with Paul's counsel to remain in the station in which one was called. Having noted the freedom conferred by baptism into the community, Bonhoeffer states that slaves may

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[28] Bonhoeffer here engages contemporaries such as Friedrich Gogarten and Emil Brunner. It is with reference to the latter that Bonhoeffer claims the importance of persisting with Christ's real presence as mediator rather than merely an inception point: 'Theology makes a serious mistake whenever it uses Jesus' mediation between God and human persons to justify immediate relationships in life'. This context is provided by Kuske and Tödt in *DBW 4*, 90n7, 91n8; cf. *DBWE 4*, 95; *DBW 4*, 90.

[29] Rades, 'Bonhoeffer', 17.

[30] *DBWE 4*, 93; *DBW 4*, 87. This counters contemporaries such as Althaus, who claimed that such a break is a possibility but only as an exception, not a rule. Paul Althaus, *Kirche und Volkskampf* (Gütersloh, 1928), 31; cited in *DBW 4*, 88, n3.

[31] *DBWE 4*, 146; *DBW 4*, 150.

[32] *DBWE 4*, 147, alt.; *DBW 4*, 151.

[33] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1920–21 rev. ed.), trans. Talcott Parsons (London: Routledge Classics, 2001), 44.

'therefore remain as slaves' with a strained attempt at exposition: 'would a revolution which simply overturned the existing order of society not obscure the awareness of God's new ordering of all things through Jesus Christ, and the establishment of his community?'[34] Such equivocation is later developed in Bonhoeffer's reflections on the French Revolution, in which his criticism of its appeal to 'absolute freedom' bears significant likeness to Hegel's account.

Bonhoeffer's reticence about overturning the 'orders' is a key challenge to the likeness often drawn between *Discipleship* and the work of Søren Kierkegaard.[35] In the critical edition of Bonhoeffer's works, claims to the revolutionary edge in Jesus' teaching have been likened to Kierkegaard's interpretation while they are contrasted with Hegel's thought. For example, on the command to love one's enemies, Bonhoeffer comments that Jesus' early disciples provoked opponents 'who feared a growing revolutionary danger'.[36] This statement is cross-referenced to Kierkegaard's assertion that 'the objection against Christianity (and this was right at the time when it was most evident what Christianity is) was that it was unpatriotic, a danger to the state, revolutionary'.[37] Matters are different when it comes to Hegel. In an exposition of Jesus' relation to the Law in the Sermon on the Mount, Bonhoeffer claims that 'it is obvious that Jesus is *not to be* understood here as a revolutionary'.[38] This statement is set against Hegel's claim that Jesus' revolutionary teaching breaks away from 'everything established'.[39] The implication is that Bonhoeffer breaks with Hegel's reading of Jesus and the Law, even though the context shows them to be saying the same thing.[40]

Acknowledging that Bonhoeffer's emphasis on 'following-after' is particularly indebted to Kierkegaard, I nevertheless argue that Bonhoeffer's depiction of Jesus' 'revolutionary' call requires further examination. Moreover, my

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[34] *DBWE 4*, 238; *DBW 4*, 254–55.

[35] Kuske and Tödt acknowledge that Kierkegaard's treatment of the 'extraordinary' element in the Christian faith 'omits the inference of "orders", which is important to Bonhoeffer'. *DBW 4*, 147n153.

[36] *DBWE 4*, 137; *DBW 4*, 140.

[37] This is cited from *Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers* in *DBW 4*, 140n131, cf. *DBWE 4*, 137n131. The editors note that Bonhoeffer had marked the passage in his own edition.

[38] Bonhoeffer is dealing with a section on kindred, but first refers back to Jesus' claim from Matthew 5:17–20, 'Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill'. *DBWE 4*, 121, emphasis mine; *DBW 4*, 122.

[39] *DBW 4*, 122n81. The association is picked up in the English edition without the citations; see *DBWE 4*, 121n81.

[40] Hegel claims that Jesus broke with the 'established order of Judaism' as that order was expressed through laws prohibiting picking corn on the Sabbath or healing a man's withered hand. Jesus' unwillingness to submit to such restrictions by waiting until the next morning marks the kingdom as the proclamation that brings 'all such ordinances' to an end. Hegel goes on to speak about the breaking of family and other social ties. *LPR III*, 188; *VPR III*, 146.

fuller account of Hegel's views on established order will show that he was harshly critical of empty, or merely 'positive', social forms, especially those that claim a divine right.

B. Similarities in Post-Revolution Criticism

Having traced Hegel's and Bonhoeffer's accounts of Jesus' social teaching, as well as their divergent views on its contemporaneity, this section turns to their criticisms of the pursuit of 'absolute freedom'. As I will show, there is a strong similarity to these two thinkers' criticisms of the kind of freedom that they saw pursued in the French Revolution. I argue, therefore, that Bonhoeffer's account of Jesus' 'revolutionary' teaching does not ultimately undermine the commitment to mediating social institutions he holds in common with Hegel. Clearly, Bonhoeffer is not speaking for an abstract form of freedom of the kind criticised by Hegel. In fact, his own reference to France's Reign of Terror points to the nihilism that can emerge from social upheaval – a dynamic he identifies in his own time.

I. Hegel on the Need for an Actualised State

Hegel has a complex and critical relation to the French Revolution, as seen in his response to Rousseau's political thought. Hegel is appreciative of elements of Rousseau's concept of the *volonté générale*, for it places human will at the political centre rather than appeals to order based on divine will, nature, or the mere possession of office. Nevertheless, Hegel argues that Rousseau goes too far in breaking down distinctions in the legislative process with a view to everyone participating equally.[41] He therefore describes the quest for 'absolute freedom' to issue in a thoroughgoing 'negativity' in which 'all the social estates, which are the spiritual essences into which the whole divides itself, are effaced'.[42] In Hegel's view, the state requires differentiation through mediating institutions that included class roles known as the 'estates [*Stände*]'.

The 'effacement' of social orders takes a fatal turn, as signalled in the heading under which the Revolution is discussed in the *Phenomenology*: 'Absolute Freedom and Terror'.[43] The loss of all social distinctions mean that neither a

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[41] Hegel is critical of the truly 'general' scope of will in Rousseau, such that custom and forms of representation are dismantled to produce an undifferentiated citizenry. This leads to the dangerous consciousness that, in Hegel's depiction, 'the world is quite simply its will, and this will is the universal will'. *PhG* §584. Taylor summarises Hegel's differences from Rousseau, noting that the two figures play out a 'vital debate of modern times which is far from finished'. *Hegel*, 185–86.

[42] *PhG* §585.

[43] *PhG* §582–598.

'positive work nor a positive' can be produced; all that remains is the '*negative act*…the *fury* of disappearing'.[44] The fearful outcome of the Revolution is the instability of the 'universal will', which offers no hope of 'positive' establishment. The individual is therefore left in a precarious position. As soon as one's will is suspected of errancy, one faces a harrowing end: suppression not 'through external necessity but through the universal will which it itself aspires to be'.[45] Hegel states that this suppression of the individual is judged on the basis of 'disposition' without recourse to appropriate legal procedure. It results in 'the coldest, emptiest death of all, having no more meaning than chopping off a head of cabbage or swallowing a mouthful of water'.[46] The banal imagery alludes to the method of execution that marked the Reign of Terror under Robespierre, a period in which it was common practice to 'guillotine on behalf of the whole'.[47] This is the outcome when *sans-culottism* is left unchecked.

While there is no going back to a time before 1789 for Hegel, a new form of state settlement is required. The French revolutionary government holds a precarious position: 'it is merely the *victorious* faction which is called the government, and precisely because it is a faction, there is the immediate necessity of its overthrow'.[48] The result is the creation of an opposition between the people and the government that seems to be 'interposing itself between them and the general will'.[49] In short, Hegel observes that the Revolution's ideological commitment to abstract principles led to 'self-devouring' outcomes.[50] He therefore looks to a new form of *Geist*, tracing how 'absolute freedom passes over from its self-destroying actuality into another land of self-conscious *Geist*'.[51] As Taylor points out, the geographical movement is literal as well as figurative, for Hegel turns from revolutionary France to his own homeland.

Nevertheless, Hegel does not abandon his sense for the importance of French politics. He welcomed the French campaign's spread of revolutionary ideals as well as its reorganisation of German lands, expressing support through his editorship of a pro-Napoleonic newspaper.[52] Such opinions led Hegel into tensions with nationalists that only grew after Napoleon's fall, an event

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[44] *PhG*, §590.

[45] This is Taylor's paraphrase of the turn narrated in the *Phenomenology*. See *Hegel*, 187.

[46] *PhG*, §590.

[47] The phrase is taken from Pinkard, *Hegel*, 213.

[48] *PhG*, §591.

[49] Stephen B. Smith, 'Hegel and the French Revolution: An Epitaph for Republicanism', *Social Research* 56, no. 1 (Spring 1989), 250.

[50] The term is Smith's, as he articulates Hegel's allusions to the hunt for those suspected of being 'enemies of the people' during the Reign of Terror. Smith, 'Epitaph', 253.

[51] *PhG*, §595.

[52] Living in Bamberg from 1807, Hegel benefitted from Bavaria's alliance with the French. Alliance notwithstanding, the kingdom held a strong collective memory of the glory of Medieval Germany set over and against foreigners. See Pinkard, *Hegel*, 243–47.

that made his position tenuous.[53] Still, he would go on to teach the new shape of *Geist* as conditioned by the Revolution, keeping France's recent history in appreciative view.[54] Throughout the period in which French associations were risky, Hegel would toast the storming of the Bastille on July 14 of each year.[55] In his later years, he rejuvenated his regard for the history of the Revolution during a trip to Paris.[56]

There is a strong religious dimension to Hegel's criticism of French politics. In a set of lectures delivered in 1831, the final year of his life, he claims that 'Catholic states' set religion and the state in 'mutual opposition' once subjective freedom appears in the people as a whole.[57] He comments:

> Thus the French, for example, who adhere to the principle of secular freedom, have in fact ceased to belong to the Catholic religion, for this religion can make no concessions but consistently demands unconditional submission to the church in all matters. In this way, religion and the state are in mutual contradiction.[58]

Hegel later refers to Robespierre's Terror as an extreme case of the split between 'conviction' and political constitution. The recurrent, contemptuous assertion of conviction is the troubling dynamic he identifies in 'our age'.[59]

Hegel acknowledges that Protestant political settlements can also lead to absolutism, but this eventuality only underlines his emphasis on the faculty of philosophy as integral to state 'realisation'. He identifies the pathway to 'arbitrariness, tyranny, and oppression' in a context in which 'laws of the state are recognised as rational and as divine on account of this *presumed original harmony* [unity of religion and the state], and religion does not have its own principles which contradict those which apply within the state'.[60] It is the imperative 'to know' what is rational in law and social ethics that leads Hegel back to

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[53] See Pinkard, *Hegel,* 302.

[54] At the beginning of the 1820s, memoirs by those who had accompanied Napoleon into exile began appearing, much to Hegel's interest. See Pinkard, *Hegel*, 514–15.

[55] Pinkard, *Hegel*, 451.

[56] Hegel made the trip in 1827. While there, he met with Auguste Marie Mignet, whose anti-restorationist *Histoire de la Révolution française jusqu'en 1814* had been published in 1824. Pinkard, *Hegel*, 451, 555–61.

[57] Hegel cites the example of Charles X, whose abdication at the July Revolution of 1830 showed the French still incapable of a political settlement. Hegel, 'The Relationship of Religion to the State (1831)' in *Political Writings*, 230, 233.

[58] Hegel, 'Relationship', 231.

[59] Hegel, 'Relationship', 233.

[60] Referring to the end of the Stuart monarchy in seventeenth-century England, Hegel states that claims to the ruler's divine authorisation provoked opposition from the claim to divine legitimation among the people. Revolution and the beheading of the king seem inevitable in Hegel's telling, because knowledge of the divine will is, in Protestant faith, 'not a particular prerogative but something open to everyone'. Hegel, 'Relationship', 227–28.

the importance of the cultivation of a people through philosophy. Hence the importance of the philosophical faculty in guarding against tyranny.

For all Hegel's interest in the French Revolution, it is not surprising that he would offer philosophical criticism from within a state structure rather than calling his own people to revolt. Early in his *Philosophy of Right* he again criticises negative freedom, or 'freedom of the void', which he describes as 'the flight from every content as from a restriction'.[61] Hegel was convinced that the bearer of abstract rights requires a 'location' in family, civil society, and constitutional state. His work therefore comes to show an embedded, reforming approach to his contemporary structure of governance.

II. Bonhoeffer on the Nihilism of Absolute Freedom

In the 1940–41 *Ethics* manuscript 'Heritage and Decay', Bonhoeffer discusses the French Revolution as he compares differences in the secularisation process between Protestant and Catholic peoples. As Hegel before him, Bonhoeffer writes out of the Protestant tradition that sees the radical character of the Revolution as necessary because Catholicism offered no room to the modern spirit.[62] In Bonhoeffer's words, because of the Catholic relation to the state, 'the process of secularization quickly became revolutionary, antichurch, even anti-Christian'.[63]

Bonhoeffer appreciates the liberation of 'reason' that emerged from the Revolution, its articulation of human rights, and its concept of the nation vis-à-vis the *Volk*. The movement is pictured as a light and fresh breeze that 'cleared up prejudices, social conceits, hypocritical proprieties, and stifling sentimentality'.[64] Bonhoeffer continues that such intellectual candour, directed at matters that included faith, was a great good, because contempt for rationalism 'is a suspicious sign of a deficient desire for truthfulness'.[65] Newly liberated reason is linked to an appreciation of the discovery of human rights, for which Bonhoeffer cites the 1789 *Déclaration des Droits d'Homme et du Citoyen* at several points, including reference to Rousseau's *volonté générale*, its expression in law, and the claim that the 'source of all sovereignty resides in the nation'.[66] Bonhoeffer continues that 'the nation is a revolutionary concept. It takes the side of the *Volk* against governing authority, of becoming against being, of the organic against the institutional'.[67] This occurs through

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[61] *PR* (Knox), §5.
[62] See *DBWE 6*, 114–15n52; *DBW 6*, 105n47.
[63] *DBWE 6*, 114; *DBW 6*, 105.
[64] *DBWE 6*, 115; *DBW 6*, 106.
[65] *DBWE 6*, 115; *DBW 6*, 106.
[66] *DBWE 6*, 118–120; *DBW 6*, 109–11.
[67] *DBWE 6*, 120; *DBW 6*, 110–11.

the liberation of the *Volk*, who find themselves 'mature enough to take their affairs into their own hands'.[68]

Bonhoeffer locates Prussia as a foil to the dynamic view of the nation to emerge from France. It is a 'very grotesque historical error' to claim that Prussia is the birthplace of nationalism, for 'no state structure was more alien, more antagonistic, to nationalism than Prussia'.[69] Prussian government was suspicious of the national cause, Bonhoeffer continues, 'combating the revolution of the "grande nation" and its intrusion into Germany'.[70] The Prussian concept of the 'state' is here set against both nationalism and internationalism, leading Bonhoeffer to claim that it is 'more occidental than that of the Revolution'.[71] The Prussian state gave way, however, to French victory, creating a 'new spiritual unity [*geistige Einheit*] of the Occident', which consists in 'the liberation of humanity as *ratio*, as the mass, and as a *Volk*'.[72]

Bonhoeffer's comments could be construed as a rejection of Hegel, who is frequently cast as a Prussian apologist. Such over-simplification would not do justice to Hegel's nuanced political thought, however. Moreover, the fact that Bonhoeffer considers Prussia through and after French influence indicates where Hegel's mediating position should be set. That Bonhoeffer would agree on the need of a mediated settlement is clear when he continues, in terms reminiscent of Hegel, about the destructiveness of a claim to absolute freedom.

Bonhoeffer alludes to Robespierre's Terror to criticise an enduring element in the new 'spiritual unity' of the post-revolution Occident. Looking back to the French Revolution, he states that there is synergy between the three identities of humanity – *ratio, Masse, Volk* – in the struggle for liberation, but 'after freedom is achieved they become deadly enemies'.[73] Bonhoeffer elaborates:

This new unity carries the seeds of its own destruction. It is further evident – and here a basic law of history becomes clear – that the desire for absolute freedom leads people into deepest servitude. … The liberation of the masses ends in the horrible reign of the guillotine. Nationalism leads directly to war. Human liberation as an absolute ideal leads to the self-destruction of human beings. At the end of the road travelled by the French Revolution lies nihilism.[74]

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[68] *DBWE 6*, 120; *DBW 6*, 110.
[69] *DBWE 6*, 120; *DBW 6*, 111.
[70] *DBWE 6*, 121; *DBW 6*, 111.
[71] *DBWE 6*, 121, alt.; *DBW 6*, 111.
[72] *DBWE 6*, 122, alt.; *DBW 6*, 112. The English translation renders several distinct terms as 'western', or 'the West', but Bonhoeffer in fact differentiates *Abendland* (a middle European collective with Germany at its centre) from *die westlicher Völker*, a group that includes France. Although there is ambiguity and overlap between the two, I have rendered *Abendland* as 'Occident' to signal the slight difference.
[73] *DBWE 6*, 122; *DBW 6*, 112.
[74] *DBWE 6*, 122; *DBW 6*, 112–13.

The claim that the absolute freedom of the revolution leads to 'nothingness' should call Hegel's account to mind.[75]

Nevertheless, Bonhoeffer draws the trajectory of the French Revolution into his own time by commenting on the ensuing revolt. He describes the 'masses', referred to as the 'fourth estate', as driven by 'undeserved misery' to set a 'law of need' against 'the law of blood and the law of reason'.[76] This surge is 'violent and short-lived', yet Bonhoeffer continues the shift from late-eighteenth century France to his own context: 'We who live today stand at the peak, and in the crisis, of this upheaval'.[77] Bonhoeffer then treats the emerging 'godlessness' and 'anti-church' sentiment that has emerged after the Revolution. His appraisal is curt: 'Having lost its unity that was created by the form of Jesus Christ, the Occident is confronted by nothingness'.[78] The nothingness is not a static void, however; it is a living and active force that deceptively animates social realities only to discard them as its victims. Among its prey, Bonhoeffer includes 'life, history, family, *Volk*, language, faith'.[79]

Bonhoeffer broadly locates his own view of freedom, and so his critical perspective on the French Revolution, with reference to German Idealism. This is shown in an essay written around the same time, in which Bonhoeffer takes exception to the assumption of a western, in this case 'Anglo-Saxon', notion of freedom.[80] Bonhoeffer claims:

The concept of freedom is highly valued in German intellectual history as well (Idealism). But it requires further definition. Being free *from* something is experienced only in being free *for* something. Being free solely in order to be free, however, leads to anarchy.[81]

Bonhoeffer's reference to the role of Idealism in German history shows the importance of distinguishing this legacy from revolutionary histories including those of France and America. For Bonhoeffer, the 'western' ideal of freedom contained an element of threat to German heritage. Significantly, his teacher Adolf von Harnack had been among the German intellectuals who, in 1917, painted Woodrow Wilson as another Napoleon, intent on imposing a 'western European idea of freedom [*westeuropäische Freiheitsidee*]' on Germany.[82]

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[75] In the critical edition notes to the section in which 'nothingness' is treated as the outcome of absolute freedom, Hegel is conspicuously absent. Heidegger's concept of 'creative nothingness' is referenced in its place. See *DBW 6,* 119n106.

[76] *DBWE 6*, 119; *DBW 6*, 109. The German mandarins' dislike for the masses that raised Hitler to power is observed in Ringer, *Mandarins*, 445–46.

[77] *DBWE 6*, 119; *DBW 6*, 109.

[78] *DBWE 6*, 127; *DBW 6*, 118–19.

[79] *DBWE 6*, 128; *DBW 6*, 119.

[80] As exemplified in the British ecumenist William Paton, whose 1942 book treated the place of the church in European reconstruction.

[81] *DBWE 16,* 532; *DBW 16,* 540.

[82] The comparison is made in Adolf von Harnack, 'Wilsons Botschaft und die deutsche Freiheit', in *Die deutsche Freiheit. Fünf Vorträge* (Gotha: F.A. Perthes, 1917), 3; cited in

This lineage is not adopted uncritically by Bonhoeffer, but 'western' readers ought to take particular care in interpreting him in light of this identification. In any case, Bonhoeffer's treatment of the 'self-devouring' outcomes of a particular revolutionary view of freedom will lead him to speak of an alliance with those from his national heritage who appeal for restraint.

C. Hegel on the Cultivation of the State

This section sketches relevant aspects of Hegel's political thought that follow from his criticism of the French Revolution. Hegel's vision of the university as the 'focal point' of the state is considered, particularly his role as a professor who sought to educate other civil servants to take up the opportunities afforded by the Napoleonic incursions. In so doing I trouble the notion of Hegel as merely a Prussian state 'apologist', showing the critical principle he embeds in his view of state actualisation. I then clarify the points to which Bonhoeffer will take exception, as expressed in Hegel's Address on the Augsburg Confession: the diminishment of confessional particulars and a church-state integration that tends towards Erastianism.

I. Prussian State Apologist?

Hegel gave good reasons for opponents to suspect his subservience to the governing class. His writings saw the system of constitutional monarchy as worth preserving, so he was an 'apologist' in that sense. Nevertheless, his attempt to bring together the forms of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy led to a highly qualified role for the king.[83] Moreover, Hegel was particularly critical of those he saw to support a royalist autocracy, particularly with crude claims to rule by might and divine authorisation.[84] A proper monarchy would be enriched, and held to account, by those training for government service in the

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Michael DeJonge, 'Bonhoeffer's Concept of the West', in *Bonhoeffer, Religion, and Politics*, eds. Christiane Tietz and Jens Zimmermann (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2012), 44. That same collection contains a speech by Friedrich Meinecke, who traces the German, 'substantial' view of freedom from Luther's portrayal of freedom and subjection through Kant and Fichte's depiction of the rational law and Hegel's view of freedom in submission to state authority.

[83] See *PR*, §272–73. As Pinkard observes, Hegel's view that the monarch was to 'dot the i's' of the bills presented by ministers did not please the royals. For Hegel this titular headship was 'to express the ungrounded, or self-grounded nature of the state, without further appeal to natural or divine law'. Pinkard, *Hegel*, 486–7.

[84] Hegel makes scathing references to Swiss Jurist and Romantic reactionary Karl Ludwig von Haller's work *Restoration of Political Science*, because of its support of a royalist autocracy. He portrays Haller's attempt to retrieve the pre-Napoleonic Prussian order, endowed

university, the site from which Hegel could contribute to that 'cultivation of
the universality of thought' that he identified as 'the absolute value in educa-
tion [*Bildung*]'.[85] Admittedly, Hegel's use of his status as a civil servant could
be problematic, such as when he invoked censorship laws in order to defend
his political philosophy against a critical review printed in a government-
backed paper.[86]

Hegel saw his professorship in philosophy, a role he placed at the 'focal
point' of society, to ensure that critical rationality continues the process of state
reform. Hegel's move to the University of Berlin in 1818 involved him in an
institution for which Schleiermacher had adopted Kant's argument that philos-
ophy have a focal status.[87] It is thus no surprise that Hegel, in his inaugural
Berlin lecture, claims his own discipline at the centre:

> Here, the cultivation [*Bildung*] and flowering of the *sciences* is one of the most essential
> *moments* – even of *political life.* In this university – as the central university – the *centre* of
> all spiritual culture [*Geistesbildung*] and of all science and truth, namely *philosophy*, must
> also find its place and be treated with special care.[88]

Hegel delivers his speech during the emergence of a newly magisterial claim
for his discipline, calling into question the traditional position of philosophy as
handmaiden to theology, queen of the sciences.[89]

Not only does Hegel claim philosophy as central to the university, but he
holds that Germany must become the discipline's leading guardian. This is be-
cause, in his estimation, other nations have retained the disciplinary title but
lost its true sense.[90] Hegel could certainly be critical of philosophical practice
in Germany, even admitting that the homeland state of the science had never
looked so bad.[91] Nevertheless, he used his appointment at Berlin in order to
appeal to his young students to turn inwards, cultivating the rationality that can

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with divine patrimonial authority, as an exercise in 'wretched inanities' and 'utter thought-
lessness'. Hegel takes particular issue with Haller's association of 'might' with rule, partic-
ularly when associated with contingent nature rather than justice. He also criticises Haller's
claims to divine revelation, relayed in terms of 'religious feeling'. See Hegel's extended
footnote to *PR*, §258, which spans pages 231–33 in the Knox edition.

