

TRANSCENDENCE

Philosophy, Literature, and Theology
Approach the Beyond

Edited by
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Introduction

Transcendence: Beyond . . .

All I could see from where I stood were three long mountains and a wood.

I turned and looked the other way,

And saw three islands in a bay.

And I could touch them, almost, with my hand,

And reaching out my hand to try

I screamed to feel it touch the sky

I screamed, and lo, infinity came down to settle over me. . . .

—“Renaissance” Edna St. Vincent Millay

Why a volume on “transcendence” now? Ironically, while transcendence signals what is beyond—beyond what can be known, represented, or experienced—it has also been linked to unfashionable concepts like presence, being, power, an argument without recourse, an authority beyond reason, the tyranny of the most excellent, the hegemony of the west, and of course, a totalitarian deity, and its fate has suffered with theirs. How transcendence acquired this unsavory reputation is not difficult to figure: crimes have been committed in the name of transcendent principles—principles held beyond question, beyond critique—and even in the name of a transcendent God. When, in the wake of the phenomenological turn in philosophy, the postmodern turn in linguistics, and the multi-in cultural studies, so many disciplines have, each in their own way, argued that transcendence is a relic of former mistakes—why are so many strong thinkers turning to transcendence again?

As the following essays attest, the current interest in transcendence is very far from an effort to rehabilitate the transcendence of logos or authority. Instead, they demonstrate the energy and commitment with which that category is being re-conceived. Far from the ground of oppression, transcendence is now conceived as the ground of humility: epistemological, ethical, aesthetic, and political. In philosophy, phenomenology has been one context of this renewal of interest, where the transcendent means the irreducibility of the other, carrying the ethical consequence of responsibility (as in Levinas), or givenness, where the transcendent breaks in upon us through “saturated phenomena” (as

in Marion)—phenomena that exceed our intuition, and certainly exceed our conceptual control. While the philosophical line that runs from Spinoza to Deleuze stands for absolute immanence, the failures of philosophies of absolute immanence are exposed (by Žižek and by Milbank). In theology, transcendence has resurfaced as mystical theology—beyond all names, defying predication; it is the transcendence that eludes idolatry, both our grasp of the other and the other's grasp of us. In literature and literary theory, transcendence points to “that within representation that nonetheless exceeds representation”¹ (as Ward, Dolar, and Hart show). While we have been told that there is no otherness that cannot be domesticated; nonetheless, these essays show that the dimension of transcendence is reintroduced as a crack in immanence, a resistance to it, a primordial inconsistency, a resistance to symbolization. Even those who claim to be radical materialists rediscover transcendence in new guises: the postmodern notion of transgression, the phenomenological notion of the other, the scientific notion of the impenetrable mystery of an infinite universe, the aesthetic notion of excess, the psychoanalytic notion of subjectivity, the political notion of revolutionary ecstasy.

Taylor establishes many of the questions this volume engages, tracing how “pre-modern societies were founded in a transcendent reality, in eternity” while modern states were founded in secular time, in a finite space and time in which human beings assume responsibility once accorded the transcendent. He describes the result: “Disenchantment on the one side, and the splintering of spirituality on the other, have contributed to the eviction of transcendence from the public sphere. At the same time, the new cosmic imaginary that places us in an abyssal universe renders the presence of God in the world, in nature, in the physical reality around us, problematic and uncertain. This distancing of God is completed by the development of an immanent-humanist option.”² And this leads him to the penetrating question: “How have human beings been able, after the centuries and millennia during which moral life was inconceivable without God or another transcendent reality, to conceive of their entire existence only in terms of immanence?”³ Kosky's essay charts the moment when transcendence vanished, seemingly without a trace, from the world of modern man, suggesting that Nietzsche's announcement of the death of God signaled total immanence. But the contributors to this volume demonstrate that pure immanence is not the only recourse. Instead they show that transcendence has been reconceived, sometimes radically. Transcendence does not only refer to the indefinite, infinite, beyond, for it is also the ground of ethics. For Levinas, “To be good is a deficit, waste and foolishness in a being; to be good is excellence and elevation beyond being. Ethics is not a moment of being; it is otherwise and better than being, the very possibility of the beyond.”⁴ In my own work, I am eager to reconceive justice under the horizon of transcendence, a justice that is beyond procedural and formal categories to be

infused with charity. Transcendence also structures subjectivity, for the beyond is within the subject; as Jean Wahl put it, “Man is always beyond himself. But that beyond-one-self must eventually be conscious of the fact that it is himself that is the source of transcendence.”⁵