[85] Hegel, *PR*, §20.

[86] See Pinkard, *Hegel*, 497–98.

[87] For a recent treatment of Schleiermacher's blueprint for the university, see Purvis,
University, 110–165.

[88] G.W.F. Hegel, 'Inaugural Address, Delivered at the University of Berlin (22 October
1818)', in *Political Writings*, 182.

[89] Adams characterizes Hegel as a servant frustrated with the queen, though not one who
goes so far as to supplant her. Adams, *Eclipse*, 178.

[90] Hegel, 'Inaugural', 183.

[91] The remark is likely aimed at the alleged subjectivism shown in his philosophical col-
league Fries, the self-declared Kantian, as well as the close influence of Schleiermacher,
whose power in the Academy of Sciences ensured that Hegel would never represent his
discipline there. See Hegel, *Political Writings*, ed. Dickey and Nisbet, 300n6.

properly animate political action.[92] Hegel's claim to custodianship of the 'sacred light' of philosophy, given its flight to Germany for survival, is part of his ongoing polemic against both Catholicism and France.[93]

Hegel's alleged role as upholder of the Prussian *status quo* is often tied to one infamous assertion. In the introduction to *Philosophy of Right*, he states that 'what is rational is actual; and what is actual is rational'.[94] The phrase appears to legitimise the 'positive' political settlement of Hegel's time, although his contemporary Heinrich Heine's account reveals the nuance behind the statement.[95] Taylor argues that Hegel's position of 'seeing the rational in the actual is not necessarily conservative', particularly when the rationality in question 'is an active one which is transforming the real'.[96] In Taylor's account, Hegel vigorously rejects 'legitimist' thought, remaining 'poles apart' from those who argue for remaining with positive institutions.[97] In a similar vein, Pinkard draws on statements from Hegel's lecture notes and the *Science of Logic* to support his rendition of the phrase as 'what counts as rational is what is efficacious'.[98]

As a Prussian civil servant who held to an active, critical rationality, Hegel came into several skirmishes with the government. The ruling class put frequent pressure on professors, including Hegel, in their intermittent hunts for 'demagoguery'.[99] Moreover, when Hegel's friend and former student Eduard

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[92] Hegel, 'Inaugural', 182, 185. Dickey and Nisbet comment that Hegel's reference to the 'inner life of spirit' is not, as one early critic claims, a Protestant retreat from political life into Mandarinism. Rather, for Hegel 'insight is the point of departure for instilling rationality into the political process'. See Hegel, *Political Writings*, ed. Dickey and Nisbet, 299–300n5.

[93] Hegel, *Political Writings*, ed. Dickey and Nisbet, 301n11.

[94] Hegel, *PR*, 'Preface', 20.

[95] The poet studied with Hegel and counted himself among those who thought the professor was 'servile'. As a result, Heine once questioned Hegel directly about the statement in question. He recounts that Hegel 'smiled peculiarly' and remarked, 'It could also be rendered, "everything that is rational must be"', only to look about hastily to see who might have heard'. The episode is recounted in Pinkard, *Hegel*, 497.

[96] Taylor claims that his thought was therefore 'easily transposable' by Marx for an account of the proletariat. Taylor, *Hegel*, 424. Compare Jürgen Habermas' claim that 'in order not to sacrifice philosophy to the challenge posed by the revolution, Hegel elevated revolution to the primary principle of his philosophy. Only after he had fastened the revolution firmly to the beating heart of the world spirit did he feel secure from it'. Jürgen Habermas, 'Hegel's Critique of the French Revolution', in *Theory and Practice*, trans. John Viertel (London: Heinemann, 1974), 121.

[97] Taylor therefore argues that Hegel should not be interpreted as making a similar case to Edmund Burke, with whom he is often associated. Hegel's own contemporary Prussian opponents will be treated below. See Taylor, *Hegel*, 423.

[98] Pinkard, *Hegel*, 458.

[99] Given the risks involved in the content of Hegel's teaching, Pinkard notes that his self-assured and sarcastic style did not help his reputation among ruling conservatives. Instances are recounted in Pinkard, *Hegel*, 437–40, 452, 504, 549.

Gans took up Hegel's course on the Philosophy of Right in 1831, its antimo-narchical, revolutionary tone provoked the Prince to take up his concerns with Hegel.[100] Such episodes challenge the legacy of interpretation that Hegel merely upheld the established order of his day.[101]

The nuance of Hegel's political stance has been obscured throughout his reception history, which has led to an underestimation of his influence on figures such as Bonhoeffer. Summarising the responses of early critics, Pinkard states that 'Hegel, the great partisan of the Revolution, gradually came more and more to assume in the minds of posterity the shape of a narrow-minded Prussian apologist'.[102] In another comment on this line of interpretation, Taylor summarises the lamentable turn from Hegel's vision:

> It was forgotten what track Hegel had thought Prussia to be on in the 1820s, and above all, what he meant by divinity and the state. So naturally both friends and enemies attributed to him the then current grounds for giving one's highest earthly allegiance to the Prussian German state, which were a mixed appeal to traditional authority and modern chauvinistic nationalism. That such an appalling salad of the merely positive and the sub-rational should be attributed to Hegel, the philosopher of a rational cosmic order, is one of the great ironies of modern intellectual history. Such are the penalties of too great originality.[103]

Reference to the merely positive and 'sub-rational' fits much of the propagandistic ideology against which Bonhoeffer wrote, so Taylor's distinction is important to bear in mind when turning to the Third Reich. To set Hegel firmly in his own context, he is best understood as an advocate of modern European reform movements such as those sought by Baron von Stein and Prince von Hardenberg in Prussia.[104]

The background of these political opinions calls into question Kierkegaard's characterisation of Hegel. In Kierkegaard's *Practice in Christianity*, one of Bonhoeffer's sources for the *Discipleship* materials, Jesus' teaching is claimed to cause 'offence', not only because he claims to be the 'God-man' but because he is set as an individual against the established order.[105] Claiming that such offence 'will happen in our day also', Kierkegaard links Hegel's reference to

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[100] Pinkard, *Hegel*, 655.

[101] This influential case is made in the 1857 study *Hegel und seine Zeit* by Rudolf Haym, which attacked Hegel as a supporter of the Restoration government. The fact that Hegel's family granted Haym access to Hegel's papers provided weight to his charge, which grew out of disaffected nationalism. Haym's portrayal was reinforced by the fact that conservatives laid claim to Hegel's legacy in their appeal for a nationalist state such as that eventually brought about by Otto von Bismarck. See Pinkard, *Hegel*, 663–64.

[102] Pinkard, *Hegel*, 663.

[103] Taylor, *Hegel*, 457.

[104] The likeness is made in Allen Wood, 'Introduction', *Elements of the Philosophy of Right,* ix-xi.

[105] Søren Kierkegaard, *Practice in Christianity*, ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 85.

the individual's conscience as a 'form of evil' to the manner in which Hegel 'deified the established order'.[106] Kierkegaard comes to Hegel after typifying a 'Pharisaical' establishment that had become an 'empty, indeed, an ungodly externality', against which Christ 'emphasizes inwardness in contrast to empty outwardness'.[107] The accuracy of this portrayal is questionable given Hegel's own polemic against externality, which will be treated in the ensuing subsection.

II. From Augsburg to the Merged Church

Hegel sees 'Germany proper' to occupy a distinct place on the world-historical stage. It is here that freedom has reached its cumulative expression, centred in the 'unity of the divine and human nature', from which unfolds religion, the state, and science with their respective forms of self-consciousness.[108] It is this realm, within which Hegel places his own project, that the Idea shows its fuller development in state polity, specifically that of a constitutional monarchy.[109] Hegel pictures the state, within which he includes its Protestant confessional expressions, through the image of the human nervous system.[110] This is likely the reason that he does not refer to the church itself with the biblical language of the body – an omission that Bonhoeffer will seek to rectify.

Hegel's address on the Tercentenary of the Augsburg Confession, delivered in 1830, shows both his diminishment of confessional distinctions and his reformist inclination. In speaking about the expansion of Protestant liberty to a citizenry marked by critical reason, Hegel plays down demarcations between clergy and laity, a move motivated by his recurrent criticism of 'superstition' and 'servitude' as characteristics of a prior, Catholic settlement.[111] What made the Diet of Augsburg so remarkable, in Hegel's view, was that both lay political leaders and clergy renounced their separate claims of authority. As a result, these 'orders were completely abolished' such that the 'unseemly division was sublated'.[112] He continues that the split into two civil powers was over: 'the commonwealth, by divine authority, should be internally one'. Then, in a key statement for those who allege that Hegel 'deifies' the established order, he

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[106] Kierkegaard, *Practice*, 87.

[107] Kierkegaard, *Practice*, 86.

[108] *PR*, §358–§360.

[109] *LPWH (1822–23)*, 459.

[110] *PR*, §263.

[111] This leads Hegel to claim his own liberty as a layman speaking on this topic. See Hegel, 'Augsburg', 188, 192–94.

[112] The verb Hegel uses is *sublatum* (the address was delivered in Latin). Hegel, 'Augsburg', 188 alt.

states that 'the laws pertaining to the state and citizens' are 'divinely sanctioned'.[113] The address ends with a statement of gratitude to King Friedrich Wilhelm, noting royal patronage of the university.[114]

Hegel's claim to a divine sanction for the law should be read alongside his advocacy for continued state reform. From the start, Hegel shifts the historical focus from church leaders and doctors of theology to the princes and other political leaders who adopted Protestant doctrine.[115] Such broad ownership of the task of reform has significance for the present, a requirement rooted in Lutheran doctrine:

> Those who condemn the Reformation of the evangelical religion in the manner described above should take heed lest, in denouncing Luther's sedition, they glory in their own obedience and zeal towards the laws and civil authorities merely because they deny divine truth altogether and ascribe all religious doctrine to human invention and opinion.[116]

Hegel's contrast case, it turns out, is the 'piety' of French kings, which led them to suppress Protestant subjects. German leaders should rather rule on the basis of justice, guaranteeing the security and freedom of the people: 'they neither know nor recognise any kind of sanctity but this'.[117]

Two key elements of Hegel's narrative contrast with Bonhoeffer's attempt to retrieve the distinctive ecclesial body, even though space does not permit a fuller account of Hegel's reception of Luther's 'two kingdoms' doctrine. First, there is a diminishment of a confessional claim to the church's unique polity and forms of life. Hegel works largely with generalisations and there is a glaring lack of engagement with Luther's teachings or the content of the confessions. This is understandable in light of Hegel's 'indifference' to the confessional allegiance of citizens, in Bayer's view, as the state 'has risen above the confessional divide' in a gain which must never be reversed.[118] Bayer continues that such elevation leads to an emphasis on the citizen's 'free subjectivity' for ethical conviction that is not dependent on the recurrence of speech acts embedded within the material forms of worship, including the exchange of auricular confession.[119]

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[113] Hegel, 'Augsburg', 191.

[114] Hegel, 'Augsburg', 195–96.

[115] Hegel, 'Augsburg', 186–87.

[116] Hegel, 'Augsburg', 190.

[117] Hegel, 'Augsburg', 195.

[118] Oswald Bayer, 'Theological Ethics: Ethics of Freedom', in *Freedom in Response: Lutheran Ethics: Sources and Controversies*, trans. Jeffrey F. Cayzer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 81.

[119] Bayer, 'Theological Ethics', 83.

Second, Hegel's claim to unity is embedded within a larger movement that has been termed 'Erastian modernity'.[120] In the early nineteenth century, Prussian leaders effected political changes in order to bring the church into union with the state by overcoming confessional divides. As one example, powers were invested in the Department of Ecclesiastical Affairs and Public Education, a sub-department of the Ministry of the Interior, founded in 1808.[121] This political initiative helped pave the way towards the merger of Lutheran and Calvinist churches into one Protestant *Unionskirche* in 1817.[122] Such legal changes were met with resistance, particularly when they attempted to enforce liturgical uniformity. From 1830–34, the period immediately following Hegel's address on Augsburg, such controversy involved both the suspension and imprisonment of dissenting clergy.[123]

Hegel's Augsburg address lacks reference to Luther's and Melanchthon's writings, much less to dissenting voices among contemporary church leaders. This is understandable given that the vision of *Staatskirchentum* was not rooted primarily in Reformation thinking; the main sources of this merger were the 'revolutionary-Bonapartist example' and German Idealism. In Thomas Howard's view, the latter influence, with Fichte and Hegel as prime examples, 'depreciated the moral and pedagogic value of the church (as a concrete historical institution)' in favour of the *Kulturstaat* ideal.[124] The change in the concerns of piety, as intimated in Hegel's address, followed on from Prussian ministers' 'subordinating the Protestant ecclesiastical polity to Prussia's nationalist *raison d'état* and bureaucratic apparatus'.[125] It is therefore not surprising that, as Adams observes, Hegel is among those modern philosophers who effectively 'have no church whose practices they might describe'.[126]

Ernst Troeltsch, a key source for Bonhoeffer's writings, gathers Hegel's account into a larger Lutheran framework for 'modern civilisation', which he defines as 'essentially an anti-Catholic freedom from sacerdotalism and from monasticism'.[127] This freedom is circumscribed, however, by a 'renunciation

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[120] The term is taken from a description of the extensive powers the state would acquire over religious and cultural affairs. See Howard, *Protestant Theology*, 213.

[121] Howard, *Protestant Theology*, 229–30.

[122] This union was promoted by Schleiermacher, who saw it as an outworking of a dynamic already at play within the university. Howard, *Protestant Theology*, 23, 184.

[123] The ensuing decades are marked by the Rites Controversy and church secessionist movements. See Howard, *Protestant Theology*, 236–37.

[124] Howard, *Protestant Theology*, 214.

[125] Howard, *Protestant Theology*, 214.

[126] In reply, Adams suggests the philosophical argument that a 'conceptual' understanding is inadequate to reality, referring to Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory*. Nicholas Adams, 'Eschatology Sacred and Profane', *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 2, no. 3 (November 2000), 306, cf. 291–92.

[127] Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, Volume 2* (1912), trans. Olive Wyon (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 570.

of ecclesial independence'. Thus, even when government shows tyrannical signs, Lutheranism tends to show 'the yielding spirit'.[128] As a result, Troeltsch identifies Prussian and German conservatism, having been restored after the effects of the French Revolution, as the easiest fit for Lutheran doctrines and so determinative for the early twentieth century.[129] In Troeltsch's estimation, right before the 1914-18 War, this had taken an authoritarian turn. Such a turn, related to Hegel but also distinct from his own project, provoked Bonhoeffer's reaction.

In a break from Luther's claim, Hegel shifts the role of discerning church-state relations to the state: 'in contrast with the church's *subjective conviction*, the state is *the one that knows* [*das Wissende*]'.[130] Such a statement jars with Bonhoeffer's attempt to reclaim the church as guardian of that distinction. Bonhoeffer uses spatial language to narrate this larger movement in Lutheranism to an above-below relation.[131] A late essay of his picks up the theme when he traces how modern Lutheranism has become indebted to Hegel:

Here the state is the fulfilment not of the universal rational nature of humanity but of the creative will of God in the people. The state is essentially a *Volksstaat* … indeed, in the final honing of this teaching it becomes the actual subject of these realities – thus of the people, of the culture, of the economy, of religion. It is "the real God" (Hegel).[132]

This movement can lead, Bonhoeffer observes, to the forfeiture of the state's vocation: 'Where the state becomes the fulfilment of all spheres of human life and culture, it forfeits its true dignity, its specific authority as government'.[133] Bonhoeffer's response, delivered in a seminary that sought to train ministers about the proper church-state distinction from the Lutheran confessions, seeks to respond to such state overreach. Given the background of Hegel's address, it is predictable that Bonhoeffer's initiative in improvised 'monasticism' was pejoratively described as 'Catholic'. That label meant opposition for Hegel, and so was inimical to the unity he saw as possible for the Protestant state.

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[128] Troeltsch, *Social Teaching*, 574.

[129] Troeltsch, *Social Teaching*, 575–76.

[130] *PR*, §270.

[131] Bonhoeffer's short taxonomy describes 'the Above of the state and Below of the church', with reference to eighteenth-century 'false Lutheran orthodoxy'. *DBWE 14*, 437; *DBW 14*, 424.

[132] The Hegel citation, on which Bonhoeffer does not elaborate, is taken from *PR* §258 a152. *DBWE 16*, 507–8; *DBW 16*, 510.

[133] *DBWE 16*, 507–8; *DBW 16*, 510.

D. Bonhoeffer's Retrieval of Confessional Space

In this section I argue that insofar as Bonhoeffer can be said to break with a 'Hegelian paradigm', this has to do with recovering 'confessional space'. I first trace Bonhoeffer's own dissent from what he termed the 'intertwining' of church and state, which he carried out with a combination of theologically and politically resonant terms. Speaking against a 'docetic-Idealist ecclesiology', he recovers the image of the church as body of Christ, setting 'Christ existing as community' in an explicitly biblical register. Intent on real presence, Bonhoeffer also employs the politically charged term *Lebensraum*, repositioning a term for national expansion within the 'weakness' that characterises the Word.

I. Visibility for the Ecclesial Body

In his two dissertations, Bonhoeffer gestures towards a form of theological *Wissenschaft* that is vitally tied to the church. At the intersection of social-philosophical and theological concepts of the person, Bonhoeffer maintains that personal, ecclesial involvement is required for a true understanding of the communion of saints:

> But the nature of the church can only be understood from within, *cum* ira et studio [*with passion and study*], never by nonparticipants. Only those who take the claim of the church seriously – not relativizing it in relation to other similar claims or their own rationality, but viewing it from the standpoint of the gospel – can possibly glimpse something of its true nature.[134]

Bonhoeffer continues that the church could be subjected to sociological study as a 'public corporation', in which case theological reflection would be superfluous. While ceding the study of 'empirical' initiation rites, Bonhoeffer's interest is theological reflection performed in the Spirit.[135] This interest is carried on in the subsequent *Act and Being,* a work Bonhoeffer casts as a form of *kirchlichen Denken,* or 'ecclesial thinking'.[136]

Bonhoeffer had initially sought to work in both the seminary and university, hoping to overcoming the divide between the two. However, in August 1936 his right to teach at the University of Berlin was rescinded, in part because he was directing a seminary that had come under government suspicion.[137] While

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[134] *DBWE 1*, 33, alt.; *DBW 1*, 18.

[135] Referring to Irenaeus, Bonhoeffer states, 'It is evidently a mistake, therefore, to attempt to reflect on the objective work of the Holy Spirit independently of the community. The Spirit is only in the church-community, and the community is only in the Spirit'. *DBWE 1*, 144, alt.; *DBW 1*, 90.

[136] *DBWE 2*, 32, alt.; *DBW 2*, 26.

[137] To that point, education for ministry had largely been at the hand of state-appointed professors in the university context. New seminaries had an initial freedom to train, in contrast to the church's *Hochschulen*, or colleges, which competed directly with the universities

Bonhoeffer did not last in the role within which Hegel found his long-awaited vocational fulfilment, he nevertheless found that directing the seminary became his most professionally fulfilling role, the first work about which he had no reservations.[138]

At Finkenwalde, Bonhoeffer was in the midst of not only articulating community but creating an institution – in this case, an improvised monasticism. Although the universities provided education for ministers, Bethge remarks that they did not provide 'training'.[139] Finkenwalde sought to fill this gap by structuring its days on a series of monastic practices, the inspiration for which came in large part from Bonhoeffer's visits to Anglican seminaries and communities.[140] The day's services were framed with the scriptural Word, as readings took the form of a *lectio continua*, seeking to cover the entire Bible without omission.[141]

With the previous century's movement of 'deconfessionalisation' in view, there were two notable curricular distinctions at Finkenwalde. First, Bonhoeffer trained the students in historic Lutheran confessions. From the inaugural summer onwards, Bethge recalls that Bonhoeffer devoted more time to classes on the confessions than to any other subject, filling a perceived gap in their education through passionate discussions about their relevance for the present.[142] This content resourced opposition to the 'German Christians' as well as renewing their views of church independence from the state. In the intertwined areas of theology and polity, Bonhoeffer taught that the confessions were the way in which the church exercised the office of the keys, binding and loosing.[143]

Second, Bonhoeffer attempts to redraw the distinction between church and state with terms that recall his longstanding criticism of Hegel. In the lecture 'The Visible Church in the New Testament', Bonhoeffer asks what kind of space the church can claim in the world, which raises the issue of 'the entire

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and so were immediately banned, though ensuing legislation rendered Bonhoeffer's enterprise illegal and it was shut down in 1937. Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 419–20, 516.

[138] As Bonhoeffer had been considering where he might work as a theologian and teacher, the Reich Bishop ordered that Old Prussian preachers' seminaries should be closed down, while those theological students still training had to prove 'Aryan' descent to take their examinations. As a result, the Confessing Church started building its own training institutions, in which Bonhoeffer would eventually take up an 'independent theological chair' in 1935. Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 410, 419.

[139] Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 419.

[140] Bonhoeffer asked Bishop George Bell for recommendations of sites to visit. Bethge, *Bonhoeffer*, 411.

[141] Bethge, *Bonhoeffer*, 428.

[142] Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 444–47.

[143] Recalling a longstanding foil, Bonhoeffer spoke of Christ's conferral of authority on the church: 'Without the protection of the key that binds', Bonhoeffer states, 'God's grace becomes an idea'. *DBWE 14*, 839; *DBW 14*, 844.

theological dispute with the state'.[144] Here he flags the danger of a 'docetic-Idealist [ecclesiology]', for which 'the essence of the church [is] understood as being merely the semblance of corporeality of an idea [*Scheinleiblichkeit einer Idee*] that cannot really claim any space in the world'.[145] In discussing this problem, Bonhoeffer claims that recent years have made the church newly aware of boundaries, whereas previously it saw itself as a 'broader space and body'.[146] This question explains the difference between the university faculty's 'science' [*Wissenschaft*] and the 'community' [*Gemeinde*].[147] Given the unique formation of the church in 'its own empirical experiences', including 'the blows it receives', Bonhoeffer asks, 'how can one delimit epistemologically the space of the church from the spaces surrounding it?'[148]

In distinguishing the unique 'mind' of the church, Bonhoeffer offers several potential resolutions between church and state, using a classification that echoes Troeltsch's *Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*.[149] Bonhoeffer notes that the claim of 'intertwining [*Ineinander*]' between church and state is held by 'Rothean theology'.[150] For Troeltsch, Richard Rothe and Hegel are paired in a discussion on 'mysticism and spiritual Idealism', a section that follows his treatment of church and sect types.[151] Troeltsch speaks of the effectiveness of mysticism within the philosophy of religion, as shown in Hegel's reference to Boehme, over and against 'the naïve age-long dominion of the positive and the particular'.[152] Along with the earlier mysticism, 'it lives in and on communities which have been brought into existence by other ruder energies', meaning that it tends to see beyond 'confessional unities' as expressions of the ecclesiastical spirit.[153]

Hegel's lack of reference to confessional distinctions, as well as his hasty typology of views on the Eucharist, would have provided Troeltsch with compelling data for this claim. Troeltsch goes further, however, claiming that Rothe and Hegel envision a new settlement in which religion no longer needs to be connected to the 'decaying churches'. In his words,

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[144] *DBWE 14,* 435; *DBW 14*, 423.

[145] *DBWE 14,* 435; *DBW 14*, 423.

[146] *DBWE 14,* 435; *DBW 14*, 424. One student notes the examples of 'the school question, Aryan legislation, flag question'. *DBWE 14*, 436n9.

[147] *DBWE 14,* 435; *DBW 14*, 424.

[148] *DBWE 14,* 435; *DBW 14*, 424.

[149] The link to this text are drawn in *DBW 14*, 424n11.

[150] *DBWE 14,* 437; *DBW 14*, 424.

[151] Howard notes that Rothe (1799–1867) was a pupil of both Schleiermacher and Hegel in Berlin. Rothe argued against a view of the church as constantly embattled, that is, a posture perpetually *contra mundum*. See Howard, *Protestant Theology*, 226.

[152] Troeltsch, *Social Teaching*, 791.

[153] Troeltsch, *Social Teaching*, 796.

Richard Rothe and Hegel did not prophesy in vain that the Church would become merged in the state, that is, the complete autonomy of the religious 'mind' directly united with the collective reason and its social organization.[154]

Troeltsch continues that though Rothe identified problems in such a form of spirituality, it was nevertheless the 'logical result of the evolution of Christianity'.[155]

Rather than engaging directly with the terms of a 'Rothean' theology, Bonhoeffer exposits the portrayal of *Geist* in the New Testament. He first dwells on the narrative of Pentecost with its language of the Spirit as a presence that is *sent*. Bonhoeffer continues by speaking of 'the church of the Spirit that has come', while also making the present claim that 'the Spirit comes'.[156] Emphasis is placed on how the Spirit's coming on the community is linked to its visibility in *contrast* to the world. Bonhoeffer also states that the church is 'the historical reality of the Holy Spirit, which forbids all docetism'.[157] This is a strange claim at first, for docetism is a Christological heresy. Given Bonhoeffer's desire to pronounce the church community, one might have expected him to say that the Spirit forbids Erastianism. However, given his modification of Hegel's phrase, 'Christ existing as community', to speak of the church is to speak of the present Christ, and it is 'docetism' that threatens the recurrent contemporaneity of the historical Jesus, who held such a bold social ethic.

Bonhoeffer also responds to a 'docetic-Idealist ecclesiology' by speaking of the visibility of Christ's body. He draws on 1 Corinthians 6:19, claiming a double meaning for the individual member: 'Your body, which is simultaneously the body of the community, is the body of Christ'.[158] This segues into a rare late iteration of the Hegel-inspired phrase from his early writings – in this version, 'Christ exists as community [*Christus existiert als Gemeinde*]' – to combat a view that Christ is only present as the proclaimed Word.[159]

Reference to the body allows Bonhoeffer to further distinguish the contours of the church from Troeltsch's characterisation of the tradition of 'mysticism and spiritual Idealism'. Against what Bonhoeffer elsewhere terms 'mystical fusion', he pronounces the independence of each member and, indeed, the living head. He conveys this through the language of 'juxtaposition' [*Gegenüber*]

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[154] Troeltsch, *Social Teaching*, 796–97.
[155] Troeltsch, *Social Teaching*, 797.
[156] 'Now something completely new occurs: *der Geist kommt*'. *DBWE 14*, 438–39; *DBW 14*, 426.
[157] *DBWE 14*, 438; *DBW 14*, 425.
[158] *DBWE 14,* 449; *DBW 14*, 437.
[159] *DBWE 14,* 449; *DBW 14*, 437.

of the community and Christ, a non-identity [*nicht-Identität*]', reasoning that 'otherwise it would be *Christ mysticism* [*Christusmystik*]'.[160]

II. Weakness of the Word, Strength of the Idea

Bonhoeffer's attempt to reclaim ecclesial visibility employed not only biblical theology but the politically charged term *Lebensraum,* or 'living space'.[161] The term *Lebensraum* was used in Third Reich propaganda for German expansionist claims across Europe, so Bonhoeffer is boldly employing terms of seizure and occupation. In *Discipleship*, Bonhoeffer claims that the church's need for *Lebensraum* takes it beyond proclamation and order into daily communal living.[162] Witness to the visibility of the community is an attempt to retrieve the original force of Luther's emergence from the monastery, which is also pitched in terms of an assault.[163]

Bonhoeffer's employment of the term *Lebensraum* risks association with crude appeals to a *Volk*'s growth and strength.[164] Turning from his own earlier vision of militant expansion, however, Bonhoeffer speaks of the church's claim to space as characterised by suffering and rejection. Such conditions are appropriate to the 'Word':

> The idea is strong. But the Word of God is so weak that it suffers to be despised and rejected by people. … The Word accepts the resistance it encounters and bears it. It is a cruel knowledge: nothing is impossible for the idea, but for the gospel there are impossibilities. The Word is weaker than the idea. Likewise, the witnesses to the Word are weaker than the propagandists of the idea.[165]

Bonhoeffer's reference to propaganda likely targets National Socialist leaders such as Joseph Goebbels.[166] Against their strong political machine, Bonhoeffer

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[160] He continues with a doctrinal claim that does not feature frequently in his writing: 'Mysticism is overcome through the fact of the ascension of Christ, for whose return we wait'. *DBWE 14,* 450, alt.; *DBW 14*, 439.

[161] The term appears in the Finkenwalde materials before its later, better known use in *Discipleship*. See *DBWE 14,* 450; *DBW 14*, 439.

[162] *DBWE 4,* 232; *DBW 4*, 248.

[163] Bonhoeffer characterises Luther's return as an even bolder form of 'counter-culture': 'The rejection which the monk had given the world was child's play compared to the rejection that the world endured through his returning to it. This time the attack was a frontal assault.' *DBWE 4*, 48, cf. 196; *DBW 4*, 34–35, cf. 208.

[164] Such terms had been central to Bonhoeffer's early *völkisch* vision, expressed most clearly in an expatriate lecture delivered in 1929. Claiming the eternal youth and strength of the divine life, Bonhoeffer stated that 'God calls a *Volk* to diversity, to struggle and victory'. *DBWE 10*, 373; *DBW 10*, 339.

[165] *DBWE 4*, 173, alt.; *DBW 4*, 180–81.

[166] Goebbels' full title was *Reichsminister für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda*. See *DBW 4*, 181n11.

makes clear that the community of Jesus' disciples should not give in to the allure of effectiveness.

Predictably, Third Reich propaganda is a far easier target than Hegel. Given that the 'Idea' is one of Hegel's terms of art, on which Bonhoeffer has engaged him explicitly in the Christology lectures, it is worth considering the comparison between Word and Idea more fully. This is particularly so as Bayer argues for a retrieval of the 'language event' for Luther's hermeneutic, emphasising the Word's 'finite form' and the limits of its address, over and against Hegel's development of the Idea.[167]

It is true that Hegel's Idea has remarkable potency: as rational, it develops organically from its own 'immanent' life into an internally differentiated constitution of the state.[168] Hegel's image of organic wholeness gives the state's development a certain inexorability. He claims that 'patriotic disposition' receives its content from aspects of the 'organism' that is 'the development of the Idea to its differences and their objective actuality'.[169] The wholeness of the Idea is likened to the manner in which the body requires every part working in 'identity with the others', or, rather more grandly, to the claim that God is not reducible to a list of attributes but has a life that must be intuited 'in itself'.[170]

On the other hand, for Hegel the Idea is not merely strength, at least in the assertive form that Bonhoeffer attacks. Hegel's criticism of the French Revolution led to his criticism of those in his own land who sought to force political change on the basis of abstract rational principles. As Taylor observes:

> Hegel cannot accept the vision of those *Aufklärer* who would design a rational state and then try to put it into operation like an engineering plan, be this a state on utilitarian principles or one founded on the general will.[171]

Hegel's trust in the organic unfurling of the Idea led him to oppose attempts at 'constitutional engineering'.[172] Indeed, although Hegel claims that the Idea is efficacious as the rational, he never saw his vision of the reformed state realised.[173]

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[167] The term 'language event' [*Sprachereignis, Sprachhandlung*] is coined by Ernst Fuchs and later taken up by Gerhard Ebeling in his treatment of Luther's hermeneutic. See Bayer, 'Theological Ethics', 71–73.

[168] See *PR,* §2, 56, 141, 258. Cf. Taylor, *Hegel*, 409.

[169] *PR,* §269.

[170] *PR,* §269 A.

[171] Even so, Taylor continues, Hegel 'also lashes the main opponents of these rational planners, the Romantics, writers like Jacobi, Fries, Schlegel…who put little faith in reason to lead men to a higher political life'. Taylor, *Hegel*, 421.

[172] Taylor, *Hegel*, 421.

[173] Taylor says that 'the Hegelian state', as portrayed in *Philosophy of Right*, 'existed nowhere in totality'. A contemporary would have noticed a number of discrepancies between the work and 1821 Prussia. Taylor, *Hegel*, 452.

Along with Hegel's rejection of certain 'shows of strength', a comparison of Bonhoeffer's Word and Hegel's Idea must consider that Bonhoeffer's claim to the Word's weakness still involves power, albeit in a veiled form.[174] In Bonhoeffer's rendition, the Idea's strength is claimed to have *Stärke,* while the Word has *Kraft*. Significantly, the latter may bear closer resemblance to Hegel's claim to the 'cunning' [*List*] of reason that cannot merely be equated with sheer violence.[175]

Such a comparison also brings the complex relation between Hegel's language of the positive and negative into play. Against the notion that sheer 'positivity' could be taken as strength, Hegel's Idea suffers a candid confrontation with negativity.[176] His successors could not always match his patience with negativity, however, resulting in a stance Kierkegaard satirises as those who voice 'prayers offering thanks to God and Hegel that they are not like those negative ones but have become positive'.[177] It is the positive thinker who, following Hegel, 'knows all about world history and our Lord's most private thoughts'.[178] In contrast, it is the 'subjective, existing thinker' who does not give in to a 'chimerical mediation' but 'holds open the wound of the negative'.[179]

The comparison between Bonhoeffer's Word and Hegel's Idea invites further elaboration. For now, I return to this section's focus on ecclesial polity. One of Hegel's purposes with the Idea, as the unique territory of the speculative philosopher, is an attempt to overcome forms of representational thought that are less stable and so more susceptible to fanaticism. In this way, religion is liable to a form of political weakness. Hegel's integrative vision for the state therefore rises above the potential fractiousness of confessional adherence. Bonhoeffer's argument for a distinct 'Confessing Church' cuts against this tendency, and it certainly came to know the stance of 'weakness' as it was rejected by the regime.

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[174] This power becomes evident eschatologically, but also in proximal 'judgements' before the Day. See *DBWE 4*, 173; *DBW 4*, 181.

[175] See *SL*, 663.

[176] In his words, the Idea 'has in its essence to differentiate itself and to posit itself negatively', for the mere positive is an empty category. *PR*, §139.

[177] Kierkegaard classes the positive in terms of 'sensate certainty, historical knowledge, speculative result'. Søren Kierkegaard, 'Possible/Actual Theses by Lessing', *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Volume 1, ed. Howard V. Hong & Edna H. Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 80–1.

[178] Kierkegaard, *Postscript*, 85.

[179] Kierkegaard, *Postscript*, 85.

E. Suffering Body, Spiritless Age

Having argued for Bonhoeffer's claim to 'confessional space' as a key difference from Hegel, this section asks whether Bonhoeffer's commitment entails a breach of 'recognition' in Hegel's sense. I begin by sketching the place that 'recognition' plays in Hegel's political philosophy. Specifically, I note the nuance shown by Hegel's three exceptions to such social integration: first, there are forms of 'religious opposition' that set people apart; second, in a 'spiritless' age, some individuals and groups may have to turn inwards; third, although some political bodies do not receive recognition, their 'strength of existence' precedes such express formulation. I then turn to Bonhoeffer's statement that the Christ-community can expect 'not recognition, but rejection' in the world, and so must abandon the claim to right. I argue that Bonhoeffer's statement is directed at contextual concerns, such as seminarians' approval of ministers taking civil court action against church government and, relatedly, responses to the eventual dissolution of the seminary. I also locate his statement within an ongoing series of texts, recalling that Bonhoeffer had earlier stated, in 1933 polemics over the Aryan Paragraph, that the church's resistance, even to the point of forceful intervention, can be a form of 'ultimate recognition', that is, opposition to the state for the sake of the state's true vocation.

I. Hegel on Mutual Recognition and Religious Oppositions

A hallmark of Hegel's philosophy is that self-consciousness is socially constituted. 'Freedom, for Hegel, is a predicate not of individuals but of people or communities', in Smith's words.[180] This is why, interested as Hegel was in French revolutionary ideals, he spoke for the preservation of local customs as a condition of freedom. The process of social self-consciousness is not a smooth symmetry, of course; in Hegel's account its emergence involves struggle. As shown in the famous dialectic from the *Phenomenology*, mutual self-consciousness involves the threat of death, settled relations of mastery and enslavement, and the liberation that comes through labour. Nevertheless, Hegel is interested in development beyond the cusp of death, and his abiding interest in the inter-relations of the various practices and institutions within a culture have led to a position aptly described as 'holism'.[181] At the heart of this social dynamic lies Hegel's term of art, *Anerkennung*, 'recognition'.[182]

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[180] Smith, 'Epitaph', 245–46.

[181] Houlgate, *Hegel*, 10.

[182] For a treatment of the philosophical background to this term, see Robert Pippin, 'What is the Question for which Hegel's Theory of Recognition is the Answer?' *European Journal of Philosophy* 8:2 (2000): 155–72.

In the *Phenomenology*, Hegel speaks of self-consciousness through the encounter of two irreducible selves. He begins with a representation of the 'activity of one' but does not remain there, for the 'other' is not merely an object of desire but is also self-sufficient.[183] Hegel argues against 'one-sided activity', for both must bring about the movement outside the self, for the self.[184] Each self-consciousness comes 'only by way of this mediation', which is to say, '[t]hey *recognise* themselves as *mutually recognising each other*'.[185]

The theme of recognition is picked up in *Philosophy of Right* as Hegel describes the relation of the individual's 'right' to that of the state. His resistance to one-sided accounts is expressed in the relation between the individual subject and the state's legal responsibility, which he seeks to mediate by means of '*the right of the rational*'.[186] Along with legal judgements, Hegel uses the concept of recognition as the means for integrating civil services: 'This universality, as the *quality of being recognized*, is the moment which makes isolated and abstract needs, means, and modes of satisfaction into *concrete*, i.e. *social* ones'.[187]

Although recognition is central to Hegel's social theory, his concessions show that it is not mere legitimation of the established order. Hegel claims that humanity's 'rational end' is found in 'life in the state', even as the state's end is the happiness of its citizens through actualising freedom.[188] Nevertheless, there are three exceptions to such integration: first, there are forms of 'religious opposition' that set people apart; second, in a 'spiritless' age, some individuals and groups may have to turn inwards; third, some political bodies do not have official recognition in a particular historical moment, although they are duly constituted. These will be elaborated briefly in turn.

In Hegel's first treatment of 'recognition' in *Philosophy of Right*, he notes various exceptions for religious communities. In one aside he addresses the historic issue of peoples that have a 'religious constitution'. Referring to the histories of 'Jewish and Mohammedan *Völker*', he acknowledges that a 'religious viewpoint may further entail a higher opposition which precludes that universal identity that recognition requires'.[189] This glancing reference to op-

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[183] *PhG*, §182, alt.

[184] This movement is described as the one consciousness going '*outside of itself* [*außer sich*]' while at the same time remaining '*for itself [für sich]*'. In this manner, one extends towards the other and '[l]ikewise, this other exists only for itself by sublating itself as existing-for-itself [*Fürsichsein*], and it is for itself only in the being-for-itself of the other. Each is the middle term [*die Mitte*] to the other'. *PhG*, §184.

[185] *PhG*, §184.

[186] *PR*, §132.

[187] *PR*, §192.

[188] *PR*, §75, 265.

[189] *PR*, §331.

position is not developed here, as Hegel spends more time on the then-contemporary question of sectarianism for a post-Enlightenment state. Religion is thus offered a qualified space in Hegel's state constitution, although he remains concerned with fanaticism.[190] These concerns arise because of the church's self-estimation 'as an end in itself, while the state is a mere means'.[191]

Second, Hegel acknowledges times in which an individual or group becomes estranged from their social world and turn within. Citing the examples of Socrates and the Stoics, he narrates the process thus: 'When the existing world of freedom has become unfaithful to the better will, this will no longer finds itself in the duties recognized in this world and must seek to recover in ideal inwardness alone that harmony which it has lost in actuality'.[192] Such flight is only permitted, Hegel qualifies, 'in ages when the actual world is a hollow, spiritless, and unsettled existence'.[193] He returns to the example of Socrates in the ruin of Athenian democracy, going on to acknowledge that 'in our times' there are various forms of disconnection between existing order and the individual's right to bestow recognition.[194]

Third, Hegel claims that some political bodies go without international recognition for a time. Just as individual subjects were 'self-sufficient' in the *Phenomenology*, so every '*Volk* as state' is 'a sovereign and independent entity'.[195] As such, a state is entitled to be seen as sovereign '*in the eyes of others*, i.e. *to be recognized* by them'.[196] Nevertheless, Hegel acknowledges that there can be a political body that does not yet have express recognition even though it knows itself duly constituted. This observation is given as a brief commentary on Napoleon's statement that 'the French Republic is no more in need of recognition than the sun is'.[197] Hegel remarks that these words relay 'that strength of existence which itself carries with it a guarantee of recognition,

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[190] Hegel states that religion should not be spoken of in 'wholly general terms', but should be distinguished because 'we rather need a power to protect us from it in some of its forms and to espouse against them the rights of reason and self-consciousness'. He gingerly treats the religious forms of relation he terms '*feeling, representation, faith*', noting their liability to fanaticism that casts aside social institutions and orders. In this respect, a pietistic, uneducated claim to seeking 'guidance from the Lord' is of particular concern to him. *PR*, §270.

[191] *PR*, §270. Relatedly, Hegel seeks to challenge the claim that religion is the basis of the state, as held by Friedrich von Schlegel and other Romantics. This is noted by Houlgate in *PR*, 355n242.

[192] *PR*, §138.

[193] *PR*, §138.

[194] *PR*, §138.

[195] *PR*, §331. Hegel himself draws the likeness to how relations between individuals constitute them as persons in his exposition of the paragraph.

[196] *PR*, §331.

[197] *PR*, §331. The saying is attributed to Napoleon before the 1797 Peace of Campo Formio, a period in which a coalition of states led by England, including Holland, Spain, and Portugal, attempted to bring down the revolutionary republic. See *PR*, §329n2.

even if this is not expressly formulated'.[198] Although he is not speaking of a religious body here, such an exception could well be appropriated by a community to narrate its estrangement.

II. 'Community of Strangers': Bonhoeffer on the Mark of Non-Recognition

Bonhoeffer's reference to the church as the *Volk Gottes* appeals to something like the 'higher opposition' that Hegel concedes in the 'religious viewpoint'. Still, this is not to relegate Bonhoeffer's claim to the 'former times' of peoples Hegel associates with the religious view, for Bonhoeffer is serious about the church's space in modernity. As he says elsewhere, the two kingdoms belong in an 'inseparable' relation. Nevertheless, Bonhoeffer's simultaneous conviction that the two belong together 'without confusion' leads him to reclaim a polity of 'non-recognition'. This is especially the case given the Third Reich under which Bonhoeffer lived, a political establishment that has a strong claim to ushering in a '*Geist*-less' age.

In *Discipleship,* Bonhoeffer states that the Christ-community will go without 'recognition' in the world. This is because the way of the cross is not only suffering, which might itself be seen as tragic and noble, but rejection with its attendant dishonour.[199] The disciples will likewise receive 'not recognition [*Anerkennung*], but rejection'. Bonhoeffer acknowledges that this is difficult to apprehend in a context the has lost the distinction between the 'citizen's existence' and the call of a Christian.[200] This lack of recognition involves abandoning the claim to right.[201] On Jesus' beatitude for the 'meek', Bonhoeffer comments that the community of strangers [*Fremdlingsgemeinde*] renounce every right of their own for Christ's sake.[202]

Bonhoeffer developed this position through an exegesis of the Sermon on the Mount – Jesus' teaching that Hegel had classed as *sans-culottism*. Luther's writings also framed Bonhoeffer's alternative, as he claims the reformer directly in teaching that suffering was 'among the marks of the true church'.[203] At another point, Bonhoeffer cites a preparatory document for the Augsburg Confession, which makes reference to a community that is 'persecuted and

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[198] *PR*, §331 A.

[199] *DBWE 4*, 85; *DBW 4*, 77–8.

[200] *DBWE 4*, 87; *DBW 4*, 80.

[201] This is in contrast to the habit at the time of ministers taking action against church governments in civil courts. Though ministers were winning these cases, a fact which delighted the Finkenwalde seminarians, Bonhoeffer expressed the limited value of these lawsuits as merely creating 'a better-informed republic from a badly informed republic'. Bethge, *Bonhoeffer*, 444.

[202] *DBWE 4*, 105; *DBW 4*, 104.

[203] *DBWE 4*, 89; *DBW 4*, 82. See Martin Luther, 'On the Councils and the Church' (1539), *LW* 41:164–65, and 'The Seven Signum' (1541), *LW* 41:202.

martyred on behalf of the gospel'.[204] This sense of estrangement is heightened by owning terms of derision employed by the National Socialist regime such as 'rootless' or 'nationless'.[205]

Bonhoeffer's emphasis on contrastive visibility to the point of non-recognition would seem to be a repudiation of a core term in Hegel's political philosophy. Indeed, the terms of derision aimed at Bonhoeffer's monastic experiment echo Hegel's own foils: the Finkenwalde community was suspected by the broader church of 'Catholic practices, enthusiastic pacifist activities, and radical fanaticism'.[206] Unsurprisingly, the year the seminary was shut down, twenty-seven of Bonhoeffer's former seminarians were imprisoned for disobeying government prohibitions.[207]

Although *Discipleship* speaks in stark terms about the 'break' Jesus inaugurates with communal orders, including the state, I argue that this should recall Bonhoeffer's earlier writings that claim such a breach as a form of 'ultimate recognition'. As Hegel before him, Bonhoeffer held that the state could forfeit its true vocation to uphold right. This is famously expressed in the 1933 essay, 'The Church and the Jewish Question', in which Bonhoeffer makes his controversial claim about the church's direct intervention in state affairs. This is the paradoxical expression of the church's 'ultimate recognition' of the state, by which it opposes the state precisely in its calling to preserve it.[208]

The suffering of the revelatory community provides Bonhoeffer with the opportunity to specify the mediator through whom recognition occurs. Bonhoeffer is a fierce critic of claims to 'immediate' knowledge, as was Hegel before him.[209] The difference comes largely through Bonhoeffer's reclamation of the terms of 'calling' and his sustained emphasis on revelation in hiddenness, as expressed in the following comment:

Ever since Jesus called, there are no longer natural, historical, or experiential immediacies for his disciples. Christ the mediator stands between son and father, between husband and wife, between individual and *Volk*, whether they can recognize him or not.[210]

The term 'recognition' is again invoked, though this time Christ is explicitly named alongside the church as the one passed over. Such recognition can only come, Bonhoeffer later observes, in faith.[211]

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[204] *DBWE 4*, 89; *DBW 4*, 82. This citation likely comes from the Twelfth Schwabach Article (1529). See *DBWE 4*, 89n18.

[205] *DBWE* 4, 109n45; *DBW 4*, 108–109.

[206] Bethge, *Bonhoeffer*, 433.

[207] See Bonhoeffer's annual report on these arrests in *DBW 15,* 14–15.

[208] *DBWE 12*, 366; *DBW 12*, 354.

[209] Hegel had claimed that self-consciousness only occurred by way of mediation between oneself and another, stating that 'Each is the middle term [*Mitte*] to the other'. *PhG*, §184.

[210] *DBWE 4*, 95; *DBW 4*, 90.

[211] *DBWE 4*, 202; *DBW 4*, 216.

Faith perception is required because Bonhoeffer argues for a unitive form of recognition from a site 'external' to the civil sphere. The unity of Christian faith and the world must be claimed only through the name of Jesus Christ, Bonhoeffer states in a letter, which is to say that it occurs 'solely because God became a poor, wretched, unknown, unsuccessful human being, and because God wants to be found from now on solely in this poverty, in the cross'.[212] The clear, unambiguous statement of 'Protestant historical consciousness' therefore comes through a name that invokes a counterintuitive form of 'this-worldliness'.[213]

Bonhoeffer's linkage of mediation and suffering reveals the strong conviction that underlies his modification of Hegel's 'God existing as community'. Using similar language as Hegel about the move away from attachments to this world, Bonhoeffer places the cross not as an unfortunate end, either to Christ's life or 'ours', but 'the beginning of community with Jesus Christ'.[214] Rather than the crucifixion as an isolated, once-for-all occurrence, it is the recurrent site of union: 'The cross is suffering with Christ. Indeed, it is Christ-suffering [*Christusleiden*]'.[215] From there, Bonhoeffer speaks of ongoing communal acts like the forgiveness of sins with this hybrid term: such acts, performed by church members, are 'the Christ-suffering required of his disciples'.[216] This is because no disciple is greater than the master, and Christ is the one 'whose whole life is described in the Apostles' Creed with one word: suffered'.[217]

F. Embattled Alliance: Church and Remnant State in *Ethics*

Having shown that Bonhoeffer's articulation of the suffering body of the church is a form of ultimate, albeit hidden, recognition, this final section turns to later writings that make such an alliance more explicit. In particular, I trace Bonhoeffer's observation in *Ethics* that a state of cultural 'decay' had driven the remnant-state of his time to seek an embattled alliance with the church. He narrates a set of concepts that could well summarize Hegel's state vocation – including 'right', 'science', and 'cultivation' – in a process of returning to their

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[212] The statement is found in a letter to Theodor Litt dated January 22, 1939. *DBWE 15,* 111–12; *DBW 15*, 113.