Historically, the separation between immanence and transcendence has inspired various responses: Hegel understood the Incarnation to reconcile God and man as he sought to reconcile Christian revelation with reason through a philosophy of religion; Feuerbach understood God as man alienated from himself, and wanted earth-bound man to reclaim his projected heavens. Milbank describes the “sundering of the sublime from the beautiful and the consequent substitution of sublimity for transcendence” and critiques those gestures, recovering the relation between the sublime and the beautiful. By Kant, the “beautiful can only be a sign of the moral if it is purged of its contamination by desire,” but Milbank would restore eros to the beautiful and both to transcendence. Sheppard shows that Emerson and Whitman respond to the Kantian dilemma of transcendence by fiat—the excess of poetic inspiration—even as relying on that excess courts the risk of delirium. Our contributors cite different factors in the split—among them, the Protestant Reformers, Spinoza, Kant, and the Enlightenment *philosophes*—and they propose different responses to heal it: access to the beyond through desire (Milbank’s erotic sublime, Carlson’s mystical theology, Marion’s love), through the visible (Carlson’s account of Fra Angelico, Horner’s account of Marion’s icon), through the literary (Sheppard, Hart), through silence (Ward) through ethics (Levinas, Schwartz), through the freedom of the subject (Dolar), through the crack, or gap in the Real itself (Zizek). But in each, the urgency of interest in transcendence is an outcome of postmodern thinking. No longer confident in reason’s capacities to know and to master, no longer believing that representation “presents” the signified, no longer trying to possess the other as the object of knowledge, no longer positing a self-present idealist subject, and no longer preoccupied with definitions of God, they turn to what? Transcendence, but without proposing “a return or recovery of previous figures of transcendence.”⁶

While the contributors to this volume are drawn from the disciplines of philosophy, theology, and literature, they share the common view that the split between the concepts of the transcendent and the immanent, the infinite and finitude, is regrettable, for once they are radically separated, the transcendent becomes radically inaccessible, abstract, even empty, and in this view, only immanence is available to us, through reason and through experience. For Hegel, the gap between immanence and transcendence is an effect of the gap within immanence, and this is the sense of transcendence that renders the individual responsible: “The fact that we cannot ever ‘fully know’ reality is not a sign of the limitation of our knowledge, but the sign that reality itself is ‘incomplete,’ open, an actualization of the underlying virtual process of becoming.” Zizek