[213] *DBWE 15,* 112; *DBW 15*, 113.

[214] *DBWE 4*, 87; *DBW 4*, 81.

[215] *DBWE 4*, 87; *DBW 4*, 80. As usual, the German is more direct: *Kreuz is Mitleiden mit Christus, Christusleiden.*

[216] *DBWE 4*, 88; *DBW 4*, 82. In the Finkenwalde materials, he refers to the 'community of the crucified', elsewhere speaking of the cross being 'laid upon the body of the community'. *DBWE 14*, 109, 221; *DBW 14*, 109, 235.

[217] *DBWE 14*, 60; *DBW 14*, 48.

ecclesial origin after a period of estrangement. Such an account of 'recognition' shows Bonhoeffer's distinct appropriation insofar as he reclaims, after Hegel's unitive project, the remnant-state joining the church by learning to bear the mark of suffering that was central to Luther's ecclesiology.

In the 1940–41 *Ethics* manuscript 'Heritage and Decay', Bonhoeffer tries to retrieve the proper distinction between church and state – no small feat after years of 'Erastian modernism' and the takeover of the church by the National Socialists of his day. Nevertheless, Bonhoeffer states that 'as long as the earth remains', the two 'must never be mixed together, yet never torn apart'.[218] He is employing a clear 'Chalcedonian logic' to reinstate a properly understood two-kingdoms doctrine over and against what he terms 'pseudo-Lutheranism'.

Bonhoeffer continues by speaking of an alliance between the church and that element of the state that still preserves right and reason, its mandate from God. The necessity of this alliance comes because of the aftermath of the French Revolution, which, for all its contributions to human rights, provided precedent for a 'mass' that seeks freedom from typical social restraints, such that 'the foundation for historical life – trust in all its forms – is destroyed'.[219] This leads to the statement that explains the manuscript title: 'The Occident is about to repudiate its historical heritage. It is becoming hostile to Christ. This is the unique situation of our time, and it is actual decay'.[220]

Two countering forces are claimed against this dissolution. The first bearer of history is the 'restraining force' [*Aufhaltende*], an invocation of the biblical *katechōn*.[221] Bonhoeffer identifies this as the 'ordering power of the state' that God uses to preserve the world, though it is neither God nor 'without *Schuld*'.[222] In Bonhoeffer's estimation of his age, the 'restrainer' is reduced to a 'remnant'.[223] In appealing to the *katechōn,* Bonhoeffer alludes to the notion also developed in this time by legal theorist Carl Schmitt. He does not dwell long with the state, however, much less the Third Reich for which Schmitt wrote.

The church is the second body to bear the historical heritage that has been abandoned, in Bonhoeffer's expansion of a theme from the Finkenwalde curriculum. Here the language of the church as 'body', which Bonhoeffer had been emphasising in his engagement with Hegel, comes to the fore. He states that 'The corpus christianum has broken apart. The corpus Christi stands over

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[218] *DBWE 6*, 112; *DBW 6*, 102. Clifford Green identifies the allusion to Chalcedon in *DBWE 6*, 112n39.

[219] *DBWE 6*, 130; *DBW 6*, 122.

[220] *DBWE 6*, 132; *DBW 6*, 123.

[221] *DBWE 6*, 131; *DBW 6*, 122–23.

[222] *DBWE 6*, 131; *DBW 6*, 122–23.

[223] *DBWE 6*, 132; *DBW 6*, 123.

against a hostile world'.[224] The 'over against' relation, *gegenüber*, picks up the way that Bonhoeffer had taken exception to the language of *Identität* in the Finkenwalde materials, in which he spoke of Christ as the head 'over against' the church. Here it is the church as a whole set against the 'body of Christendom'.[225] The church carries out its role in part through preserving the people's historical legacy that runs through the Middle Ages and Reformation, even as its proper force is the proclamation of the risen, historical Jesus.

With the proclamation of Christ at the centre, the church shows itself an ally to the 'restraining force' in the preservation of 'elements of order'. Bonhoeffer's list reads as a set of Hegel's key themes: 'Right [*Recht*], truth, science [*Wissenschaft*], art, cultivation [*Bildung*], humanity, freedom, and patriotism'. The alliance comes about because, given the process of 'decay' he identified in the early 1940s, these elements 'after long wanderings, find their way back to their origin'.[226] Many of the terms that Hegel set as the preserve of philosophy, particularly *Recht* and *Bildung* in this current chapter, are claimed by Bonhoeffer to have originated in, and to be in a moment of return towards, the church.[227]

Bonhoeffer's strategy, in which he calls for terms that have become the preserve of philosophy to rediscover their bearings in the church, features elsewhere in his writing. As Eberhard Jüngel observes, with respect to 'death of God' language, a period of 'alienation' began with Hegel.[228] This was 'against Hegel's intention', Jüngel claims, but the migration of such language went from theology to philosophy and then came to be used in an anti-theological manner.[229] Bonhoeffer therefore 'prepared the way' for the return of such talk to its home in theology.[230] The drive for such a return would also be taken up by Barth, who argued that Hegel's rich theological basis was not too demanding for modern thought, but not demanding enough; it may well prove to have taken too little from theology.[231]

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[224] Though the world is noted as hostile here, it is referred to earlier as one of two 'authentic parts' to the *corpus christianum*. *DBWE 6*, 132, cf. 112; *DBW 6*, 123, cf. 102.

[225] The 'corpus expressions' are additions to the manuscript. They appear in the margin of this text and the issue is also highlighted in his working notes for the related manuscript 'Ethics as Formation', where he writes, 'Body of Christ, corpus Christi, not christianum, as starting point'. *Zettel* 44n23, cf. *DBW 6*, 101n29.

[226] *DBWE 6*, 132, alt.; *DBW 6*, 124.

[227] This claim includes marginal reference to Bonhoeffer's contemporaries' language of a 'Third / German humanism, Idealism'. *DBWE 6*, 118n68, cf. 106n15

[228] Eberhard Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, trans. Darrell Guder (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), 55.

[229] Jüngel, *Mystery*, 56.

[230] Jüngel, *Mystery*, 56.

[231] Barth, *Nineteenth-Century*, 414–15.

At the same time that Bonhoeffer reaches out to Hegel's terms, he maintains, as did Luther before him, that it is the church that truly discerns the right relation between church and state. He therefore calls back from Hegel the sense that the state is the one that serves as custodian of the distinction. Bonhoeffer adds that this alliance is not a bid for political power, but remains part of the church's mark of suffering, for its 'suffering is infinitely more dangerous to the spirit of destruction than the political power that it may still retain'.[232] This 'mark' comes in part because of the destruction of historical heritage in that day, but also because the church is to candidly bear the 'guilt', alongside the blessing, of its historical predecessors.[233]

Conclusion

It is not a question of whether Jesus' teaching is to be taken as revolutionary, for both Hegel and Bonhoeffer read the Sermon on the Mount as a breach of social orders. Moreover, both thinkers equivocate over the call to revolution in light of the terrorising outcomes of the French Revolution's quest for 'absolute freedom'. Nevertheless, their views on scripture and the demands of their respective situations lead them to very different views on the text's then-contemporary significance. As a university professor and civil servant, Hegel sought to establish revolutionary reform from within the Prussian state structure, a task he understood as the philosophical culmination of the political opportunity afforded by Napoleon's incursions. As with the abstract appeals to freedom and equality emanating from France, so Jesus' teachings provoked violent suppression before the emergence of a refined polity of freedom. Providing the political backgrounds to Hegel's Augsburg address, I have argued that Hegel did not merely uphold established order but sought to educate a reform-minded citizenry marked by critical reason.

A century later, Bonhoeffer left the civil service of a government that increasingly sought to absorb both the church and the university. Alternately resigning from the ministry and then having his teaching license revoked, he looked to Jesus' social teachings as the basis for a seminary community that could renew the distinction between church and state. In Bonhoeffer's ensuing acts of resistance, I have argued, his target was not a truly 'Hegelian' paradigm of the state, but a brutal, sub-rational Reich, the likes of which Hegel could not have foreseen. Making this distinction sets Bonhoeffer's central criticism into relief, namely, that Hegel was wrong to diminish confessional difference and to presume that the church could be assimilated into the 'body' of the state. He therefore identifies the problem of a 'docetic-Idealist ecclesiology' – a theory

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[232] *DBWE 6*, 132; *DBW 6*, 124.
[233] *DBWE 6*, 133; *DBW 6*, 124.

of the church for which Jesus has not truly become a human body, for it has no discernible political contours. In response, Bonhoeffer called the church to live as a polity of freedom in its own right, chiefly exhibiting that freedom by taking up the cross of the present. Having issued that call, he does not end with an account of sheer opposition; rather, he welcomes the discovery of an embattled alliance between church and remnant-state in the preservation of right. In Bonhoeffer's distinct Lutheran rendition, such alliance occurs through sharing the experience of suffering that has long marked the church.

Chapter Six

Volk, Race, and the Shapes of History

Church history is the hidden centre of world history. – Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*

A regular line of argument against Idealism is that it results in the subordination of ethnic and political difference. This charge is all the more urgent in the aftermath of the *Shoah* that irreparably marked Bonhoeffer's time.[1] Although Hegel's sociality of reason involves a process of 'self-emptying' towards mutual recognition, critics claim that this is not true socio-ethical encounter but the veiled work of a single, culturally prejudiced mind.[2] Wayne Floyd expresses similar concern, arguing that Bonhoeffer's use of dialectics bears comparison with Theodor Adorno's attempt to preserve 'otherness' in his own critical response to Hegel.

Scholarly treatments of both Hegel and Bonhoeffer must indeed reckon with the horrors of the *Shoah*. Moreover, the similarities between Adorno's philosophical criticism of Hegel and Bonhoeffer's work are well worth identifying. The purpose of the current project, however, is to seek a nuanced account of Hegel's thought vis-à-vis Bonhoeffer's own, and such later concerns can lead to the neglect of Hegel's criticism of 'one-sided' accounts, including his work to undermine nationalist expressions in his time. In this chapter, I therefore call attention to Hegel's claim that the state can forfeit its own 'principle' and so incur guilt in its treatment of foreigners – a notion worthy of comparison to Bonhoeffer's view that the state can 'self-negate'. Relatedly, I show that a strictly oppositional construal of the two figures limits investigation into problematic aspects of Bonhoeffer's thought, whether in his early claims to national expansionism or in his characterisations of Jewish difference.

While the previous chapter treated Hegel's reformist support for the Prussian polity of his own day, the current chapter turns to his attempt to think beyond his particular historical context. As part of his broader philosophical

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[1] The term *Shoah* is employed rather than the more familiar 'Holocaust', partly in order to avoid sacrificial or redemptive overtones.

[2] As one critic asks, 'Can it be that the underlying, unifying *one* of our monistic systems has been the avaricious, power-seeking, organizing, self-same self?' John Wild, 'Introduction', in Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority,* trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 13.

project, Hegel sought to trace a reciprocal relationship between the *Geister* of individuals and those of the *Völker* within a larger 'world-historical' movement. Understanding the background 'shapes of Geist' sets Bonhoeffer's ecclesiology into sharp relief as he speaks of the 'form of Christ' – a transnational confessing community. From the start, Bonhoeffer had been critical of accounts that rely on 'some *Geist* entity, called *Volksgeist*, that arises of its own natural strength from metaphysical depths'.[3] Moreover, Bonhoeffer's theme of 'revelation in hiddenness' was deepened by how he learned the importance of seeing history 'from below'. As a result, Bonhoeffer's language of the hidden centre, conditioned by a certain race-critical reception of Hegel, offers promise for challenging 'centrist' accounts of history, particularly those located around the North Atlantic.

In approaching a 'world-historical' account, it is worth reiterating the differences between Hegel's and Bonhoeffer's approaches. Hegel understood the role of the philosophical historian to be retrospective analysis. Although he wrote timely political essays and often made asides on contemporary events in the classroom, he attempted to separate his role as a lecturer from that of the political actor. Hegel's account of the 'cunning of reason' requires the scientific discipline of a university faculty that has no business with 'prophecy'. In contrast, Bonhoeffer is not primarily engaged in retrospective analysis, although he often comments on the effects of historical events, such as the 1914-1918 War, on national consciousness. As an ecclesio-political actor, he writes out of deliberation from roles that include Confessing Church minister and agent with the *Abwehr*. Moreover, while Hegel treats the church as an integrated element in the state body that is his primary object of concern, Bonhoeffer's invokes 'confession' towards a renewed ecumenical and transnational consensus.

A. From Thinking the Whole to the Racial Community

Hegel's claim that 'the true is the whole' is highlighted in Bonhoeffer's copy of the *Phenomenology*.[4] This is the phrase that Adorno would later invert to 'the whole is the false' as he challenges Hegel's legacy by linking claims of totality with anti-Semitism.[5] This first section traces the different trajectories in Hegel reception among which Bonhoeffer's account is located. I first follow a recent argument that seeks to differentiate Hegel from the neo-Hegelians of

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[3] *DBWE 1*, 103; *DBW 1*, 66.

[4] *NL-PhG*, 21.

[5] Theodor Adorno*, Minima Moralia*, 50; cited in Floyd, *Dialectics of Otherness*, 193–94. Floyd states that however much Adorno is still Hegelian, 'the genocide' as 'absolute integration' is burned into his mind. Floyd*, Dialectics of Otherness*, 268.

Bonhoeffer's time, showing how neo-Hegelians 'racialised' Hegel's *Geist* in a manner congruent with Third Reich policies. Such a trajectory is contrasted with another line of Hegel reception that was influential on Bonhoeffer's thought, namely, the race-critical perspective of W.E.B. Du Bois.

I. Hegel among the Neo-Hegelians?

Andreas Grossmann offers a telling survey of leading neo-Hegelian thinkers during the emergence of the Third Reich. Grossmann dates the beginning of the neo-Hegelian period to a 1910 speech by Wilhelm Windelband in Heidelberg that calling for development from neo-Kantianism.[6] The 1920s showed a renewed interest in Hegel, appealing to holistic vision and a unity of philosophy and life.[7] The movement should be examined against the backdrop of legal and constitutional battles during the Weimar years, during which the desire for national unity was acute and led to an 'ideologisation of jurisprudence'.[8] Out of this time, lawyers who were educated in legal philosophy and legal history, such as Karl Larenz and Gerhard Dulckeit, sought out Hegel's resources.[9]

Grossmann observes that the 'Hegel' of these neo-Hegelians is 'characterised by anti-liberalism and anti-individualism', a figure constructed to justify the Third Reich after 1933.[10] In particular, Karl Larenz appropriates the notion of *Volksgeist*, transforming the term that previously referred to a people's distinctive culture into 'an ideology permeated by racist thought, a requirement, so to speak, to include exclusion (which meant concretely: of the Jews) in its own definition'.[11] In Larenz's writings, Jews, as they did not have German blood and so were not members of the *Volk*, were not members of the community under law. While they would have a qualified legal status, they were to be kept from certain positions in the legal process, such as that of a judge or jury member.[12] Larenz claims that 'objective *Geist*', the term Bonhoeffer appropriates in his first dissertation, is held by the *völkisch* community for which 'spirit and blood were to merge in a single entity'.[13] Exclusion along 'bloodlines' was accompanied by reinterpretations of the legal status of each member of the

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[6] Grossmann, 'German Neo-Hegelianism', 234.

[7] Works by Heinrich Levy and Hermann Glockner develop the contours of this movement, with the latter providing its name. Grossmann, 'German Neo-Hegelianism', 234.

[8] This phrase comes from Grossmann, 'German Neo-Hegelianism', 253n24.

[9] Grossmann, 'German Neo-Hegelianism', 235.

[10] Grossmann, 'German Neo-Hegelianism', 244.

[11] He points out that this particular use of the term comes largely from J.G. Herder via Montesquieu, rather than directly from Hegel. Grossmann, 'German Neo-Hegelianism', 244.

[12] Grossmann, 'German Neo-Hegelianism', 247.

[13] Grossmann, 'German Neo-Hegelianism', 244. Cf. Larenz, 'Die Aufgabe der Rechtsphilosophie', 224.

Volk, with individual sacrifice necessary for the sake of the whole.[14] Such accounts provide ample material for Popper's account of the transmutation of Hegel's *Geist* into blood in modern 'racialism'.[15]

Writing on legal developments in that era, Carl Schmitt claims that, on the day of Hitler's ascent to power in 1933, 'Hegel, so to speak, died'.[16] Schmitt's statement is a criticism of Hegel, as he suggests that the opposition formerly set between civil society and state has become obsolete in light of the new arrangement of 'state, movement, and people'. In subsequent writings, Schmitt claims that the notion of 'concrete orders' can be attributed to Hegel. The primary order is unsurprising: 'Hegel's state is the concrete order of all orders, the institution among all institutions'.[17] In spite of such ready usage of Hegel's thought, Schmitt admitted in 1936 that the struggle for Hegel continued: it was uncertain 'whether the living Hegel could be found today in Rome, in Berlin, or even in Moscow'.[18]

The assumption of a trajectory between Hegel's account of the Idea and National Socialist ideology was explicitly contested in Bonhoeffer's time. Herbert Marcuse challenged the 'Hegel to Hitler' line in the 1941 publication *Reason and Revolution*, arguing that it is precisely the demotion of Hegel's critical reason that allowed National Socialism to come into its own. Marcuse states that Hegel's dynamic, rational conception of society stood in contrast to the Nazi conception of the *Volk* as 'a natural reality bound together by "blood and soil" and subject to no rational norms or values'.[19] He therefore cites numerous National Socialist assaults on Hegel's political theory, adopting Schmitt's dictum of Hegel's death.[20]

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[14] Every member's tiered position, or *Gliedstellung*, sets one in a set of social obligations, such as family or class, in which obligations come prior to rights and the language of individual sacrifice is understood as necessary. Grossmann, 'German Neo-Hegelianism', 247–8.

[15] Popper, *Open Society*, 73–75.

[16] Carl Schmitt, *Staat, Bewegung, Volk* (Hamburg, 1933), 32.

[17] Carl Schmitt, *Über die drei Arten des rechtswissenschaftlichen Denkens* (Hamburg: Henseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1934; second edition, Berlin, 1993), 39; cited in Grossmann, 'German Neo-Hegelianism', 256n62.

[18] Carl Schmitt, 'Faschistische und national-sozialistische Rechtswissenschaft', in *Deutsche Juristenzeitung* 41 (1936), 619–20; cited in Grossmann, 'German Neo-Hegelianism', 256n62.

[19] Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory* (1941), Second Edition (London: Routledge, 1955), 413.

[20] Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, 419.

II. Race-Critical Reception: The Work of W.E.B. Du Bois

It would have been difficult for Bonhoeffer to articulate 'concrete sociality' while avoiding the pitfalls of contemporary neo-Hegelians.[21] He did not only know the German academic context, however, and his intercultural exchanges were significant to his critical response to neo-Hegelianism. This subsection traces an often unacknowledged critical line of Hegel reception that Bonhoeffer learned during his period of study in America, namely, the writings of W.E.B. Du Bois.[22] Du Bois offers Bonhoeffer a unique critical appropriation of Hegel, showing an alternate line of reception to the racialising dynamic of German neo-Hegelians.[23]

Hegel functioned as a resource and critical foil for Du Bois in two primary ways, both of which were shaped by Du Bois' exchange studies at the University of Berlin from 1892–94.[24] First, Du Bois' 1903 *The Souls of Black Folk*, which was on Bonhoeffer's course list at Union Theological Seminary, makes clear his appropriation of Hegel's thought.[25] The first essay, titled 'Of Our Spiritual Strivings', contains Du Bois' well-known depiction of 'double-consciousness', one of the most widely cited in African-American letters: 'One ever feels his two-ness – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body'.[26] Among the

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[21] In Floyd's words, such an articulation had to be carried out 'without playing into the hands of one of two camps, either one of the varieties of post-Hegelian "positivism" or the prevalent anti-critical, if not downright anti-rational, neo-Romantic ethos of Germany' between the wars. See Floyd, *Dialectics of Otherness*, 115–16.

[22] This subsection presents material that appeared in an earlier form as David Robinson, 'Confessing Race: Toward a Global Ecclesiology after Bonhoeffer and Du Bois'. *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 36, no. 2 (Fall / Winter 2016): 121–39. The term 'race' is used advisedly, as the concept has been construed in very different ways. Du Bois' own list of races changed over time, and he would easily slip between talk of 'race' and talk of 'nation'. See Appiah, *Lines of Descent*, 83–93.

[23] This background also complicates the claim that Bonhoeffer was oblivious to an 'unmasking' type of Marxist criticism, or that his Hegel is 'pre-Marx'. See Floyd, *Dialectics of Otherness*, 116, 269. Floyd works primarily with *Act and Being* in that book, so his scope understandably excludes Bonhoeffer's later works and intercultural exchanges.

[24] Du Bois' exchange period in Berlin then marked a time of 'personal liberation' from the confines of racialising categories, and he eagerly inhabited his role as a member of the *Bildungsbürgertum*. Nevertheless, Du Bois witnessed both anti-Semitism and claims to the inferiority of 'mulattoes' by racial Romanticist Heinrich von Treitschke – a figure who had a complex appeal for Du Bois. Most importantly, Du Bois found debates over the 'Social Question' by the Historical School a helpful analogue to his own scientific study of the 'Negro question past and present'. See Appiah, *Lines*, 27–43.

[25] Appiah claims that Du Bois is 'showing his readers the *Geister*…of a black *Volk*'. Though the focus of this exposition is on Herder's legacy, Appiah makes note of Hegel at several points. Appiah, *Lines*, 45–47.

[26] W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* [1903] (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2003), 9.

many allusions contained in this passage, Du Bois draws on Hegel's *Phenomenology* to express dissatisfaction with the internalised division exposed by the color-line.[27] Unsatisfied with one-sided solutions, Du Bois holds a 'longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost'. He then speaks of the anticipated end of his striving: 'to be a co-worker in the kingdom of culture' in terms that echo Hegel's own emphasis on common 'ethical life', *Sittlichkeit*.[28] In short, Du Bois moves from a fixed state of division towards a dynamic pair with both history and future, driving towards reconciliation.

Second, Du Bois appropriated the concept, shared with Hegel, of the unique 'political expressivism' of each *Volk*. This entails a collective 'spirit' that seeks reflection, articulation, and nourishment in social institutions.[29] Such commitment to a particular *Volk* within the larger nation helps to explain why Du Bois cannot be easily plotted among other Hegel-inspired American philosophers from the period. In Shamoon Zamir's words, Du Bois refuses 'to subsume the negative particularity of African-American experience into historicist teleologies', particularly those that claim American exceptionalism.[30] Thus, during Du Bois' student days he adopted voluntary segregation over and against the 'recognition', a key term from Hegel's social ethic, afforded by white culture at the time.[31] Although Du Bois resisted racialising political settlements, he worked tirelessly for a more thoroughgoing 'recognition'. In one example that is particularly relevant to Bonhoeffer's life, Du Bois attended the 1919 Versailles Peace Conference along with representatives of the NAACP to advocate on behalf of people of colour.[32] The attempt to meet the American president was denied, and the act of advocacy is rarely mentioned in connection to the Treaty, at least relative to the resentment and eventual expansionist sentiment expressed by Germans such as Bonhoeffer.

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[27] Shamoon Zamir notes several parallels between 'Strivings' and the *Phenomenology*, claiming that Du Bois makes several creative adaptations – such as having a veil descend rather than lift. Zamir traces how Du Bois' studies at Harvard gave him significant exposure to Idealist philosophy, including a study of Hegel's *Phenomenology* with George Santayana. See Shamoon Zamir, *Dark Voices: W.E.B. Du Bois and American Thought, 1888–1903* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 113–15.

[28] Du Bois, *Souls*, 9–10.

[29] Robert Gooding-Williams, *In the Shadow of Du Bois: Afro-Modern Political Thought in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 4, 140.

[30] This observation comes in a chapter comparing Du Bois with Dewey, Royce, and the St. Louis School. Zamir, *Dark Voices*, 126, cf. 119–33.

[31] Du Bois reflects that 'to a white Harvard student of my day, a Negro student who did not seek recognition was trying to be more than a Negro'. *Autobiography*, 85–86.

[32] Williams, *Black Jesus*, 54–55.

Du Bois' writings influenced Bonhoeffer's understanding of racial segregation during Bonhoeffer's exchange studies in New York in 1930–31.[33] This influence can be seen in two extant writings. First, in a church report at the end of his Union year, Bonhoeffer writes that in Harlem 'one gets to see something of the real face of America, something that is hidden behind the veil of words in the American constitution saying that "all men are created equal"'.[34] The veil is one evocative image drawn from Du Bois' *Souls*. Second, Bonhoeffer's 1939 retrospective adopts a related image from the same work, placing 'the color-line' in English in parentheses as a short hand for the 'segregation of races'.[35] Unfortunately, further elaboration is not available as Bonhoeffer's essay on African American literature from this year has been lost.[36] Given this gap in documentary evidence, Reggie Williams does significant work to illustrate Bonhoeffer's source materials.[37]

Williams makes a convincing case that Du Bois and other African American writers are crucial for Bonhoeffer's critical perspective on racialising tendencies in Germany. Nevertheless, Williams tends to read Bonhoeffer's Harlem influences over and against a monolithic German intellectual background. I therefore call attention to Du Bois' own exchange period in Germany in order to depict something of the mutuality Bonhoeffer would later claim between nations in the task of 'confession'. In particular, Du Bois' appropriation of Hegel shows that a Hegelian legacy cannot be relegated to the German neo-Hegelians whose influence was seen in the laws against which Bonhoeffer would write. At the very least, Du Bois suggests a counter-reading to the view that Hegel's thought leads to the subordination of difference.[38]

Du Bois' writings would have had a certain congeniality for Bonhoeffer insofar as they drew on a similar academic and cultural milieu. Beyond references to Weber or Hegel, however, Du Bois' account of black folk expression

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[33] Bonhoeffer encountered Du Bois' writings in a Union course on 'Ethical Viewpoints in Modern Literature' with Reinhold Niebuhr and Harry Ward. Du Bois' 1903 *The Souls of Black Folk* was at the top of the course reading list. In course notes, Bonhoeffer comments on W.E.B. Du Bois' criticism of Booker T. Washington, judging that Washington tends 'to agree with the statement of the inferiority of the black race' while approving Du Bois as 'more race-proud!' *DBWE 10*, 421; *DBW 10*, 392.

[34] *DBWE 10*, 321; *DBW 10*, 282.

[35] *DBWE 15*, 440; *DBW 15*, 433.

[36] The letter that seeks to retrieve the essay is printed in *DBWE 12*, 95; *DBW 12,* 51.

[37] Williams, *Black Jesus*, 75.

[38] Other race-critical receptions involve the qualified use of Hegel as a means to criticising totalising race constructions. For example, Frantz Fanon speaks of the elusive goal of mutual '*reconnaissance*', using Hegel's master–slave dialectic to argue for the necessity of true struggle in order to transcend merely 'white freedom and white justice'. Fanon sees America to afford such open conflict, in contrast to the indifference and paternalism characteristic of the French. See his subsection 'Le Nègre et Hegel' in *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1952), 195–200.

was articulated in genres that resonated with Bonhoeffer's own attempt to re-claim the language of ecclesial 'confession': 'sorrow songs', credal statement, and figural accounts of Christ.[39] While these genres might be classified as 'rep-resentational' thought by Hegel, their rooting in a particular *Volk* and their claim to an irreducible aesthetic form set them alongside Bonhoeffer's chal-lenge to the primacy of conceptual thought.

Du Bois' parable 'Jesus Christ in Texas' is a particularly apt segue to Bon-hoeffer's homeland writings, as it illustrates the way that black and Jewish persons have been caught up together before the 'practiced eyes' of racism.[40] The connection helps to convey how Bonhoeffer is engaged in a similar critical project insofar as he resolutely depicted a Jewish, as opposed to an Aryan, Christ. That black and Jewish struggles are linked in Bonhoeffer's mind seems evident in his later reference to the black church under the *Rassenfrage*, the 'race question', echoing the *Judenfrage* about which he wrote in 1933.[41] The next section therefore turns to both Hegel's and Bonhoeffer's critical responses to the state's treatment of minoritised persons, particularly the Jews.

B. State Responsibility Before the Jewish People

This section situates Bonhoeffer's arguments over the so-called 'Jewish ques-tion' against the background of Hegel's views on Jewish 'emancipation' in early nineteenth-century Prussia. For all their circumstantial differences, both figures turn the 'Jewish question' into an interrogation of the state's own char-acter while criticising its exclusionary impulse. First, I show that while Hegel holds a supersessionist view of Judaism as a religion, he goes so far as to claim that the state can incur guilt by neglecting the claim that Jews, *qua* human be-ings, have on civil rights. Second, I trace Bonhoeffer's forceful argument for the state's purpose in preserving the rights of Jewish persons, even as he main-tains theological ambivalence about Jewish 'estrangement' among the nations.

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[39] To take one example from this list, Du Bois presents the 'sorrow songs' as the irre-placeable folksong, the *Volksdichtung* of Afro-America, showing his Herderian tendency. Appiah, *Lines*, 46–47.

[40] The short story sets the incarceration of a black man alongside the visit of an evidently Jewish stranger. In light of the narrow categories of the region, the stranger is taken as 'a mulatto, surely, even if he did not own the Negro blood, their practiced eyes knew it'. When the black man seeks to escape and is subsequently lynched, the shadowed form strung from the tree is backlit by a great burning cross on which hangs the enigmatic stranger, who prom-ises the lynched man he will join him in paradise. W.E.B. Du Bois, 'Jesus Christ in Texas', in *Darkwater: Voices from within the Veil* [1920] (New York: Dover, 1999), 72–77.

[41] This habit of framing another person or race as a question calls to mind Du Bois' demurral at the constructs of others: 'To the real question, How does it feel to be a problem? I answer seldom a word.' Du Bois, *Souls*, 8.

I argue that the primary difference between them is not so much about whether the state should uphold the rights of Jewish persons, but about the strong role Bonhoeffer accords to the church in ensuring that it does so.

I. Hegel on Supersession and Civil Rights

Hegel has been rightly criticised for his supersessionist view of Judaism. As Yirmiyahu Yovel states, Hegel worked with a theological abstraction and so showed himself to be a historical philosopher cut off from the real history of postbiblical Judaism.[42] Such abstraction was, in the words of Amy Newman, rooted in Hegel's view that Christ's coming as a Jew entailed that universal Christianity could 'effectively and conclusively subvert particularistic Judaism'.[43] This is partly why Hegel diverges from other contemporary portrayals of Judaism that employ images of immortality, such as mummification.[44] Newman ends her contextualisation of Hegel's account, set within an overarching German Protestant discourse on the 'death of Judaism' that includes infamous statements by Schleiermacher and Kant, with a chilling line about the 'death event' of Judaism 'requiring only the formulation of effective strategies to this end'.[45] She thereby points to the complicity of a long tradition of Christian discourse in the violence perpetrated against the Jewish people, particularly in the *Shoah*.

Hegel indeed saw Christianity as a 'sublation' of Judaism, although it is questionable whether his criticism of the religion was primarily about its interrelation with national particularity.[46] His criticism appears to focus on an alleged 'abstraction' between divine purpose and communal reason. In Hegel's portrayal of Judaism, commandments 'appear only as something given by God, as something prescribed and immutable, something eternally and firmly posited'.[47] Although he concedes that Judaism carries with itself the drive to know wisdom, such that cultic activities would be seen as 'rational' and so connected

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[42] Yirmiyahu Yovel, *Dark Riddle: Hegel, Nietzsche, and the Jews* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 89.

[43] Amy Newman, 'The Death of Judaism in German Protestant Thought from Luther to Hegel', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* LXI, no. 3 (1993), 475.

[44] The longstanding image of the Jewish people as a mummy is contextualised within the Egyptian craze in Berlin in the 1820s. See Newman, 'Death of Judaism', 475–79.

[45] Newman, 'Death of Judaism', 480.

[46] On the one hand, Hegel points out that 'the Jewish God is only a national God, has restricted himself to this nation'. This follows Hegel's logic of divine movement, that the sublime God is fated to, in Taylor's paraphrase, 'enter into the rawest particular'. On the other hand, particularism is not the ultimate concern for Hegel, who admits both that Judaism speaks of an expanding knowledge of God and that Christianity has its own national expressions. See *LPR II*, 371–73; *VPR II*, 575–77.

[47] *LPR II*, 374; *VPR II*, 578.

to *Sittlichkeit*, he argues that such wisdom is 'undeveloped and does not penetrate into feeling'.[48] As a result of such abstraction, Hegel claims that the Jewish people's political constitution is superseded by the later Protestant church from which rational ethical life emerges in its many forms.

Nevertheless, Hegel held his supersessionist view of the religion alongside considerable support for Jewish civil rights in the Prussian context. In §209 of *Philosophy of Right* he states the goal of his work as a professor with these well-known words:

> It is part of education [*Bildung*], of *thinking* as the consciousness of the individual in the form of universality, that I am apprehended as a *universal* person in which [respect] *all* are identical. A *human being counts as such because he is a human being*, not because he is a Jew, Catholic, Protestant, German, Italian, etc.[49]

The combination of a supersessionist view of religion and advocacy for universal rights shows Hegel's philosophy to be conditioned by an Enlightenment account of recognition beyond religious and ethnic identifications.[50] The latter commitment was not to be taken for granted. As Shlomo Avineri observes, other nineteenth-century thinkers who showed affinity with Hegel's work opposed Jewish emancipation precisely because of their negative view of Judaism.[51] Expansive as Hegel's claim would appear, then, it was vulnerable to those who claimed that Jews, because of their religion or lack of 'education', remained incapable of participating in civil life.[52] Hegel therefore returns to the subject of Jewish rights in an extended note to §270.

Hegel's note on religious minorities is concerned with the state's response to anomalous cases: those groups that, because of their religious and, at times, ethnic commitments would exempt themselves from certain duties. He begins by discussing Quakers and Anabaptists, who decline military service. Hegel says that the state can 'tolerate' such dissent, foregoing the right it has to claim defence against its enemies, if it otherwise exists in a position of strength. He then acknowledges that it would similarly be 'contrary to formal right' to grant civil rights to the Jews as they are not only members of a particular religious group but also belonged to a 'foreign people [*Volk*]'.[53] The reference to formal

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[48] *LPR II*, 374–75; *VPR II*, 578.

[49] *PR*, §209.

[50] Relatedly, Yovel remarks that although Hegel had rejected an Enlightenment criticism of religion, he shows himself conditioned by that very stance in his approach to Judaism. See Yovel, *Dark Riddle*, 82.

[51] Avineri contrasts Hegel's view with that of the young Hegelian Bruno Bauer, who opposed emancipation partly because Jews maintained their religion. See Shlomo Avineri, 'A Note on Hegel's View of Jewish Emancipation', *Jewish Social Studies* 25, no. 2 (April 1963), 145–47.

[52] This position is described in Avineri, 'Jewish Emancipation', 146–47.

[53] *PR*, §270, Hegel's note.

right likely picks up on the earlier reference to the state's own 'strict rights' to demand full allegiance, as expressed through military service.

On the question of this second anomalous group, which belongs to another religion *and* 'people', Hegel challenges the 'fierce outcry raised against the Jews'. Echoing the language of §209 cited earlier, he states that the problem with judgements on the basis of these factors 'ignores the fact that they are, above all, *humans*'.[54] Humanity, Hegel continues, is not 'a mere superficial, abstract quality' but rather the basis for the 'feeling of oneself as counting in civil society as a person with rights'.[55] In contrast to those who argued that Jews should not be granted such recognition on account of their foreignness, Hegel claims that it is within the state's power to evoke that feeling which inheres in Jewish persons *qua* human beings.

Hegel has begun to turn the question of the Jews into an enquiry about the state's own identity. He then asserts that if the state had not bestowed rights, so avoiding or even perpetuating this people's foreignness, then the lack of recognition would run both ways:

the Jews would have remained in that isolation [*Trennung*] with which they have been re- proached, and this would rightly have brought blame [*Schuld*] and reproach [*Vorwurf*] upon the state which excluded them; for the state would thereby have failed to recognize its own principle as an objective institution with power of its own.[56]

Remarkably, Hegel speaks of the state incurring 'reproach', mirroring the re- proach that had been visited on the Jews in their isolation. In effect, the afore- mentioned 'outcry' is being turned against the state that performs the exclu- sion. Hegel then acknowledges that although the call to exclude Jews, as both religious and ethnic foreigners, 'claimed to be based on the highest right, it has proved in practice to be the height of folly'.[57] He therefore ends with support for the government policy in force at the time of his writing.

The background of the Prussian government policy that Hegel deems 'wise and dignified' reveals the political ambiguities involved in claiming the rights of Jews *qua* human beings. A proposal initiated in 1808 on the legal status of Jews in Prussia sought to make progress towards citizenship rights for influen- tial Jews, a trajectory that sought to avoid formation of a 'state within a state'.[58] Following on from this initiative, the 1812 Edict recognised Jews who were

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[54] *PR*, §270 (Knox, alt.), Hegel's note.

[55] *PR*, §270 (Knox), Hegel's note.

[56] *PR*, §270 (Knox), Hegel's note.

[57] *PR*, §270, Hegel's note. I have chosen the Nisbet translation here to further indicate Hegel's polemic reversals: the supposedly highest right is, in practice, the height of folly.

[58] The proposal was written by State Minister Friedrich Leopold von Schrötter. Different government departments held a range of opinion on Schrötter's reform-oriented work, as traced in Michael Meyer, *German-Jewish History in Modern Times, Volume 2: Emancipa- tion and Acculturation 1780–1871* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1997), 24– 26.

legally resident as 'native residents and Prussian citizens', entailing civil rights on the fulfilment of certain requirements in that legal context.[59] The Edict proposal set forth by State Chancellor Karl August von Hardenberg had included clearer steps towards Jewish involvement in state offices and the military, but alterations by the King intimated a series of deferrals to come.[60] In any case, the 1812 Edict became the basis for Hardenberg and Humboldt's advocacy for uniform emancipatory laws across the German Confederation at the 1815 Congress of Vienna. Their efforts were not successful, however, and Jewish civil status remained dependent on the regulation of individual German states, many of which sought to roll back freedoms gained during French occupation.[61] As Jews could not move freely between German states, they could not always act to improve their situation.

Emancipation was often entangled with judgement over Jews' level of 'cultivation'. This malleable criterion was shown in the intra-governmental debates that lay behind Prussia's relatively more progressive Edict. Although Humboldt argued that the granting of rights should not be based on pre-existing 'regeneration', his view did not prevail. Rather, as David Sorkin observes, 'the intellectuals who formulated the ideology of emancipation between 1806 and 1830 enunciated the doctrine of the tutelary state and argued for emancipation on the basis of regeneration'.[62] This argument was even picked up by many among the Jewish educated bourgeoisie, the *Gebildeten*.[63] Because this line of argument met with a variety of responses, the majority of the Jewish educated class did not assimilate, i.e. pursue intermarriage, conversion, or the severance of ties with the Jewish community, and so came to form a unique German-Jewish subculture.[64]

In light of this context, it is significant that Hegel's treatment of civil rights emphasises the fellow humanity of Jews rather than the demonstrated level of 'cultivation' achieved by some. In this respect, he remains closer to Humboldt's position. Such likeness is further shown by the way in which Hegel's views on Jewish inclusion were expressed in the academic context, particularly

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[59] The requirements involved taking on official family names, as well as adopting certain linguistic and script conventions. Meyer, *German-Jewish History*, 27.

[60] See Meyer, *German-Jewish History*, 26–27.

[61] Meyer, *German-Jewish History*, 28.

[62] David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry 1780–1840* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 32.

[63] Moses Mendelssohn's earlier case for inclusion on the basis of natural rights remained an anomaly among Jewish arguments. Sorkin, *Transformation*, 32.

[64] Sorkin, *Transformation*, 4–7.

his advocacy for the inclusion of Jewish students against strains of nationalism and anti-Semitism.[65]

In summary, Hegel's supersessionist criticism of the religion of Judaism is held together with an argument against the exclusion of Jews from civil society because of religious or ethnic identity. While Hegel is upholding an incomplete, bureaucratised *status quo* – this is hardly Bonhoeffer's call for the church to 'seize the wheel' of the state that fails to grant due rights – he offers a powerful critical vantage point, namely, that the state which merely reinforces the isolation of foreigners can thereby show itself estranged from its own basic principle.

On the question of state responsibility toward the Jewish people, then, Hegel's political philosophy proves difficult to appropriate for the exclusionary policies of later National Socialism. The argument against a 'Hegel to Hitler' trajectory is taken up by T.M. Knox, who cites Hegel's claim that Jews are to be counted as human beings with rights rather than subject to discrimination on account of religion or 'race'.[66] Later National Socialist policies may claim the 'highest right' of state prerogative but, following Hegel's logic, they deserve utter reproach.

II. Bonhoeffer on the Church's Response to State 'Self-Negation'

Bonhoeffer was confronted with the 'Jewish question' largely because of legal developments that tested the boundary between state and church. The 'Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service' of April 7, 1933 sparked widespread church deliberation about the status of its ministers and members of Jewish descent. In particular, the 'Aryan paragraph' led the *Deutsche Evangelische Kirche* (DEK) to consider the removal of Jewish pastors from office, even questioning whether Jewish persons would remain members of the church. The universities were involved in the debate, with the theological faculty at Erlangen issuing an expert opinion.

Bonhoeffer's well-known essay, 'The Church and the Jewish Question', shows a willingness to leave the state to its own task, although he then brings

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[65] Pinkard recounts how Hegel fell out with J.F. Fries over Fries' 1816 pamphlet attacking 'Jewishness'. It is also worth noting Hegel's support of his student and friend Eduard Gans in the midst of anti-Jewish sentiment in the academy. Pinkard, *Hegel*, 396–97, 530–37. Avineri traces the role played by Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* lectures in the argument for the inclusion of Jews in university fraternities, by tracing the position of Hegel's student Friedrich Wilhelm Carové. Avineri, 'Jewish Emancipation', 148–51.

[66] The textual warrant is precisely the note to §270 in *Philosophy of Right*, for which Knox served as a leading translator. See T.M. Knox 'Hegel and Prussianism', in *Hegel's Political Philosophy*, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York, NY: Atherton Press, 1970), 27–8.

that task under scrutiny with a robust 'two-kingdoms' doctrine.[67] Bonhoeffer writes that '[w]ithout doubt one of the historical problems that must be dealt with by our state is the *Judenfrage*, and without doubt the state is entitled to strike new paths in doing so'.[68] These new paths occur on the church's watch, however, for 'the church alone knows what history is and what the state is', *pace* the university's interpretive seat.[69] Bonhoeffer then argues that the path indicated by the infamous 1933 law shows the state endangering its own 'character as state [*Staatlichkeit*]'.[70]

Calling the state's integrity into question leads to Bonhoeffer's controversial claim about times in which the church might have to intervene directly in state affairs. In his powerful image, the church may be called 'not just to bind up the wounds of the victims beneath the wheel but to seize the wheel itself'.[71] He explains this by observing that the state can fail both by providing too much law and order, e.g. intervening in church affairs, and by providing too little law and order, e.g. depriving citizens of their rights. The combined misprision leads to a two-fold result: 'the church would find itself in a *statu confessionis,* and the state would find itself in the act of self-negation [*Selbstverneinung*]'.[72] This is the paradoxical expression of the church's 'ultimate recognition' of the state, by which it opposes the state precisely in its calling to preserve it.

Bonhoeffer's shift to the church's knowing has a troubling aspect, for he largely accepts the construction of 'the Jews' as a social problem.[73] He does try to shift the discourse, however, arguing that for the church Jewishness should not be considered a 'racial concept' so much as a religious one.[74] Bonhoeffer therefore explicitly resists the prioritisation, by theologians such as Paul Althaus, of an order of race.[75] In his 'Theses on the Aryan Paragraph in the Church',[76] Bonhoeffer states that 'the church is not a community of people

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[67] See Michael P. DeJonge, 'Bonhoeffer's Two-Kingdoms Thinking in "The Church and the Jewish Question"', in *Christ, Church and World,* ed. Michael Mawson and Philip Ziegler (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 141–60.

[68] *DBWE* 12, 363; *DBW 12*, 350.

[69] *DBWE 12*, 363; *DBW 12*, 350.

[70] *DBWE 12*, 364; *DBW 12*, 351–52.

[71] *DBWE 12*, 365; *DBW 12*, 353.

[72] *DBWE 12*, 366; *DBW 12*, 354.

[73] See Stephen Haynes, *The Bonhoeffer Legacy: Post-Holocaust Perspectives* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 65–66.

[74] Bonhoeffer understands the discourse as a racialising one, later arguing against churches erecting a 'racial law' for membership. *DBWE 12*, 368; *DBW 12*, 356.

[75] For a fuller comparison between Althaus and Bonhoeffer on this theme, see David Robinson and Ryan Tafilowski, 'Conflict and Concession: Nationality in the Pastorate for Bonhoeffer and Althaus', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 70, 2 (May 2017): 127–46. The ensuing subsection presents revised material from that essay.

[76] These were written by the end of August 1933, shortly after the August version of the Bethel Confession. See *DBWE* 12, 425n1.

who are all the same but precisely one of people foreign to one another who are called by God's Word. The *Volk* of God is an order over and above all other orders'.[77] The act of baptism, a constitutive part of the Word in Lutheran tradition, inaugurates this order, binding members with 'indissoluble ties'.[78] These ties appears stronger than those that bound each *Volk* together; in the Berlin theses, water proves thicker than blood.[79]

Bonhoeffer's reasoning, framed by the conviction of a 'state of confession', shows that the church can also forfeit its calling. The logic of exclusion derived from the Aryan paragraph has the consequence of vocational self-negation: sacrificing a single member, 'the church would no longer be the church'. Insofar as the civil restrictions of the Aryan Paragraph are adopted by the church, Bonhoeffer argues that the remaining pastors 'should prefer to stand by those with lesser rights rather than to benefit from the privileged status in the church. They must see their own true service, which they can still perform for their church, in resigning from this *office as pastor as a privilege*'.[80]

While Bonhoeffer's criticism of legal change in 1933 is promising, his shift to the 'religious' concept retains a problematic, long-standing ambivalence about the ongoing role of the Jewish *Volk*. He states that '[t]he church of Christ has never lost sight of the thought that the "chosen people", which hung the Redeemer of the world on the cross, must endure the curse of its action in a long suffering-history [*Leidengeschichte*]'.[81] No state can deal with the Jews entirely, he claims, because of this wandering in salvation history; homecoming only occurs through conversion in this narrative.[82] He also maintains, in the course of argumentation, the depiction of Judaism as a legalistic, externalised form of religion.[83]

C. The Limits of *Völkisch* Thinking

This section begins with Hegel's criticism of nationalist thinking among contemporaries and, relatedly, the constraints he puts on his own world-historical

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[77] *DBWE 12*, 426; *DBW 12*, 410.

[78] *DBWE 12*, 427; *DBW 12*, 411.

[79] The phrase comes from Jana Marguerite Bennett's *Water is Thicker than Blood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[80] *DBWE 10*, 430–431 alt.; *DBW 10*, 414. Bethge refers to this argument as characteristic of Bonhoeffer's claim to a 'fatal privilege'. Bethge, *Bonhoeffer*, 305.

[81] *DBWE 12*, 367 alt.; *DBW 12*, 355.

[82] *DBWE 12*, 367; *DBW 12*, 355.

[83] He argues that if the churches were to erect a 'racial law' for membership, the radical implementation of the Aryan Paragraph, they would show themselves to be churches of the 'Jewish Christian type'. *DBWE 12*, 369; *DBW 12*, 357. This line of argumentation carries through several essays.

account. I then show Bonhoeffer's formative experience with 'revelatory community' at the intersection of Africa and America, observing that he writes from a context that Hegel explicitly declined to predict. Finally, I show how Bonhoeffer seeks to transcend national limits by speaking of a form of catholicity that draws together both ecclesial 'multiplicity' and 'unity' insofar as national histories have determined them. Although this shows his difference from Hegel's assimilation of the church into the realised Prussian state, Bonhoeffer's challenge to one-sided nationalist thinking employs a dialectic mode of thinking similar to Hegel's own.