shows how this perspective of radical immanence can lead to ontology without ethics, an “is” without “ought.” If, for Spinoza, full knowledge can allow you to dispense with the ought, the deontic, for Kant, it is the opposite: in order to open up a space for ethics, you need to limit knowledge; that is, the gap between the phenomenal and noumenal domains is essential for his ethics. Ward sees modernity’s retention of transcendence as taking two forms: either complete presence, the absolute contact with the object, as in the aesthetics of the sublime, or complete absence, utter meaninglessness: the aesthetics of kitsch which “announces that though the sign is bankrupt, such emptiness can be entertaining . . .”⁷ These are in turn caught up in the binaries of language and silence, the silence of full presence and the silence of the void. Ward offers a theological understanding of silence that refuses the dualism of immanence and transcendence. Carlson sees the most radical repudiation of transcendence in contemporary culture’s omnivorous images: within the culture of image today . . . transcendence can seem to “appear” only through its negation or, even more, through its sheer absence—as that which is so thoroughly lost that few actually miss it or even see it as absent. Such a culture would seem to be a culture of absolute immanence, a culture lacking any reference beyond itself—lacking, indeed, any beyond at all, and hence any possibility of transcendence.⁸ So it would seem; but it is not, for the image is not always a conspicuous sign of the absence of transcendence; rather, “the overwhelming immanence of visuality ever signals, without reaching, the invisible.”⁹ It can suggest “the mystery of invisibility made visible,” as Horner demonstrates in the work of Marion, and as it does in Fra Angelico where transcendence “assumes body in the very matter of painting,” and in this way, the image can overcome the dualisms of complete presence or kitsch and absence as Ward argues. Blanchot offers the dark side, as Hart explains, “Rather than consoling us with the thought that the real and the image are distinct and stable orders, that we can measure the truth of an image against the reality it represents . . . as Blanchot likes to put it, that the distance between a thing and its image is always and already *within* the thing.”¹⁰ Blanchot’s concept of the “le pas au-delà”, meaning both “the step beyond” and “the step not beyond” has two implications: on the one hand, each and every move beyond immanence returns us to a new, expanded sense of the immanent. On the other hand, in its struggle with immanence, transcendence always wins, even if only negatively.

Clearly, “transcendence” is an overdetermined word with a long complex history; nonetheless, we can discern distinguishable meanings in currency. One includes the old contrast of transcendence with immanence. A “vertical transcendence” suggests leaving the immanent world, leaving the phenomenal, for another world, either in a transascendence to the heights or a transcendence to the depths. But to understand transcendence as a negation of immanence, as beyond this world, is fraught with contradiction. Hegel offers a

critique of this in his *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, “the bad infinity” that is only a negation of immanence rather the coinciding of them. If we “transcend” this world for another world and then reach it, it becomes immanent, hence, transcendence is not beyond the world; rather, is a passage from one world to another. Levinas further exposed the transcendence of negativity as not opening to a reality infinitely distant from my own, but only defined by my own, in opposition: “This mode of negating while taking refuge in what one negates delineates the same or the I.”¹¹

The second sense of transcendence would be “horizontal.” On the one hand, this is the project of self-transcendence, the understanding that we are incomplete, thrusting ourselves into an incomplete future. Our encounter with our death is such a transcendence, the heroic grasping of the last possibility. Horizontal transcendence also includes the rethinking of transcendence in the context of ethics: here, the subject is less the self-transcendence of the ego than the relation to the transcendent other embedded in social life: “The other metaphysically desired is not “other” like the bread I eat, the land in which I dwell, the landscape I contemplate, like, sometimes, myself for myself. I can “feed” on these realities and to a very great extent satisfy myself, as though I had simply been lacking them. . . . The metaphysical desire tends toward *something else entirely*, toward the *absolutely other*.”¹² Of course, these categories—vertical and horizontal—are heuristic distinctions that ultimately break down, for the vertical inflects the horizontal, and vice versa; “There can be no ‘knowledge’ of God separated from the relationship with men.”¹³ Nonetheless, these essays resist the reduction of transcendence to immanence: as Hart writes, “we distance transcendence from experience at the cost of rendering it unintelligible. More often than not, I suspect, the poets are concerned with a movement of unrest within experience, a sense of irruption within the immanent.”¹⁴ Transcendence is a delirious rupture in immanence, an erotic claim made by it, a gap in the Real, a question put to subjectivity, a realm of the impossible that breaks into possibility. As such, “beyond” also signals the character of this collection, beyond the traditional disciplinary categories of philosophy, theology and literature, not only because the topic is the purview of these disciplines, but also because it blurs their delimiting preconditions. To think about transcendence is necessarily to think beyond these and all divides.

Regina Schwartz
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Notes

1. Regina Schwartz, Ed. *Transcendence: Philosophy, Literature, and Theology Approach the Beyond* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 212.
2. *Ibid.*, 8.
3. *Ibid.*, 4.

4. Emmanuel Levinas, "God and Philosophy" in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Boston: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987), 162.
5. Jean Wahl, *Traite de Metaphysique* (Paris: Payot, 1953), 721.
6. Schwartz, *Transcendence*, 13.
7. *Ibid.*, 133.
8. *Ibid.*, 109.
9. *Ibid.*, 120.
10. *Ibid.*, 162.
11. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 40–42.
12. *Ibid.*, 33.
13. *Ibid.*, 79.
14. Kevin Hart, "La Poesia è scala a Dio: On Reading Charles Wright" in *Journal of Religion and the Arts*, 7, forthcoming.

2

The Birth of the Modern Philosophy of Religion and the Death of Transcendence

BY JEFFREY L. KOSKY

Writing about transcendence today, as the twentieth century has come to a close, I cannot escape the thought that I will be suspected as the rear guard of an already vanquished troop defending an already forgotten cause. It seems that this task, to write on transcendence, runs counter to every dominant movement and voice of twentieth-century culture. I remind myself that we, the inhabitants of the century that has just ended, have witnessed the progressive realization of what Max Weber, at the beginning of the century, called the “disenchantment of the world.” With this phrase, Weber described the world view upon which modern culture was premised: the assumption that the world is fully knowable, fully calculable, fully open to the probing of the scientific mind and reason. In such a world where all is potentially if not yet actually available for man, what place is left for transcendence, for something, or something that is not at all a thing, which might transcend the grasping mind or hand of modern man? The fact that fewer and fewer authors and scholars today even think or discuss “disenchantment” only indicates how illuminating Weber’s vision has proven to be; for to forget that the world is disenchanted is precisely the spell cast by disenchantment. Transcendence is so far lost that we don’t even know it is gone.

In this essay I will not propose a return or recovery of previous figures of transcendence; such a task would deny the historical and cultural horizon within which thought has its life. Others in this collection will have shown how, even without following the path of such a return, it might be possible within the contemporary horizon to catch a glimpse of transcendence flickering ambiguously amidst the images which have cast us in their net. What I propose to do instead is to mark the moment when transcendence vanished from the modern world, with or without a trace being a question undecided here. More specifically, I am interested in how this vanishing of transcendence has been expressed in one particular, indeed academic, faculty: namely, the philosophy of religion. Concerned as it is with the loftiest of man’s aspirations—namely religion, the one dimension of human existence where transcendence

might be expected to retain its meaning—the philosophy of religion would seem to be the place where the meaning of transcendence would remain alive and well. In fact, this has not been the case, and it is this paradox that I want to explore through a reading of the birth of the modern philosophy of religion.

Few will doubt that the modern philosophy of religion was born at the dawn of the nineteenth century. Born with Kant and the Kantians, the discipline came of age, like so much of modernity, in Hegel and Nietzsche. They therefore define the horizon within which philosophy of religion operated in modernity. What is this horizon? What are the conditions under which philosophy of religion emerged and so operates? Perhaps ironically, readings of Kant, Hegel, and Nietzsche confirm a close connection between the birth of the philosophy of religion and the realization of total immanence announced in the sentence “God is dead!” For subsequent philosophy of religion, then, one phenomenon in particular has posed a nearly insurmountable difficulty—divine transcendence.

The death of God received its first philosophical articulation in Hegel’s philosophy. “God is dead” appears in Hegel’s writings for the first time in *Faith and Knowledge* (1802) where he writes, “Formerly, the infinite grief existed historically in the formative process of culture. It existed in the feeling that ‘God Himself is dead.’”¹ Even if Hegel’s first statement of the death of God thus claims that this is “the feeling upon which the *religion* of more recent times rests,” it is important to note that this statement is part and parcel of a critique of *philosophy* as represented by the leading philosophies of Hegel’s time, the reflective philosophies of subjectivity found in Kant, Jacobi, and Fichte. Thoroughly entrenched in nineteenth-century Enlightenment culture, modern philosophy, as represented by these authors, conceptualized what existed historically as “the feeling that ‘God Himself is dead.’” The Enlightenment God is a dead God, according to Hegel, since “spirit that does not manifest itself or reveal itself is something dead” (LPR, 102). The God of the Enlightenment was precisely a God who does not manifest himself in knowledge and so a God totally abstract and unrelated to life—dead.