I. Beyond Hegel's Germany: Dark Continent, Future Land

Hegel sees the German cultural context, as shaped by the arrival of Christianity, to have a focal position in the movement of *Geist* between 'world-historical realms'.[84] Hegel lists several 'worldly' consequences of the arrival of Christianity in the Roman world and its subsequent development of doctrine for the life of the state. The first is that freedom has been actualised for human beings as such, regardless of ethnic or religious identities, entailing the abolition of slavery.[85] There is also a new valuation of individual inwardness as well as state autonomy.[86] Hegel's subsequent reference to the 'Germanic' [*germanisch*] incorporates a broad range of European peoples, although his emphasis on the Lutheran Reformation and Teutonic character lead him to prize 'Germany proper [*das eigentliche Deutschland*]'.[87]

Hegel's particular form of 'centricity' involves dealing with the national limitations that make up the philosopher's temporal location. In *Philosophy of Right*, he states that 'it is just as absurd to fancy that a philosophy can transcend its contemporary world as it is to fancy that an individual can overleap his own age'.[88] In contrast to Kant, categories of thought are not fixed and eternal; for Hegel there are changing historical preconditions of knowing.[89] Nevertheless, this is to be matched with the notion that philosophy, in apprehending the 'concept', is the 'supreme blossom' of this entire shape of history.[90] Truth is seen as neither eternal nor historical – a false dichotomy for Hegel, who articulates them as inseparable.[91] As with many of Hegel's expansive claims to unity, this

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[84] This is stated briefly in the conclusion to *PR* and developed through his lecture courses in the 1820s. Hegel's well-known scheme shows a broad movement from the Oriental to the Greek, the Roman, and, finally, the Germanic realm.

[85] *LPWH I*, 457.

[86] *LPWH I*, 457–59.

[87] Wood makes this observation in *PR* 479–80n2.

[88] Hegel, 'Preface', *PR* (Knox), 15.

[89] The comparison is made in Houlgate, *Hegel*, 6.

[90] Houlgate, *Hegel*, 9.

[91] Houlgate, *Hegel*, 16–17.

one has provoked a good deal of debate, particularly over how much Hegel acknowledged the national and temporal limitations of his own thinking.

Hegel's multi-faceted notion of *Geist* involves a reciprocal relation between an individual and her people. This is shown in Hegel's admiration for the Greek city-state, which was seen as a harmonious whole antecedent to fragmented modern societies. Hegel's early essays on Christianity make this early appreciation clear as he opines on the beauty of a people related in love. His early expressivist statements also show how linguistic, even rational, constructions are always those of a particular *Volk*. Thus, when faced with the strong elements of provincialism in his own people*,* a motivating question to his early work was, in Pinkard's words:

> could 'Germany' remain 'Germanic' in the conditions of the modern world? Or does 'Germany' necessarily have the same fate that Hegel at the time ascribed to ancient Greece or to the Jews – that, having played its role on the world stage, it now is fated to sink gradually into oblivion?[92]

The combination of love and fear is partly behind Hegel's criticism of narrow nationalist interests. As the previous chapter has shown, Hegel was of two minds about the French Revolution, a fact that Pinkard ties to his position as a 'mixture of hometowner and reformer'.[93] Hegel's sympathies with the 'hometowners' came from being raised as the son of a Württemberg civil servant, a background that left him suspicious of Kantian appeals to universal reason that seemed to discount the influence of local customs.[94] Hegel was therefore ready to take a calculated position about appeals to universal right after Napoleon. As Pinkard states, Hegel maintained that 'unadulterated hometown life was clearly a thing of the past', and yet 'it could not simply be abolished, since the simple, "unmediated" abolition of hometown life would undermine the authority of the reform movement altogether'.[95]

Although Hegel warned against the effacement of local customs by the claims of universal right, he could be devastatingly critical of entrenchment in particular traditions. In personal correspondence, Hegel mocked 'old Bavaria' by referring to it as 'Barbaria', a play on the Latin term *Bavariae*.[96] Hegel also coined the memorably 'scathing pun' that renders those who celebrated

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[92] Pinkard, *Hegel*, 151.

[93] Pinkard, *Hegel*, 193–94.

[94] Pinkard, *Hegel*, 37.

[95] See the account of Hegel's position vis-à-vis Bavarian identity in Pinkard, *Hegel*, 252–55.

[96] The term 'old Bavaria' distinguishes the region that preceded post-Napoleonic expansion, setting apart its inhabitants from 'foreigners'. See Hegel's play on words in *Briefe I,* #108; *Letters,* 149; cited in Pinkard, *Hegel*, 251.

Deutschtum, 'Germandom', as the *Deutschdumm*, the 'German-dumb'.[97] In Hegel's view, such particularism could entrench pockets of resistance to the expansion of rights suitable to the modern era.

For all Hegel's awareness of the limitations of nationalist thinking, he holds an admittedly 'Eurocentric' account. This focus is related to his conviction that a philosophical account of world history takes seriously the geographical and climatic conditions of peoples as either help or hindrance to the emergence of *Geist*. 'The state as the bearer of history' is in this way 'the unity of spirit and nature' in the words of Hodgson and Brown, such that awareness of natural environs is not a mere appendix to Hegel's account.[98] Such a 'natural basis' to history contributes to Hegel's focus on Europe, for he sees *Geist* to emerge most effectively in those nations located in the temperate, 'broad breast' of civilisation, impeded by neither torrid nor frigid conditions. It is also a key reason that certain peoples are peripheral to his account of history.

Two continents are peripheral to the 'centre' in Hegel's account, while being of particular interest in light of Bonhoeffer's intercultural engagements. First, Hegel makes the portentous claim that for Africa 'history is in fact out of the question', lacking the unifying emergence of spirit and so consigned to 'a succession of contingent happenings'.[99] His claim that the continent is not a historical nation is based in his idea that it has no self-reflective narrative expressed through the state.[100] This judgement is partly based on the absence of a written archive, and partly on the pernicious ideology that instances of 'development' must come from external influence.[101] Hegel claims that the continent is 'enclosed within itself': '*Africa proper*', he asserts, is 'removed from the light of self-conscious history and wrapped in the dark mantle of night'.[102]

Second, Hegel sees the Americas as yet to emerge as historical actors in their own right. For both North and South America, he recounts how native – in his view 'purely natural' and inferior – cultures were either destroyed or withdrew from European colonial expansion.[103] Hegel associates the political

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[97] Pinkard also notes that that the fuller context of the letter compares German nationalists to a terrible stereotype of the Jews, even though the letter's recipient, Paulus, was of Jewish origin. *Briefe,* II, #241; *Letters,* 312; cited in Pinkard, *Hegel,* 311, cf. 710n116. For further references to Hegel's term *Deutschdumm* see Pinkard, 311, 461, 486–87.

[98] 'Hegel's treatment of geography is systematically anchored in his discussion of the state as one of its essential features, rather than the topic being treated separately or relegated to an appendix, as in earlier editions'. Hodgson and Brown, 'Editorial Introduction', in *LPWH I,* 5–6.

[99] Hegel, *LPWH,* 176.

[100] Hegel continues to compare China, as an empire with such a historical record, with India, which 'does not have a history' even though it has ancient religious texts and books of law. Hegel, *LPWH,* 136.

[101] Criticism is offered in Appiah, *Lines,* 120–21.

[102] *LPWH,* 173–74.

[103] *LPWH,* 163–64.

stability of American continents according to external religious difference: North America has grown in industry and civil order, achieving 'firmly established freedom'; South America still has republics based on force, and so undergoes 'continuous revolutions'.[104] Reiterating his judgement about Catholic influence on the state, he states that the difference lies in the fact that Spanish settlements imposed Catholicism, while North America is Protestant.[105]

The American character of Protestantism is suspect, however, for it lacks the relative unity of European countries, 'where deviations are limited to a few confessions'.[106] As might be expected, Hegel casts American religious expressions in pejorative terms: 'innumerable sects' lead to caprice and instances of enthusiasm; on the whole, it is hard to see a cohesive state emerge from such an 'anarchy of worship'.[107] Emergence as a unique historical actor nevertheless lies ahead, for Hegel acknowledges a need to break from past and present influence, as well as his own limitations:

It is up to America to abandon the ground on which world history has hitherto been enacted; what had taken place there up to now is but an echo of the Old World and the expression of an alien life; and as a country of the future, it is of no interest to us here, for prophecy is not the business of the philosopher.[108]

Hegel's reticence to forecast is another way of expressing his well-known aphorism that the owl of Minerva flies only at night.

Hegel's reticence about predicting a future, one that involves emergence beyond the 'old world', shows that he does not hold to a superficial 'end of history'. As his appreciative criticism of the French Revolution would suggest, Hegel wrote of global history with the potential of upheaval in plain view. He therefore kept himself from pre-empting either future events or the judgements of later historians.[109] As Pinkard observes, Hegel's 'Eurocentricity' involves prioritising 'the way in which European culture embodied a fundamental "negativity" about itself'.[110] Such a self-critical posture has its limits, of course. To take but one example, Hegel's degrading characterisation of Africa has contributed to political actions that have adversely affected the continent's future prospects.

Before turning to Bonhoeffer, it is worth noting Du Bois' revision of the historical record after Hegel's problematic influence. Du Bois is to be counted among the later historians who took up the task of 'negative' criticism, apprais-

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[104] *LPWH*, 166.
[105] *LPWH,* 166.
[106] *LPWH,* 168.
[107] *LPWH,* 168.
[108] *LPWH*, 171.
[109] Hegel could not 'rule out future animadversions of the spirit'. Smith, 'Epitaph', 258.
[110] Pinkard, *Hegel*, 492–93.

ing Hegel's world-historical account for its rationality, which is to say, in Hegel's terms, its contribution to freedom.[111] The title of Du Bois' work *The World and Africa: An Inquiry into the Part which Africa has Played in World History* conveys his full frontal challenge to the 'Authority' that presumes an account of the globe can be written which ignores 'black folk'.[112] In the work, Du Bois rejects the omission of Africa from truly 'historical' peoples as 'scientifically unsound and also dangerous for logical social conclusions'.[113] This is only one of Du Bois' many interventions in the historical record, to which might be added his initiative with the Pan-African Congress and a later move to Ghana for work on the *Encyclopaedia Africana.* Du Bois's research into African cultures led him to increasingly think beyond modern western forms in articulating 'black subjectivity'.[114] As noted above, his race-critical thinking would affect Bonhoeffer's own account of revelatory community.

II. Bonhoeffer's Confession as Transnational Dialectic

Given that Hegel left Africa and the Americas on the periphery of his 'world-historical' account, it is fascinating to trace Bonhoeffer's reflections on 'Christ existing as community' in light of his experience in the African American church. Bonhoeffer's emphasis on thinking the community as a 'whole' goes back to *Sanctorum Communio*, in which he sought an articulation of the *Gesamtgemeinde* that was not reducible to the churches' state of 'empirical' division. There he claimed the desire to express God's totality of will and the one Spirit who works through estrangement. Bonhoeffer's ensuing exchange period in New York exposed him to the depth of ecclesial division, particularly during his participation in the black church.[115]

Bonhoeffer's attempt to think through the divisions in German and American communities is powerfully expressed in his 1939 essay 'Protestantism Without Reformation'.[116] Significantly, it is written during Bonhoeffer's flight

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[111] The phrasing is drawn from Pinkard, *Hegel*, 490.

[112] W.E.B. Du Bois, *The World and Africa* (1947), ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), xxxi.

[113] Du Bois, *The World and Africa*, xxxii.

[114] See Paul Gilroy, *Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993), 113.

[115] Bonhoeffer would spend Sundays and most evenings in the community, marking his 'one real commitment' in Bethge's estimation of the time in New York. See Bethge, *Bonhoeffer*, 150. The church had a remarkable history, having moved from lower Manhattan to Harlem largely to meet the needs of African American migrants from the South who were enduring packed living quarters, sleeping in shifts as they competed for openly racialized pay grades. See Williams, *Black Jesus,* 82–89.

[116] The essay was published posthumously, having been drawn from the diary Bonhoeffer kept during his flight from Germany in 1939. See further background details in *DBWE* 15, 438n1.

from his homeland – an experience of 'statelessness' unrivalled in Hegel's life. This contributes to his appreciative tone for the 'multiplicity' of church life in America, a nation of peoples fleeing persecution. As Bethge observes, 'this time the refugee and person turning back home could appreciate the nation of refugees'.[117] Moreover, Bonhoeffer's sense of national exile makes it increasingly difficult for him to think catholicity – in his own words, 'for any thoughts of the *Una sancta* to make headway'.[118] The experience of displacement is a crucial but often overlooked element of the essay that challenges an easy claim to unity.

Bonhoeffer's attention to such socio-political realities is often attributed to his training at Union, which included access to Du Bois' texts.[119] Indeed, it is significant that although Bonhoeffer notes how American churches lack theology, he himself does not spend much time engaging with the theological implications of opposing Christologies of colour; rather, his treatment of the 'race question' proceeds as a series of social criticisms.[120] While there is a marked change in this period of Bonhoeffer's thinking, the difference between theology and politics, or Europe and America, cannot be posed too sharply for two reasons. First, Bonhoeffer's expression 'Christ existing as community' provides a strong theological basis for engaging the church's socio-historical realities. In other words, his critical commentary on a racially segregated ecclesial and political reality is another way of posing that famous biblical riposte to sectarianism: 'is Christ divided?'[121] Second, Bonhoeffer's broader philosophical background is not as apolitical as some American interpreters might suppose. In his time at Union, Bonhoeffer was suspicious of 'radically empirical' thinkers and the widespread local assumption that questions of Kantian epistemology were nonsense.[122] Such provincialism sets aside the political implications of Idealism, insulating America's own philosophical-ethical nexus from certain challenges.

The political edge of Bonhoeffer's criticism is evident when he refers back to his German philosophical tradition, and the ecclesial memory from which it

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[117] Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 658–59. The essay shows a severe limitation by not considering the manner in which the 'refugees' displaced native American peoples.

[118] Bethge, *Bonhoeffer,* 655.

[119] Two of Bonhoeffer's instructors observe that his time at Union led him out from his 'orthodox European shell' to become an 'astute political analyst'. The observation by Niebuhr and Baillie is recorded in Bethge, *Bonhoeffer*, 165.

[120] Drawing on the literature he had encountered at Union, Bonhoeffer remarks that 'the fact that today the "black Christ" of a young Negro poet is pitted against the "white Christ" reveals a destructive rift within the church of Jesus Christ'. He records racialized segregation in pastoral office, seating priority, and access to the communion table. As a result, 'the common worship service became for Negroes more and more a farce'. *DBWE 15*, 456–7; *DBW 15*, 453–45.

[121] See 1 Corinthians 1:11–13.

[122] Bethge, *Bonhoeffer*, 160–61.

grows, for a vision of holism and criticism of the isolated particular. He writes that America's foundational attempt to protect multiple churches, as people had recently fled persecution in Europe, contributed to a dynamic in which 'the remaining communities have more a denominational than an ecclesial self-understanding'.[123] As a result, segregation could continue by another name, or set of nominations. After all, no truly 'ecclesial' self-understanding, bound to the confession of catholicity, would permit white congregants to forbid black members from kneeling to pray in their midst.

In diagnosing the problem with denominationalism, Bonhoeffer uses broad philosophical brush strokes to differentiate national expressions of polity.[124] He first notes the influence of nominalism in America, which he glosses as the view that 'the existing particular has priority before the whole in the sense that the particular and empirically given is the real, while the whole is merely a notion, a name. The particular stands at the beginning, unity at the end'.[125] He contrasts this with 'German-Continental' philosophies such as Idealism, for which 'the whole is the original reality, and the particular is merely that which has fallen away from the unity'.[126] Although Bonhoeffer's foil of 'nominalism' is underdeveloped, it can be traced back to an enduring concern with the isolated particular.[127]

Bonhoeffer contrasts a German philosophical tradition that emphasises thinking the unified whole with the American nomination of particular churches. This was not merely to dismiss the American tradition, however. In fact, Bonhoeffer held the unfulfilled wish of extending his Union fellowship to investigate Pragmatism, an interest that stemmed from reading through the works of William James.[128] More importantly, he is not primarily interested in transmitting a philosophical legacy; Bonhoeffer's determinative vocation is as a theologian, so these philosophical bearings serve to orient him back to the German memory of a united church.[129]

Throughout the essay Bonhoeffer seeks to awaken the struggle for a theological statement of belief, a *pro*fession such as that adopted in his homeland as the distinguishing mark of the Confessing Church over and against the Ger-

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[123] *DBWE 15*, 440; *DBW 15*, 434.

[124] He admits that these broad strokes are insufficient. *DBWE* 15, 443; *DBW 15*, 437.

[125] *DBWE 15*, 443; *DBW 15*, 437.

[126] *DBWE 15*, 443; *DBW 15*, 437.

[127] It would be worth comparing Bonhoeffer's criticism of atomism with Hegel's depiction of bare particularity as a 'bad infinite' if taken apart from universal considerations. Bonhoeffer has Hegel's term underlined in *NL-VPR I*, 212.

[128] See Bethge, *Bonhoeffer*, 161.

[129] Bonhoeffer claims in this essay that Idealism and Realism are 'based on philosophical-methodological demands derived from theological insights'. They are thus not sufficient as background to the properly theological question. *DBWE 15*, 443; *DBW 15*, 437.

man Christians. Relatedly, his criticism of the American philosophical tradition and its counterpart in church polity drives him to speak of the unifying task of confession that crosses 'nominal' boundaries. Bonhoeffer therefore warns that particular church movements should not be placed into a boring 'convenient and dead schematisation' such that, for instance, the social gospel is seen as 'typically American'.[130] Such a non-threatening mode of enquiry is 'false because it dissolves from the outset the mutual obligation the churches have for each other's proclamation and doctrine'.[131]

The call for 'mutual obligation' between churches, a confessional link that goes beyond mere socio-historical difference, should be read against elements of German paternalism in the essay. It is true that Bonhoeffer is concerned with how the struggle for 'one true church' that marks the German Reformation is marginalised in America.[132] Nevertheless, Marsh misrepresents Bonhoeffer's posture by claiming that 'the essay fairly burns with contempt for the "denominations of America."'[133]

Rather than a one-sided polemic against America, Bonhoeffer insists on drawing the two nations together in the confessional task, as shown by his unequivocal statement that it is 'the same church-community of Jesus Christ that is at stake, both in America and among us'.[134] He therefore takes care in how he describes his host nation, respecting the different historical contours of confession across the Atlantic. That American churches see ecclesial unity as 'goal' rather than 'origin' means that they have a key role in recovering lost catholicity, for Bonhoeffer sets the two nations in a dialectical relationship. Each points towards a Christ who is not reducible to one political economy:

> where unity is understood as origin and goal alike, the life and work of Christendom, which seeks and finds the unity of the fragmented church, grows from the foundation of the life and work of Jesus Christ, in whom all unity of the church is fulfilled.[135]

The relationship is such that America 'poses the question of multiplicity', while Germany 'poses the question of unity', with both queries necessary to thinking the church as one.[136] For the time being, such credal confession reveals the need for confession as corporate penitence. Bonhoeffer therefore ends

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[130] *DBWE 15*, 438; *DBW 15*, 432.

[131] *DBWE 15*, 438; *DBW 15*, 432.

[132] *DBWE 15*, 442; *DBW 15*, 436.

[133] Marsh, *Strange Glory,* 283. Perhaps related to the absence of the black church in Marsh's summary of the essay, the attribution of contempt obscures the serious criticism that denominational lines fall conveniently along the lines of segregation, creating a dynamic of avoidance over the so-called 'race question'.

[134] He later remarks that the different national patterns of secularisation can be better understood in the contrast. *DBWE 15*, 439, 453 *DBW 15*, 432, 449.

[135] *DBWE 15*, 445; *DBW 15*, 439.

[136] *DBWE 15*, 443–44; *DBW 15*, 438–39.

the essay by identifying the enduring effects of America's racialising history as both *Schuld*, 'guilt', and future problem.[137]

D. Between Shapes of *Geist* and the Form of Christ

This section considers Bonhoeffer's experimental account of the 'form of Christ' in his later *Ethics*. In contrast to Hegel's articulation of the shapes of particular peoples' *Geister,* Bonhoeffer speaks of the singular *Gestaltung* of Christ. The term is Bonhoeffer's alternative to what he calls a 'docetic-idealist ecclesiology', bringing the community of real presence to bear on the 'natural basis' of world history. For Bonhoeffer, to speak of the church is to speak of a particular body, of 'Christ existing as community'. The attendant use of 'form' is a way of narrating either cultural acceptance or rejection of the Christian community. Bonhoeffer also maintains that encounter with the Jewish people cannot cease, a commitment that I argue can be extended to the encounter with other diasporic peoples.

I. Hegel on the Cunning of Reason Through Shapes of Geist

Hegel claims that different *Geister* have particular 'shapes' or 'forms' that can be discerned. In the *Phenomenology,* he refers to the transition between epochs as ushering in a 'new world, new shape of *Geist* [*Geistesgestalt*]'.[138] Hegel also speaks about the different '*Gestalten* of consciousness'.[139] These terms are often associated with particular lands, as shown earlier in the transition between France and Germany. Hegel's later *Philosophy of Right* acknowledges the limitations of the diverse 'spirits of the peoples', which he otherwise regards as independent, ethical wholes. As a result, he points to a higher level of *Geist:*

> The principles of the spirits of peoples [*Volksgeister*] are in general restricted on account of their particularity, for it is in this particularity that, as *existent* individuals, they have their objective actuality and their self-consciousness. Their deeds and destinies in their relations to one another are the manifest [*erscheinende*] dialectic of the finitude of these spirits, and out of it arises the *universal spirit*, the *spirit of the world*, free from all restriction, producing itself as that which exercises its right – and its right is the highest right of all – over these finite spirits in world history as the *world's court of judgement* [*Weltgericht*].[140]

This comment occurs in the transition from Hegel's discussion of right and recognition between states to the limitations of any one state within the turmoil

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[137] *DBWE 15*, 456; *DBW 15*, 453.

[138] *PhG*, §808. Earlier he refers to the *Formen* of *Geist. PhG*, §29.

[139] *PhG*, §36.

[140] *PR*, §340, cf. p. 475–76. As Wood notes, the phrase *Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht* is often attributed to Hegel himself, but the phrase is actually taken from Friedrich Schiller's poem 'Resignation'.

of international relations, with their contingencies and the play of passions, interests, and force.[141]

Such historical conflicts have a 'rational' character, even if that reason operates by a 'cunning' that is difficult to identify. In other words, Hegel claims that history is comprised of 'identifiable' or 'classifiable' elements.[142] These terms are helpful in showing what a claim to *Weltgeist* entails: not a pantheistic entity so much as a quality to world events that can be 'minded', even if only in retrospect. Although Hegel can name the arbitrariness of individual deaths, as he did in his treatment of the French Revolution, he remains committed to tracing a broader emergence of the 'consciousness of freedom' that is the mark of reason. History may be a 'slaughter bench', in his stark admission, but it is not without purpose. Of course, Hegel's claim to an active 'rationality' in history came to seem increasingly absurd given the mass slaughter of the *Shoah*.

The discernment of reason's course, at least in its higher forms, is only available to some. Hegel therefore remarks on the pathos of those individuals who lead world history but do not have the philosopher's perspective:

At the vanguard of all actions, including world-historical actions, stand *individuals* as subjectivities giving actuality to what is substantial. They give life to the substantial deed of the world spirit and they are therefore immediately at one with that deed, though it is concealed from them and is not their aim and object.[143]

These individuals will not necessarily receive public honour for their roles, as such recognition awaits the philosopher who can discern what has taken place.[144] The autonomy of the world-historical figures role is necessary, however, insofar as history is guided by a logic immanent to human activity. In other words, the course of events is not at the mercy of some transcendent 'absolute', a kind of puppet-master that governs reality.[145]

For Hegel, retrospective philosophical judgement is the action through which the work of providence can be perceived. He writes that education can bring this discernment, criticising those who claim that providence is 'inscrutable and incomprehensible', likely including Kant's admission in the essay 'Towards Perpetual Peace'.[146] Such perception, however, is not necessarily at the forefront of states, peoples, or the individuals who lead them. Their respective constitutional interests show an awareness of *Geist* at a certain level, but with respect to world *Geist* 'they are all the time the unconscious tools and

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[141] *PR*, §340 (Knox).
[142] Adams, *Eclipse*, 113–115.
[143] *PR*, §348 (Knox).
[144] *PR*, §348 (Knox), cf. 362–63n318.
[145] Houlgate, *Hegel*, 24–25.
[146] The link is drawn by Houlgate in *PR*, 362n316.

organs of this inner activity'. While *Geist* prepares for its next stage, 'the shapes which they take pass away'.[147]

In the later *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, Hegel identifies a discrepancy between intention and outcome in a passage where he also defines the historian's concern:

The deeds of the great men who are the individuals of world history thus appear justified not only in their inner significance (of which the individuals in question are unconscious), but also in a secular sense. But from this latter point of view, no representations should be made against world-historical deeds and those who perform them by moral circles to which such individuals do not belong.[148]

Napoleon is a prime example of Hegel's characterisation of the world-historical figure through whom the cause of freedom progresses, often *malgré lui*. Hegel's doctrine of the 'cunning of reason' meant that he saw Napoleon's fall as a personal tragedy but not a fatal blow to ideals of freedom that would reach their culmination in German Idealism.[149] Napoleon does not come at the end, for only Hegel can put in conceptual form what Napoleon accomplished.