On Hegel’s reading, modern philosophy’s flight from the transcendent began when Luther and his Reformation followers instituted an unbridgeable separation between finite human existence and transcendent or infinite divine existence. Fearing that mediating structures such as icons and the sacraments would pose a crisis for the faithful asked to believe, for instance, that the (finite) bread and wine experienced at the eucharist are in fact (divine, infinite) body and blood, Protestantism banished the infinite from the intuitable, perceptible finite. Protestantism located religion in subjectivity and feeling, but a subject still separated from God by the infinite abyss of sin such that divinity remained an object of longing and desire. For the Protestant, on Hegel’s reading,

beauty and truth present themselves in feelings and persuasions, in love and intellect [understanding]. Religion builds its temples and altars in the heart of the

individual. In sighs and prayers, he seeks for the God whom he denies to himself in intuition, because of the risk that the intellect will cognize what is intuited as a mere thing, reducing the sacred grove to mere timber (FK, 57).

According to Hegel, then, the unbridgeable gap between sighing subjectivity and the God for whom it longs was established in order to ward off the risk that knowledge, in the act of comprehending its object, will reduce God to the level of man—or worse, that of a mere thing. God was removed from finitude so that his transcendence might be preserved. Religion, on the other hand, was located in the finite, more precisely in a finite and limited subjectivity yearning for the infinite that transcends its grasp. “Religion, as this longing, is subjective; but what it seeks and what is not given to it in intuition, is the Absolute and the eternal” (FK, 58).

What Luther instituted as a prophylaxis of sorts—aiming to prevent debasing the divinity of God in and through the act of reducing him to finitude and immanence—backfires in its very functioning, according to Hegel, and leaves an abstract, unknowable God. In short, Protestantism succeeded all too well in its attempt to preserve transcendence and the absolute distinction between God and man.² Frustrated by the impossibility of satisfying its yearning for the infinite, sighing subjectivity reconciles itself with the finitude to which it is confined and admits no reality beyond empirical existence and the ordinary, everyday world of science and the understanding. Hegel writes,

The infinite longing that yearns beyond body and world, reconciled itself with existence. But the reality with which it became reconciled, the objective sphere acknowledged by subjectivity, was in fact merely empirical existence, the ordinary world and ordinary matters of fact (*Wirklichkeit*). Hence this reconciliation did not itself lose the character of absolute opposition implicit in beautiful longing. Rather it flung itself upon the other pole of the antithesis, the empirical world (FK, 59).

Subjectivity puts its longing to rest by absolutizing the position of finitude and empirical reality—one might say, simply by forgetting what it could not know and then forgetting this forgetting. This forsaking of transcendence in the distance that was meant to protect it results in and belongs to the good conscience of a subject “allowed to confide in ordinary life and surrender to it without sin” tarnishing its clean conscience (FK, 59). God, the infinite, or the transcendent has no experienceable relation to this finite reality, and this absence is not even noted in a possible trace left in sin and the disturbed conscience. Such a God is not alive in this world or for this subject. This is at least one of the things Hegel means when he writes that “the religion of more recent times rests” on “the feeling that God Himself is Dead.”

According to Hegel, this “formative process of culture” has established the subjective standpoint which determines Enlightenment philosophy. Even though

by the time of Kant, Enlightenment philosophy no longer absolutized empirical reality, according to Hegel, it nevertheless had absolutized subjective experience. Knowledge was confined to the phenomenal realm where the activity of the finite, human mind contributed to the experience made.

The fixed standpoint which the all-powerful culture of our time has established for philosophy is [one where] philosophy cannot aim at the cognition of God, but only at what is called the cognition of man. This so-called man and his humanity conceived as a rigidly, insuperable finite sort of Reason form philosophy's absolute standpoint. Man is not a glowing spark of eternal beauty, or a spiritual focus of the universe, but an absolute sensibility.³ He does, however, have the faculty of faith so that he can touch himself up here and there with a spot of alien supersensuousness (FK, 65).

Like the Protestant culture in which it was rooted, Enlightened philosophy absolutized the distinction between the finite and infinite, man and God, and took man as its absolute standpoint—a man, moreover, determined by finitude and sensibility and so a man incapable of elevating himself to the eternal and absolute.

Confined to the finite and the limits of sensible intuition, Kantian philosophy employed reason in the critical project of reflecting on itself and thereby removed God from the sphere of its applicability. For Kant, as is well known, reason turns in on itself in order to analyze itself and discover its own limits. This critical turn was meant to secure the possibility of knowledge by specifying the a priori structures of the mind which make knowledge and experience possible. Knowledge was possible so long as it was confined to the phenomenal realm of experience where the mind is active; but when the mind attempts to extend knowledge beyond the realm of experience and make a claim to know things-in-themselves, it falls into illusion. Prey to what Kant called the transcendental illusion, finite man mistakes the structures of thought for structures of reality. In the case of God, reason is particularly susceptible to this. The so-called proofs for the existence of God, for instance, rest on the illusory supposition that the principle of causality applies outside the field of our understanding, that is on the supposition that causality is not a category of the understanding but a category of being. To infer from our experience of the world that the world must have a cause outside it (named, God) is “a judgment of purely speculative reason, since the object which we are inferring is not an object of possible experience,” and therefore this cause is not a possible object of knowledge.⁴ Kant's critique of pure reason secured knowledge from its skeptical attackers, but only at the price of removing God from this well-defended fortress.

Having removed God from a knowledge confined to the limits of sensible experience, Kant believed that he had actually made room for faith, as he wrote famously in the “Preface to the Second Edition” of *The Critique of Pure Reason*:

“I have therefore found it necessary to deny *knowledge*, in order to make room for *faith*” (CPR, 29). What knowledge gave up, faith found, but this faith could not know what it nevertheless held as its own. Knowledge had surrendered God to faith with the express purpose of preserving and protecting God from the threat knowledge itself posed. On Hegel’s reading, this striving for a place beyond the limited and finite place established for knowledge (a place called faith) represents both what is most noble about Kantian philosophy and its ultimate betrayal of philosophy. Hegel writes,

The torment of a nobler nature subjected to this limitation, this absolute opposition [between the finite and infinite], expresses itself in yearning and striving; and the consciousness that it is a barrier which cannot be crossed expresses itself as faith in a realm beyond the barrier. But because of its perennial incapacity this faith is simultaneously the impossibility of rising above the barrier into the realm of Reason, the realm which is intrinsically clear and free of longing (FK, 64–5).

Confronted with the barrier posed by the limits of the understanding, man’s better part, his nobler nature, longs for something unlimited and infinite, something beyond this barrier. This longing, however, cannot fulfill itself in knowledge, for man’s knowledge is confined to finitude and the limits of the understanding, so it expresses itself in faith which can never know what it nevertheless desires.

When Kant claims that his philosophy aims to abolish knowledge in order to make room for faith, he illustrates almost to perfection what Hegel means by the death of God. Kant’s God is a dead one, for Hegel, to the degree that it is apprehended in a faith which cannot know what it nevertheless talks about, believes in, and longs for. Transcendent—that is, separated from knowledge by the absolute opposition between the finite and the infinite, the God of faith must always remain abstract and dead, apart from the living world of knowledge and experience.