Hegel's focus tends to neglect the victims of larger historical movements, whether revolution or expansion.[150] He also makes statements of chilling disregard for those peoples who are not dominant. Hegel speaks of the way a particular *Volk* is 'assigned a moment of the Idea', and therefore 'entrusted with giving complete effect to it in the advance of the self-developing self-consciousness of the world spirit'.[151] This role has a 'natural' basis, involving geographical placement and the anthropological conditions through which the people has risen to dominance. Nevertheless, it is a position the *Volk* holds only once on the world stage:

In contrast with this its absolute right of being the bearer of this present stage in the world spirit's development, the spirits of the other peoples are without rights, and they, along with those whose epoch has passed, no longer count in world history.[152]

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[147] *PR*, §344 (Knox).

[148] Hegel *LPWH*, 141. He continues that the philosophy of world history does not 'refrain from judgement' so much as leave individuals unmentioned, 'for what it has to record is the activity of the spirit of nations', with the 'individual forms' of spirit left to the 'ordinary historians'.

[149] See Pinkard, *Hegel*, 311.

[150] Little thought is given to victims of the Revolution, as Smith observes in 'Epitaph', 254–55.

[151] *PR*, §347 (Knox).

[152] *PR*, §347 (Knox). This comment might be compared with §351, where Hegel speaks of the right of civilised nations 'to regard and treat as barbarians those who lag behind them in the substantial moments of the state'.

Such passages show the susceptibility of Hegel's thought to hierarchical and racialising accounts.[153] Moreover, it is hard to find space for the act of lament within the broader movement. As Martin Wendte argues, the late Hegel under-cuts both the particular victims of history and the sovereignty of the God who might respond to them.[154]

Hegel's broad vision of history also lacks a distinctive role for church fig-ures vis-à-vis the 'political' actors in world-historical drama. Adams puts the point sharply: 'the world-historical individuals are not the saints, who follow Christ, but Alexander the Great and Napoleon who precede and supplant him'.[155] This gap is set in relief by Bonhoeffer's placement of 'church-history' at the centre of world history. Christ as community, a real bodily presence whether acknowledged or rejected by the social order, is the focal 'figure' of Bonhoeffer's account.

II. Bonhoeffer on Divine Intent and the 'View from Below'

In *Sanctorum Communio,* Bonhoeffer qualified his appropriation of objective *Geist* by stating that 'it is not my intention to call Hegel forth from the grave', making particular reference to how Hegel positions the *Geister* of peoples as 'moments' in the dialectical evolution of *Geist*.[156] Even so, Bonhoeffer's early nationalism showed disregard for the lives of others. In 1929 Bonhoeffer made an early foray into providential history, striking a similar tone to Hegel. His lecture was written with a view to educating his expatriate congregation about the intellectual crisis in the homeland in the wake of the war and Versailles settlement.[157] Entitled 'Basic Questions in a Christian Ethic', it includes a sec-tion on war that defends, even 'sanctifies', shedding blood on behalf of one's *Volk*.[158] More disturbingly, it speaks of a nation heeding the call to expansion under the 'Lord of history', even if that means disregarding the lives of other

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[153] *Pace* Houlgate's observation that Hegel gives no priority to racial difference, claiming that the process of self-consciousness emerges through education for all. After all, Houlgate himself notes that Hegel sets limits to certain peoples, who do not, of themselves, strive for culture. See Houlgate, *Hegel*, 23, 175.

[154] See Martin Wendte, 'Lamentation Between Contradiction and Obedience' in *Evoking Lament: A Theological Discussion*, ed. Eva Harasta and Brian Brock (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 86.

[155] Adams argues that such description would 'illustrate the kinds of action that their eschatologies require'. Adams, 'Eschatology', 287.

[156] *DBWE 1*, 102n134; *DBW 1,* 65 [*SC-A*].

[157] *DBWE 10*, 325; *DBW 10*, 285. While working as a pastor in Barcelona, Bonhoeffer observed, in a letter to Reinhold Seeberg on July 20, 1928, that 'the war and especially the period of revolution simply passed most of [the congregation] by'. As a result, he notes that their intellectual ethos showed striking differences to that which he knew in Berlin.

[158] *DBWE 10*, 372; *DBW 10*, 338.

peoples.[159] Bonhoeffer's main difference from Hegel in this lecture, as a twenty-three year old pastor, is the inscrutability of the divine will behind such acts of displacement in world history. The tragic actor knows only the constraints of the 'world's laws'; he is bound by blood and soil.

Bonhoeffer's later writings maintain a view of the 'hidden counsel of God' as an operative force in historical events. In the *Ethics* manuscript 'History and Good [I]', he states that 'God moves along God's own path, which cuts across human good and evil'.[160] The claim to providential cunning was crucial in order to contest ideological appeals to *Vorsehung*, 'providence', by the *Führer*.[161] Bonhoeffer therefore seeks to dislodge the 'correspondence between action and idea' as an 'unambiguous standard by which to judge good and evil'.[162] There is, of course, a significant historical divide between Hitler and Napoleon, as well as a deep chasm separating their political aims, so any comparison to Hegel's account of the course of reason must proceed with care. It can at least be said that, as Hegel before him, Bonhoeffer points to goals operating beyond the passions and intentions of historical actors. Unlike Hegel, however, Bonhoeffer does not seek to retrospectively discern such purpose, even in his distinct theological register. Rather, under the conditions of 'hiddenness', he stakes his life on action to subvert the providential politics of the state.

Rather than offering a full doctrine of providence, therefore, Bonhoeffer's *Ethics* lays out a theological account of free and responsible action. To that end, he not only speaks of the inscrutable 'Lord of history' but also attends to the revealed Christ-as-community. In the earlier manuscript 'Heritage and Decay', his experimental account of national histories traces how the forms of incarnation and crucifixion can be discerned in the history of the church among the *Völker*. Admittedly, this is no 'world history', for Bonhoeffer leaves several continents on the periphery by stating that 'one can only speak of historical heritage in the Christian West'.[163] He goes on to speak of European nations finding their unity 'through the form of Christ'.[164] These statements certainly sound like a retreat from the promising account of trans-Atlantic exchange that attended to the 'confession' of African American churches. Nevertheless, Bonhoeffer's use of Christological form in history resources the deconstruction of a superficial Eurocentrism in two ways.

First, Bonhoeffer is not defining the West as a monolith but as an arena of historical contest. Bonhoeffer refers to German self-understanding, including its unique political philosophy of freedom, through terms such as *Mitteleuropa*

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[159] *DBWE 10*, 373; *DBW 10*, 339.

[160] *DBWE 6*, 227; *DBW 6*, 226.

[161] The political context is a major motivation behind Bonhoeffer's production of two versions of this manuscript. See *DBWE 6*, 245n104; *DBW 6*, 244n97.

[162] *DBWE 6*, 227; *DBW 6*, 226.

[163] *DBWE 6*, 103; *DBW 6*, 93.

[164] *DBWE 6,* 110; *DBW 6*, 100.

and *Abendland,* which are distinct from Britain, France, and the United States as *der West*.[165] These two collectives are defined according to their relation to the community of the church, which is to say, the form Christ has taken in the world. Bonhoeffer associates the 'western' view of historical continuity with the incarnation of Christ; specifically, the Roman heritage represents 'antiquity's bonding with and assimilation into Christianity'.[166] This is carried on in the Roman Catholic church and national contexts such as France, Italy, and England.[167] In contrast, Bonhoeffer claims, for Germany 'the tension, or even the break, between antiquity and Christianity (inherent in the Greek heritage) was strongly felt'.[168] This historical break is conveyed as a thought form of crucifixion. Each is, however, only a one-sided account:

> But because Christ is both the incarnate and the crucified, and wills to be recognized as both equally, the proper reception of the historical heritage of antiquity is still an open task for the Occident. The Germans [*die Deutschen*] and Western peoples [*westlichen Völker*] will be brought closer together by the search for a common solution to this problem.[169]

Rather than locating the whole Christ with either heritage, it is working through this cultural opposition that manifests his form. It is a resolution similar to Bonhoeffer's claim to catholicity as the encounter between German unity and American multiplicity.[170]

Second, Bonhoeffer's account retains elements of his deepened awareness of the 'underside' of history, particularly the experience of diasporic peoples. The trans-national turn to 'confession' as socially constitutive, born of his experience as exchange student and refugee, marks a shift from Hegel's organic view of the state.[171] In contrast, Bonhoeffer's expression of a church polity requires attending to the diaspora.

The dialectic of 'the West' is opened out by Bonhoeffer's insistence on one particular diaspora: 'Western history is by God's will inextricably bound up

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[165] Although the terms admittedly overlap, this nuance in diction is obscured by the English translation of nearly all cases as 'the West'. See DeJonge, 'Bonhoeffer's Concept of the West', 40.

[166] *DBWE 6*, 106; *DBW 6*, 96.

[167] *DBWE 6*, 106; *DBW 6*, 96.

[168] Bonhoeffer observes that in thinkers such as Nietzsche there is a deliberate 'anti-Christian appropriation of the Greek heritage', which Bonhoeffer goes on to claim could only have arisen from the soil of the German Reformation. *DBWE 6*, 106; *DBW 6*, 96.

[169] *DBWE 6*, 107; *DBW 6*, 96.

[170] Bonhoeffer locates himself within the German heritage, and so favours the occidental approach by, for instance, prioritising the Lutheran 'two-kingdoms' doctrine. DeJonge notes other points at which Bonhoeffer offers a more favourable portrait of Germany, such as when he treats German authoritarianism as over-compensation for western liberalism. See DeJonge, 'Bonhoeffer's Concept of the West', 52.

[171] Influenced as he was by early Greek philosophy, Hegel did not develop an account of fully human life beyond the state. See Inwood, *Dictionary*, 280.

with the people of Israel, not just genetically but in a genuine, unceasing encounter'.[172] He therefore argues against the racialising currents of his time: 'driving out the Jew(s) from the West must result in driving out Christ with them, for Jesus Christ was a Jew'.[173] Significantly, the historical status of the Jews, through the person of Christ, relativises the *völkisch* German past. Although this ethnic past 'remains with us by nature, as a species or, if one will, a race', Bonhoeffer states, '[i]t is not, and never can become, a historical heritage'.[174] There is only one way to truly temporal consciousness: 'Jesus Christ has made [the West] into a historical unity'.[175] As a result, Bonhoeffer sees his nation as closer, in a sense, to the Jewish people than to its own *völkisch* past.

Bonhoeffer's reference to the Jewish diaspora should be read alongside another passage of the *Ethics* that reveals his continued awareness of those who live 'behind the veil' as he composes this account of the West. For example, Bonhoeffer recounts how he attempted to convince a prominent church leader in Germany to join international reaction to the 1931 Scottsboro trials, claiming that the sentencing of nine young African Americans was a 'terrible miscarriage of justice'. In response to the church official's refusal to protest the sentencing, on the basis of allegedly Lutheran understanding of vocation, Bonhoeffer countered with Nietzsche's exhortation to 'love of the farthest'.[176] This recollection shows that Bonhoeffer's account is open to extension through attention to the lives of 'diaspora blacks' who express the 'ambivalences' of modernity and its history of enslavement.[177]

The reference to the Scottsboro case in *Ethics* shows how Bonhoeffer had begun to see history in a new manner. At the turn of the year 1942–43, reflecting on ten years of acute *Kirchenkampf*, Bonhoeffer acknowledges what he has learned:

It remains an experience of incomparable value that we have for once learned to see the great events of the history of the world from below, from the viewpoint of the outcasts, the suspects, the maltreated, the powerless, the oppressed and reviled – in short from the viewpoint of the suffering.[178]

Commenting on this passage, Gustavo Gutiérrez observes that Bonhoeffer does not here offer a critical analysis of the structures of oppression. Nevertheless,

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[172] *DBWE 6*, 105, alt.; *DBW 6*, 95. My thanks to Bernd Wannenwetsch for his advice on the translation of this phrase.

[173] *DBWE 6*, 105; *DBW 6*, 95.

[174] *DBWE 6*, 108–9; *DBW 6*, 99.

[175] *DBWE 6*, 109; *DBW 6*, 99.

[176] See *DBWE 6*, 294–95; *DBW 6*, 295–96.

[177] The terms are drawn from Paul Gilroy, who marks Du Bois as a key representative of this dynamic, both for his nomadic life and his attempts to make visible the world's unrecognised histories. See '"Cheer the Weary Traveller": W.E.B. Du Bois, Germany, and the Politics of (Dis)placement', in *The Black Atlantic*, 111–145.

[178] *DBWE 8*, 52; *DBW 8*, 38.

Gutiérrez argues that Bonhoeffer's new sense for the 'limitations of his own theological enterprise' provides a point of departure for what he calls 'theology from the underside of history'.[179]

E. Rethinking Cultural Formations After 'World War'

In some of his earliest writings, Bonhoeffer had both acknowledged historical progress and qualified it eschatologically. 'There really are times of acute morality and self-evaluation, of the soul coming to itself, as Hegel had hoped', Bonhoeffer admits in an early essay, 'however, the greater the knowledge, the greater the sin'.[180] Rather than a sole focus on progress in the shapes of *Geist*, Bonhoeffer holds that 'at every moment the judgement of God is present in history through the Word of God', which suggests that 'every moment is the end of history, and yet it is not the end'.[181] This is an early example of how Bonhoeffer both affirmed and qualified the importance of historical actualisation. In other words, it is not enough to trouble Hegel's high stakes for the historical arena as the 'world's court of judgement' by stating that 'history is not an eschatology'.[182] After all, Bonhoeffer's theological response to Hegel remains with the claim that '*the body of Christ is a real presence in history*'.[183]

Hegel's progressive world-historical account is 'polycentric' in the sense that there are shifts of dominance between peoples. Although he recognises the culminating moment of the Prussian state of his own time, this awareness did not preclude the future turn to another people at the 'centre'. His demurral to speculate on America's future on the world stage shows the reticence of one who had lived through the French Revolution. Nevertheless, Hegel's negative characterisations of certain continents had a constraining effect on their profiles among the nations, a fact that reveals the decidedly 'regressive' element in his thinking.

More importantly, Hegel's account of the broader movements of *Geist* tends to pass over the lament and Christ-identification of peoples caught under the dominance of others. Such inattention shows a philosophy too quick to resolve

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[179] Gustavo Gutierrez, 'The Limitations of Modern Theology: On a Letter of Dietrich Bonhoeffer', in *The Power of the Poor in History,* trans. Robert Barr (London: SCM Press, 1983), 231–33.

[180] This citation is taken from Bonhoeffer's paper on the church and eschatology, submitted for a seminar with Seeberg, who evaluated it in January 1926. *DBWE 9*, 319–20; *DBW 9*, 348–49.

[181] Bonhoeffer draws on Leopold von Ranke's criticism of Hegel, particularly his comment that 'every age is in direct relationship with God'. *DBWE 9*, 319–20n60; *DBW 9*, 348–49.

[182] The phrase is part of Levinas' response to Hegel. See Levinas, *Totality*, 241.

[183] *DBWE 1*, 211; *DBW 1*, 142.

the Good Friday at its heart. Commenting on Hegel's speculative 're-establishment' of the historical Good Friday, Dorrien notes that 'any Idealism that fixed on ideals extricated from tragedy, suffering, brokenness, and Godforsakenness was not saving'.[184] Broader Idealist tendencies in 'metahistory' have also been called into question with a view to future philosophical histories. In the words of Jörn Rüsen,

An intellectually honest recognition of the historical experience of inhumanity and suffering, which "Idealist" categories once served to suppress, must now become central to both the philosophy and practice and history.[185]

Towards such a truly global account, Bonhoeffer was right to begin attending to the 'view from below'.

Bonhoeffer does not speak of polycentricity so much as the 'hiddenness' of the singular form at the centre of world history. This claim to concealment is not to be fully associated with viewing history from the 'underside', to borrow Gutiérrez's expression. Rather, it is to say that the 'form' of Christ is not reducible to the church's place within the life of any one people – even, *pace* Hegel, within the realised Lutheran state. The way that the church, 'Christ existing as community', is the 'hidden centre' of history involves thinking in intercultural dialectics. In the case of German-American exchange, it requires envisioning the whole that gathers up both unity and multiplicity.

The necessity of discerning the figure of Christ in trans-national exchange was heightened as Bonhoeffer observed cultural ruin from a German prison. In a 1944 letter to Bethge, Bonhoeffer reprises his theme of their German cultural inheritance. 'How far', he asks, 'does "culture" still depend on classical antiquity?'[186] Bonhoeffer observes that the notion of history as a continuum comes from Hegel, who saw history 'culminating in "modernity", that is, in his own philosophical system'. He then expresses ambivalence about that solution, stating that 'our conception of cultural formation [*Bildungsbegriff*]' can neither idealistically consider classical antiquity the foundation nor eliminate it.[187] Rather than re-entrenching a classical education, Bonhoeffer continues, perhaps it is more important to seek 'encounters with other peoples and countries' as a 'real cultural experience that goes beyond politics or business, beyond snobbery'.[188] His line of thought is disrupted by a radio announcement and sirens signalling oncoming aircraft. As Bonhoeffer relays to his friend, they could watch the daytime air raids on Berlin from the prison.

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[184] Dorrien, *Kantian Reason and Hegelian Spirit*, 177.

[185] Jörn Rüsen, 'Idealism in the German Tradition of Meta-history', in Walker, ed. *Impact of Idealism,* Volume II, 341.

[186] *DBWE 8,* 320; *DBW 8*, 353.

[187] He is engaging with Oswald Spengler's account of decline, which he terms a 'biological-morphological' account. *DBWE 8*, 321; *DBW 8*, 354.

[188] *DBWE 8*, 321; *DBW 8*, 355.

Conclusion

This final chapter has considered how Bonhoeffer's experimental accounts of intercultural exchange compare to Hegel's 'world-history'. The task began by distinguishing neo-Hegelian accounts under the Third Reich from race-critical approaches to Hegel such as that represented by Du Bois. This distinction cleared the ground to trace how Hegel invoked reason to temper the state's prerogative, as shown in his claim that the state can forfeit its own principle by depriving the Jewish people of rights. I argued that Hegel's position on state treatment of foreigners complicates the frequent association made between his attempt to 'think the whole' and the sheer subordination of difference.

I then demonstrated how Bonhoeffer abandons his earlier concession to *völkisch* drives for the sake of an emerging global ecumenism. He therefore came to criticise 'one-sided' national claims on church life and polity, placing them into dialectic with others so that a true confession of catholicity could emerge. As one example, Bonhoeffer sets the 'multiplicity' of American denominations into dialectic with the 'unity' characteristic of German philosophy and ecclesial memory. Finally, I turned to the difference between Bonhoeffer's attempt to discern the 'form of Christ' in history and Hegel's work to track the 'shapes of *Geist*'. Although Bonhoeffer's attendant dialectic of incarnation and cross is embedded within a Eurocentric frame, I argued that his particular account of the whole leads to a fuller reckoning with those on the 'underside of history', particularly diasporic peoples. Bonhoeffer's question remains timely: what Christ-identification is expressed by those who have been subjected to the cultures bearing Greek and Roman antiquity?

Conclusion

A. Revisiting the Humboldt Monuments

'Their death is an obligation to us'. With these words, the Humboldt University monument recognises Bonhoeffer as one of several political figures who fell in the struggle against fascism. How would Bonhoeffer have accounted for such a brutally vanquished group, only rendered visible by two contorted fists protruding from between the iron bars? The experience of bodily suffering under the regime became the site from which Bonhoeffer, a Christian leader who sought to recover Luther's 'marks' of the church, formed alliance with those who acted on behalf of the remnant-state in order to preserve right. Moreover, Bonhoeffer had begun to identify with those who lived and died 'behind the veil', excluded from recognition because of racial or national ties. Such vicarious action was rooted in a theological ethic succinctly expressed in his Hegel-inspired refrain, 'Christ existing as community'.

Does Hegel's death also pose an obligation to 'us'? What about the other monument, that solitary bust only identified by a single name? It would be all too easy to claim that the Hegel monument, without place name or date, depicts the 'timelessness' and ultimate 'confinement to the self' that Bonhoeffer attributed to Idealism. However, while Bonhoeffer had serious criticism to level against Hegel, I have argued that the figures depicted by the two Humboldt monuments are not as different as they appear. It was at that same university, after all, that Bonhoeffer fulfilled an 'obligation' to his predecessor by selecting Hegel's lectures for a seminar in the Summer of 1933. For all Bonhoeffer's ensuing disillusionment with the academy of his time, he did not reject the vocation of *Wissenschaft* even as he sought to acknowledge Christ as its 'hidden centre'. Moreover, in his late writings Bonhoeffer referenced the commitment to freedom, from Luther to Idealism, that had come down to him.

B. From Word to Geist: How Does the Community Reveal?

This account of Bonhoeffer's reception of Hegel centres on the recurrent question of what makes a revelatory community 'after' Christ. That is, how does a specific community's forms of life, sacred texts, even the members themselves,

express the divine being in whom they believe? Moreover, to what extent can this 'revelatory' aspect be extended to those social bodies among which the community is embedded? I have argued that Bonhoeffer's modification of Hegel invokes a background in which divine 'authorisation' enhances a religious public's commitment to the rights and dignity of outsiders, to cultural preservation, and to the self-critical vigilance shown in habits of confession and forgiveness. Making this case has involved showing that Bonhoeffer carries out a more complex variation on Hegel's thought than is often recognised. I have begun by showing that Hegel's interest in theological doctrine is primarily for the diagnostic power of their underlying logic, through which one can identify false oppositions that obstruct thought across the disciplines.

As Bonhoeffer recognised, however, the shift to 'underlying logic' comes at a cost. The derivation of a political philosophy from an exact verbal claim, such as the Augsburg Confession or Christ's words of institution, raises the persistent question of what is both gained and lost in transposition. How does a specific material form of worship – *this* bread and wine, *this* body – unfold into a people's ethical life? While Bonhoeffer could acknowledge the 'relative right' in Hegel's secularisation of the Lutheran Eucharist, he asserted that Jesus must nevertheless be named.

In other words, I have not argued that Bonhoeffer is Hegelian. Indeed, his criticism of Hegel drove many of his theological counter-emphases. In particular, Bonhoeffer emphasised the being and action of that distinctive person who is the revelatory 'body'. He persistently referred to *Christ* existing as community, going on to criticise the 'docetic-idealist ecclesiology' exemplified in Hegel's support for church-state merger. Relatedly, Bonhoeffer resisted the identification of the 'Idea' of Christ in a manner that obscured the personal contingency of 'address' or the real presence encountered in sermon and Eucharist. In these respects, Bonhoeffer's project is on a trajectory with later criticisms of a 'sacramental principle' that is identifiable beyond the material forms of worship.[1]

Nevertheless, I have acknowledged that Bonhoeffer's account of revelatory community has similarities to Hegel's project when it redeploys a Christological form of thought, that is, a logic derived from creedal expressions about Christ's person. For instance, Bonhoeffer speaks of the two kingdoms as 'never mixed together, yet never torn apart' in order to challenge what he calls the 'two-realm thinking' of pseudo-Lutheranism. His experiments along these lines have therefore been criticised by theologians for seeming to employ Christology as a 'structuring principle' of reality. Moreover, Bonhoeffer's

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[1] Bernd Wannenwetsch criticises a 'sacramental principle' of divine presence in creation through the works of Leonardo Boff and William Temple, tracing this instinct back to Hegel's 'absorption' of the material forms of worship. See Bernd Wannenwetsch, *Political Worship*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)*,* 41–44.

treatments of intercultural encounter refer to the 'form of Christ' in a dialecti-
cal and historically conscious approach that bears comparison to Hegel's rela-
tion between 'shapes of *Geist*'. This particular variation provides a marked
contrast to Hegel insofar as Bonhoeffer's account is beholden to the 'view from
below' – a commitment to vicarious action based in his recovery of Luther's
conviction that suffering was a mark of the revelatory community.

Bonhoeffer's articulation of a 'disruption' of the Word vis-à-vis Hegel's ac-
count of community is captured well by the two epigraphs that opened this
book. Hegel predominantly speaks of doctrine as a community production, 'not
something produced by the Word of Christ, so to speak'. Such an opposition
provokes Bonhoeffer's description of Christ in terms of address, not Idea; a
living person, not doctrine. Even though Bonhoeffer would appropriate much
from the social vision of 'objective *Geist*', he maintained the Word as a counter
to 'Idealist *Geist*-monism' just as a rock stood in the path of a stream. His work
to reprioritise the 'Word before *Geist*' had several expressions, including care-
ful exegetical work on Genesis in response to Hegel's Aristotelian protology.

While Bonhoeffer's reclamation of the 'external' Word could be taken as a
strictly oppositional account, I have traced not only Bonhoeffer's strong coun-
ter-emphasis but also his positive appropriations of Hegel. This is most evident
in the Christological modification of Hegel's phrase 'God existing as commu-
nity', which provides a syntax for Bonhoeffer's reconciliation of competing
accounts of revelation. In other words, Bonhoeffer's externalisation of the
Word does not revert to the outward forms of authority, 'positivism', or fetish-
ism that Hegel attacked. Rather, the notion of 'real presence' entails that Christ
exists not only 'in' but 'as' community. The community remains revelatory,
although that does not obviate Christ's claim that 'this is *my* body'.

C. Eclectic and Christologically Intent: A Posture of Reception

I have characterized Bonhoeffer's reception of Hegel as both eclectic and
Christologically intent. The term *eclectic* suggests the freedom to appropriate
the more promising aspects of Hegel's philosophy. As Yovel comments, even
if one takes exception to Hegel's account of 'absolute knowing', there remains
'a treasure of fertile, often profound, Hegelian ideas and thought patterns by
which one can philosophize in a dialectical and historically conscious man-
ner'.[2] While Bonhoeffer is sceptical of Hegel's expansive account of reason,

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[2] Yovel continues that such a stance is 'free from the illusions of much of contemporary
analytic philosophy (the illusion of a timeless, univocal truth ruled by some formal canon)'.
See Yovel, *Dark Riddle*, 101.

he certainly shows himself heir to dialectical and historically conscious patterns of thought, as evidenced in his treatment of intercultural exchanges between Germany and 'the West'.

Bonhoeffer's eclectic use of his source material comes from a period of disciplined exposition, which has inspired the approach of the present study. While the word *eclectic* can suggest dilettantism, I have drawn the term from the description of Bonhoeffer's approach given by a student in the 1933 Hegel seminar. Bonhoeffer's counsel in the seminar was to ensure one read with a view to what the author intended within the whole of a given work. To that end, I have provided fuller presentations of Hegel's texts and the contexts from which they arose, rather than only treating the historically effective 'Hegel' of Bonhoeffer's time. I have focused on the texts that Bonhoeffer worked with most – *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* and *Phenomenology of Geist* – while consulting other significant works, particularly *Philosophy of Right* and *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, in order to fill out the background of Hegel's accounts of politics and history.

My fuller comparative presentation of Hegel's work has challenged caricatures and hasty dismissals. Bonhoeffer himself regularly worked with a composite foil of 'Idealism', which is ironic given that he criticised Hegel for the loss of personal distinctions in rendering a collective. A study of primary sources uncovers that, for example, Bonhoeffer's criticism of Idealism as a 'timeless' mode of thinking lands insofar as Hegel works with a 'de-tensed' concept, but it has yet to reckon with Hegel's serious historicism. Given the sheer range of topics raised by the notion of 'revelatory community', I have not offered a comprehensive account of Hegel's relevant terms. Nevertheless, this study sets a precedent for accounts of Hegel's reception in early twentieth-century theology by dealing closely with his primary texts while challenging the association between his thought and the Third Reich.

I have presented Bonhoeffer's eclectic approach to Hegel as motivated by the priority he grants to Christology. Bonhoeffer changes the subject – from 'God' to 'Christ' existing as community – in every use of Hegel's phrase. Such specification involves Bonhoeffer's reclamation of a robust Christology of the Word, as expressed through his emphasis on preaching and the manner in which Christ 'counters' a reductive *Menschenlogos*. While sharing an appreciation of the Lutheran Eucharist with Hegel, Bonhoeffer challenges the manner in which this claim to 'real presence' is secularised such that the distinctive 'form' of Christ becomes assimilated into ethical life. It turns out that a great deal is lost when a body becomes logic, or confessing churches are merged with the state, hence the importance of Bonhoeffer's criticism of a 'docetic-idealist ecclesiology'. Against a background of 'deconfessionalisation', a movement in which Hegel's philosophy takes part, Bonhoeffer calls for a distinctively 'confessing' church.

These Christological reclamations are undergirded by Bonhoeffer's awareness that Hegel's philosophical project is significantly derived from Christian doctrine. He does not merely identify Hegel's heterodoxy and react by sheer confrontation or revolt. Rather, Bonhoeffer calls for philosophy to return to its origin after a period of estrangement. The necessity of such alliance had become increasingly acute as the Third Reich contributed to what Bonhoeffer called the 'decay' of right, reason, and history. While I acknowledge the problematic aspects of Hegel's thought that were appropriated by the state against which Bonhoeffer wrote in the 1930s and 1940s, I have accentuated those aspects that Bonhoeffer sought for the work of 'preservation'.[3]

D. 'Luther to Idealism': Toward Further Enquiry in the Tradition

'Where in the world was freedom spoken of more passionately than in Germany, from Luther to the philosophy of Idealism?', Bonhoeffer asks in his essay 'After Ten Years'.[4] The question alludes to the critical period of transmission from the reformer to Hegel. Given Bonhoeffer's emphasis on retrieving Luther's 'confession', further work is now required to draw out the distinctly Lutheran shape of Hegel's logic. Responding to recent accounts of Hegel's 'Chalcedonian logic', how much is Hegel's Chalcedon specified by the *communicatio idiomatum,* or that insistent *est*? Such work would help to indicate how much Bonhoeffer receives from Hegel uniquely, and how much Bonhoeffer is responding to Hegel's mediation of Luther.[5]

A fuller account of Lutheran forms of thought would have to deal with one of Luther's most problematic legacies, which is adopted by Hegel and Bonhoeffer to varying degrees: a longstanding Christian ambivalence towards the Jews. Bonhoeffer's reception of Hegel took place during the *Shoah,* a horrific event that has since marked both Christian and Jewish theologies. While I have shown Hegel's and Bonhoeffer's respective calls for the state to uphold the rights of Jewish persons, I have also indicated their complicity in a longstanding narrative of supersession. Further enquiry into the Lutheran shape of Hegel's philosophy should interrogate the combination of a supersessionist view of a people's religion with the claim to that same people's civil rights. Such a

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[3] On this point, Knox acknowledges that National Socialist ideology could lay claim to Hegel's political philosophy when it came to the unity of national life or the merging of church and state. He continues, however, that 'it is only if half its doctrine is ignored that the *Philosophie des Rechts* can be interpreted as an apologia for the most criticized aspects of National Socialism'. Knox specifically mentions Hegel's commitment to 'subjective freedom' and rightful treatment of the Jews. See Knox, 'Hegel and Prussianism', 27–8.

[4] *DBWE 8*, 41; *DBW 8*, 24.

[5] Relatedly, see Michael DeJonge, *Bonhoeffer's Reception of Luther* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

question extends beyond a historical contextualisation of Hegel toward contemporary concerns in theology and ethics.

E. Contributions to Contemporary Theology

This book offers contributions to three key discussions in current academic theology: the theological reception of Hegel, the doctrine of ecclesiology, and the disciplinary relation to philosophy. First, with respect to theological receptions of Hegel, the present work comes at a time of renewed interest in the 'impact of Idealism' on twentieth-century thought, even as major theologians remain unrepresented.[6] The present study shows how Bonhoeffer's engagement with Hegel shapes many of his key concerns and creative retrievals, presenting an argument that Hegel's influence should be more fully recognised by students of Bonhoeffer's works.[7] Along with filling an acknowledged gap in critical literature on Bonhoeffer, my work has implications for translation and indexing choices, as I have argued with respect to terms such as *Aufhebung.*

Second, with respect to ecclesiology, Bonhoeffer's modification of Hegel has a great deal to offer recent discussions of 'ecclesial ethics'. Responding to trends in late-twentieth century ecclesiology, David Fergusson suggests that theologians find resources to more clearly articulate the Word of God *extra nos*.[8] Bonhoeffer provides vivid accounts of the externality of the Word, memorably rendered as the *Gegenlogos*, without forfeiting a strong Lutheran identification of divine presence and human community. Ecclesial ethics has also been said to lack a robust account of the witness of the Spirit in its emphases on practice and the cultivation of virtue.[9] I have therefore highlighted moments in which Bonhoeffer speaks of the Holy Spirit, often as a means of distinguishing divine action from the community's 'objective *Geist*'. Insofar as Bonhoeffer does not develop a full pneumatology, my reception account suggests that the pervasiveness of *Geist* in Hegel's project led Bonhoeffer towards Christology as the doctrinal locus necessary for his time.

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[6] Adams appeals for such studies with particular reference to major German theologians, including Barth and Bonhoeffer, in the introduction to *The Impact of Idealism*, *Volume IV: Religion*, ed. Nicholas Adams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 21–22.

[7] As David Fergusson remarks, the student of contemporary theology cannot bypass Hegel's influence, particularly with respect to the renaissance in Trinitarian theology and the interest in more dynamic accounts of the life of God. See his 'Hegel' in *Blackwell Companion to 19th Century Theology*, ed. David Fergusson (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 73.

[8] See David Fergusson, *Community, Liberalism, and Christian Ethics*, New Studies in Christian Ethics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 71–2,189n81.

[9] The risk of pneumatological deficiency is highlighted in Reinhard Hütter, 'The Church as Public', *Pro Ecclesia* 3 No. 3, 1994, 357–61.

Third, Bonhoeffer's work with Hegel is a significant case study in the relation between theology and philosophy. As I have shown, Hegel both receives and encourages the ascent of philosophy among the disciplines at the newly founded University of Berlin. Bonhoeffer seeks to reverse this shift by criticising philosophical concepts from the standpoint of theological sources. He therefore speaks to an era of renewed theological confidence and strong criticism of 'secular reason'.[10] At the same time, Bonhoeffer is neither arrogant nor anxious in his disciplinary location. He can freely offer a qualified appreciation of Hegel and even employ Hegelian concepts in theological service. Such eclectic appropriation points towards the larger appeal from Bonhoeffer's *Ethics* that, in light of Germany's cultural crisis in the 1940s, philosophical concepts return to their origin in theology.

F. Contributions to Contemporary Ethics

How, then, might Bonhoeffer's reception of Hegel be significant for contemporary ethics? This final section indicates three areas for which this exchange over 'revelatory community' is pertinent: 'non-metaphysical' accounts of community; the 'recognition' of cultural and ethnic difference; and religious pluralism. These are all areas that call into question how much of Hegel's project might be relevant today. After all, many aspects of Hegel's broader political and historical vision are no longer tenable given current social fragmentation, religious diversity, and the rise of that religion which did not fit into Hegel's progressivist account: Islam.[11]

First, current philosophical treatments of Hegel often seek to develop 'non-metaphysical' accounts of community.[12] While this might suggest a diminished interest in theology, it is worth noting that Bonhoeffer welcomed the alliances that could form in the wake of a certain era's metaphysics. Speaking about a broad ethical coalition that sought to oppose German fascism, he states that it

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[10] For an influential representative work in English theology, see John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, Second Edition (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006). In the 'Preface to the Second Edition', Milbank reflects on the work as 'an initial attempt to redo Hegel in a non-gnostic fashion that refuses a Hegelian transparency of reason and identification of Creation with Fall'. See Milbank, *Theology and Social* Theory, XV–XVI. On the question of disciplinary autonomy, John Walker challenges Milbank's understanding of Hegel, arguing that Hegel offers a better account of the autonomy of theology, which is at the same time vitally related to 'secular' philosophy and culture as well as the living Christian community. See John Walker, 'The Autonomy of Theology and the Impact of Idealism: From Hegel to Radical Orthodoxy', *The Impact of Idealism*, *Volume IV: Religion*, 184, 188.

[11] See David Fergusson, 'Hegel', in *The Blackwell Companion to Nineteenth-Century Theology*, ed. David Fergusson, (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 73.

[12] See Beiser, 'Introduction: The Puzzling Hegel Renaissance', 3–5.

was 'not metaphysical speculation, not a theological postulate of the "logos spermatikos"' that drew people into proximity with Christ, but 'the concrete suffering of lawlessness, organized lies, of hostility to humankind and acts of violence'.[13] Just as such suffering turned others towards Christ, Bonhoeffer continues, it awakened the Christ-community to the breadth of its responsibility. Relatedly, in his later prison letters Bonhoeffer would describe 'religionless Christianity' as a form of faith that leaves behind 'the temporally conditioned presuppositions of metaphysics, inwardness, and so on'.[14] Theologians who follow Bonhoeffer's lead would do well engage with this non-metaphysical current in Hegel scholarship. To that end, a comparative account of Hegel's and Bonhoeffer's critical responses to 'positivism' would be worthwhile, particularly as a background to Bonhoeffer's famous challenge to Barth's 'positivism of revelation'.[15]

Second, while the limits of Hegel's cultural location have come up during this enquiry, it is important to note that his suggestive work on 'recognition' has informed contemporary proponents of multiculturalism. This can be seen in the work of Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor, who has featured as an interpretive voice throughout this book. Taylor has deployed Hegel's thought towards articulating a social vision that preserves difference in a greater unity.[16] Relatedly, German Idealism has featured significantly in recent discussion surrounding a theological account of race. As J. Kameron Carter argues, the Kantian legacy involves a problematic 'mutual encoding of the racial and theological so as to yield the cosmopolitical'.[17] Meanwhile, Dorrien claims that Idealism is crucial for any 'vital progressive theology' even as he exposes the disturbing, at times 'savage', ironies in its treatments of race.[18] In light of this compromised legacy, Bonhoeffer's interaction with race-critical receptions of Hegel point towards a critical line of repair.

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[13] *DBWE 6*, 344–45; *DBW 6*, 347.

[14] *DBWE 8*, 364; *DBW 8*, 405.

[15] Bonhoeffer states that he seeks to extend Barth's criticism of religion beyond the point where Barth turned back to a 'positivism of revelation'. *DBWE 8*, 363–4; *DBW 8*, 404–5. See van 't Slot, *Negativism of Revelation*, 208–225.

[16] See Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism and the 'Politics of Recognition'*, ed. Amy Gutman (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992). For an account of Taylor's reception of Hegel in the Canadian context, see Robert C. Sibley, *Northern Spirits: John Watson, Geroge Grant, and Charles Taylor, Appropriations of Hegelian Political Thought* (Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008).

[17] J. Kameron Carter, *Race: A Theological Account* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008), 5.

[18] Dorrien devotes a final section of his monumental work to the theme 'Idealism as White Supremacist Ordering', dealing particularly with Kant's view of racial hierarchy. See *Kantian Reason and Hegelian Spirit,* 2, 542–549. His term 'savage irony' comes from an earlier discussion of Hastings Rashdall.

Third, with respect to religious pluralism, it is important to recall that Bonhoeffer claimed the Christ-community would receive 'not recognition, but rejection'. As he observed, the hope of 'recognition' may be an indicator of how Christians have left faith in God for a rationalised world.[19] In contrast, Bonhoeffer's particularist account of faith community involves the strong claim that the church can only be properly understood from within its unique forms of life. Christiane Tietz has suggested that his claim can be extended towards the conditions of knowing in other faith communities.[20] This helps to nuance Bonhoeffer's retrieval of the 'visibility' of the church, which does not entail that the revelatory community is to be recognised as one *Volk* among the *Völker*. Rather, his account of 'revelation in hiddenness' gestures towards a body that is not reducible to the categories of visibility or invisibility; it is, to adopt a recent rendition of Luther's ecclesiology, witness to the 'trans-visibility' of the Christ-community.[21] With this dynamic tradition in view, the question of revelatory community invites further enquiry into the relation between specific faith claims and the forms of logic they evoke.

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[19] Bonhoeffer comments that the Reformation led to a 'desacralisation' of the world, which prepared the ground for rational science. Many thereby left behind their faith in God. *DBWE 6*, 114; *DBW 6*, 104.

[20] See Christiane Tietz, 'Bonhoeffer's Strong Christology in the Context of Religious Pluralism' in Carter and Green, eds., *Interpreting Bonhoeffer*, 193.

[21] The term is suggested with reference to the 'hidden' quality of the church, drawing on Luther's thought, in Bernd Wannenwetsch, 'Ecclesiology and Ethics', *Oxford Handbook of Theological Ethics,* ed. Gilbert Meilaender and William Werpehowski (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 65.

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A. Hegel's Literature with Abbreviations

Separate English and German abbreviations will be given in the case of differing pagination for key works. Date of publication is included if during the author's lifetime; date of delivery is provided in the case of lectures. Translations of German and French texts are my own, with alterations to English translations noted with 'alt'. All citation emphases are original unless otherwise noted.

ETW   *Early Theological Writings*. Translated by T.M. Knox. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948.

EL   *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline. Part I: Science of Logic*. Edited and Translated by Klaus Brinkmann and Daniel O. Dahlstrom. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Cited by paragraph (§) with additions (A). *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften I* (1817, rev. 1827, 1830), *Werke* VIII.

LHP / VGP   *Lectures on the History of Philosophy 1825–6, Volume III*. Edited by Robert Brown. Translated by R.F. Brown and J.M. Stewart. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. / *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie, Teil 4*. Edited by Pierre Garniron and Walter Jaeschke. Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1986.

LPR I / VPR I   *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, Part I: The Concept of Religion*. Edited and Translated by Peter C. Hodgson. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984. Citations will be taken from the 1827 lectures unless otherwise indicated. / *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion* (1821, 1824, 1827, 1831). Edited by Walter Jaeschke (1983).

LPR II / VPR II   *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, Part II: The Determinate Religion*. Edited and Translated by Peter C. Hodgson. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985. Citations will be taken from the 1827 lectures unless otherwise indicated. / *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion* (1821, 1824, 1827, 1831). Edited by Walter Jaeschke (1984).

LPR III / VPR III   *The Christian Religion – Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, Part III: The Revelatory, Consummate, Absolute Religion*. Edited and Translated by Peter C. Hodgson. Missoula, MT: Scholars Press for the American Academy of Religion, 1979. / *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion* (1821, 1824, 1827, 1831). Edited by Georg Lasson (1929).

LPWH   *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History – Introduction: Reason in History*. Edited by Johannes Hoffmeister. Translated by H.B. Nisbet. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.

LPWH I   *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History Vol. 1: Introduction and the Lectures of 1822–3*. Edited by Robert F. Brown and Peter C. Hodgson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. / *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte* (1822–1831).

NL-VPR I   Bonhoeffer Nachlass 7.A.26: *Der Begriff der Religion*, 12. Band der Lasson Ausgabe 2. Teil. Leipzig: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1925.

NL-VPR II   Bonhoeffer Nachlass 7.A.26: *Die Bestimmte Religion*. 13. Band der Lasson-Ausgabe. Leipzig: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1927.

NL-VPR III   Bonhoeffer Nachlass 7.A.26: *Die Absolute Religion*. 14. Band der Lasson-Ausgabe. Leipzig: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1929.

NL-PhG   Bonhoeffer Nachlass 7.A.26: *Phänomenologie des Geistes* 2. Band der Lasson-Ausgabe. Leipzig: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1928.

PhG   *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Parallel German / English Version. Translated by Terry Pinkard (Forthcoming, Cambridge University Press, 2018). Cited by paragraph (§) from the 2013 draft version. *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1807), *Werke* III.

PR   *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. Edited by Allen W. Wood. Translated by H.B. Nisbet. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*. Edited by Stephen Houlgate. Translated by T.M. Knox. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. Cited by paragraph (§) with remarks (R) and additions (A). Translations will be taken from Nisbet unless otherwise indicated. *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (1821), *Werke* VII.

PW   *Political Writings*. Edited by L. Dickey and H.B. Nisbet. Translated by H.B. Nisbet. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

SL   *Science of Logic*. Edited and Translated by George Di Giovanni. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. / *Wissenschaft der Logik* (1812, 1816), *Werke* V–VI.

Werke   *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*. Edited by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel (1970). Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970.

B. Bonhoeffer's Literature with Abbreviations

Separate English and German abbreviations will be given unless reference is made to a specific critical note. Date of publication is included if during the author's lifetime; date of delivery is provided in the case of lectures.

DBWE 1   *Sanctorum Communio. A Theological Study of the Sociology of the Church.* Edited by Clifford J. Green. Translated by Reinhard Krauss and Nancy Lukens. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1998.

DBW 1   *Sanctorum Communio. Eine dogmatische Untersuchung zur Soziologie der Kirche* (1930). Edited by Joachim von Soosten. München: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1986.

DBWE 2   *Act and Being. Transcendental Philosophy and Ontology in Systematic Theology.* Edited by Wayne Whitson Floyd, Jr. Translated by Martin Rumscheidt. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996.

DBW 2   *Akt und Sein. Transzendentalphilosophie und Ontologie in der systematischen Theologie* (1931). Edited by Hans-Richard Reuter. München: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1988.

DBWE 3   *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3.* Edited by John W. de Gruchy. Translated by Douglas Stephen Bax. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997.

DBW 3   *Schöpfung und Fall: Theologische Auslegung von Genesis 1–3* (1933). Edited by Martin Rüter and Ilse Tödt. München: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1989.

DBWE 4   *Discipleship.* Edited by Geffrey B. Kelly and John D. Godsey. Translated by Barbara Green and Reinhard Krauss. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000.

DBW 4   *Nachfolge* (1937). Edited by Martin Kuske and Ilse Tödt. 2nd. ed. München: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1994.

DBWE 5   *Life Together* [and] *Prayerbook of the Bible: An Introduction to the Psalms.* Edited by Geffrey B. Kelly. Translated by Daniel W. Bloesch and James H. Burtness. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996.

DBW 5   *Gemeinsames Leben* (1939). *Das Gebetbuch der Bibel* (1940). Edited by Gerhard Ludwig Müller and Albrecht Schönherr. München: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1987.

DBWE 6   *Ethics.* Edited by Clifford J. Green. Translated by Reinhard Krauss, Charles West and Douglas W. Stott. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005.

DBW 6   *Ethik.* Edited by Ilse Tödt, Heinz Eduard Tödt, Ernst Feil, and Clifford Green. Gütersloh: Chr. Kaiser/Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1992; second edition 1998.

DBWE 8   *Letters and Papers from Prison.* Edited by John W. de Gruchy. Translated by Isabel Best, Lisa E. Dahill, Reinhard Krauss, and Nancy Lukens. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010.

DBW 8   *Widerstand und Ergebung*. Edited by Christian Gremmels, Eberhard Bethge, and Renate Bethge with Ilse Tödt. Gütersloh: Chr. Kaiser/Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1998.

DBWE 9   *The Young Bonhoeffer: 1918–1927*. Edited by Paul D. Matheny, Clifford J. Green and Marshall D. Johnson. Translated by Mary Nebelsick, 2002. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press,
DBW 9   *Jugend und Studium 1918–1927*. Edited by Hans Pfeifer with Clifford Green and Carl-Jürgen Kaltenborn. Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1986.

DBWE 10   *Barcelona, Berlin, New York: 1928–1931*. Edited by Clifford J. Green. Translated by Douglas W. Stott. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008.
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DBW 11   *Ökumene, Universität, Pfarramt, 1931–1932*. Edited by Eberhard Amelung and Christoph Strohm. Gütersloh: Chr. Kaiser/Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1994.

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DBWE 14   *Theological Education at Finkenwalde: 1935–1937*. Edited by H. Gaylon Barker and Mark S. Brocker. Translated by Douglas W. Stott. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2014.
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