It is precisely in this Kantian context that the modern philosophy of religion emerged. As the eminent scholar Walter Jaeschke, one of the chief editors of Hegel’s *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, notes, “The first works to bear the name of philosophy of religion are written by committed Kantians. Karl Heinrich Pölitz in particular expressly took his stand in 1795 wholly on the practically grounded doctrine of God and religion.”⁵ While it might seem surprising that the philosophy of religion should emerge at the moment when God was being cast from knowledge to faith, it was precisely this act of banishment that opened its possibility, determined its task, and guided its future. As Jaeschke writes, “as long as it seemed as though the idea of God was not only conceivable but indispensable to theoretical philosophy, indeed, properly speaking, its

central point, the philosophy of religion had only marginal importance. What first released it from this shadow existence was Kant's demonstration of the failure of traditional philosophical theology.⁶ How did removing the idea of God from philosophical knowledge of God make an opening for the philosophy of religion? And what tasks belonged to this emergent philosophy of religion?

What theoretical reason gave up with Kant (namely: God) practical reason recovered. That is to say, though theoretical reason cannot have any knowledge of God, God nevertheless appears as a necessary postulate of the practical reason. In his *Critique of Practical Reason*, the idea of the moral good and the presupposition of moral experience serve as the basis on which Kant shows how such morality necessarily presupposes the a priori operation of what he calls the categorical imperative. Just as theoretical reason acts in knowledge in and through the forms of the intuition and the categories of the understanding, practical reason contributes the category of the ethical imperative to our moral life.

Now, according to Kant, along with the categorical imperative, practical reason postulates the idea of God—and it is just that, a postulate which means that it is not known, and in fact can never be known, if there is a reality corresponding to this idea. Kant's argument, however, is well known. The chief end of the moral life is virtue rewarded by happiness. To be morally virtuous we must never do the good in expectation of reward for then we act out of a motive other than love of duty and hence are not virtuous. However, Kant says, we anticipate, and even believe, that this virtue will be crowned with reward. In order that this end might be upheld, the practical form of reason operative in morality necessarily postulates three ideas: 1) freedom, since only if we can do what we ought to do will this end be realized; 2) immortality, since the infinite distance between our sinful nature and the good we desire cannot be overcome in this life; and 3) God, who assures that virtue receives its just reward by apportioning happiness according to merit. The idea of God thus belongs to the practical faith that moral behavior will receive reward, and this idea is perfectly rational insofar as it is a postulate of reason in practical form.

The place where God is found has thus been shifted from theoretical knowledge to the practical reason active in morality and in doing so Kant has "made room for faith" (CPR, 29). The man of the Enlightenment, according to Kant, "needs no speculative proofs for God's existence. He is convinced of it with certainty, because otherwise he would have to reject the necessary laws of morality which are grounded in the nature of his being. Thus he derives theology from morality, yet not from speculative but from practical evidence; not through knowledge but through faith."⁷ The idea of God remains and is fully rational because it is rooted in the a priori structure of reason in its moral operation. The qualification that we are here dealing with a practical knowledge, or faith, must not be understood to imply a lesser degree of evidence; for it is

delivered with all the certainty and conviction as pertains to our conviction in human freedom—which is to say, for man at that time, a great deal.⁸

Having banished the possibility of knowing God in order to save God for faith, critical philosophy faced the daunting task of deciding what to do with the traditions and dogma of the historical religions. Within the philosophical disciplines, reflection on religion thus replaced speculation on God. Making no claim to uncover knowledge of God, the philosophy of religion in Kant and especially his followers aimed to save what of religion was in accord with the activity of practical reason. Submitted to the definition of religion as the practical knowledge of our moral duties as divine commands (CPrR, 134), religion would comprise nothing more than what morality and practical reason could tolerate. With this identification, it became possible for philosophical reflection on actual, historical religions to assess the extent to which particular doctrine or dogma did and did not conform to the religion of reason. The philosophy of religion was initially charged not with knowledge of God, but a critique of the representations, positive forms, and doctrine found in historical religions.

The classic expression of Kant's philosophy of religion is *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1793) where the historical institutions and beliefs of Christianity are evaluated and reinterpreted in light of the ethical religion of reason. To such a project, the revealed elements of religion obviously posed the largest obstacle insofar as the claims of revelation introduced a transcendence and authority beyond reason. This is evident in the Kantian reinterpretation of the Christological problem. Whereas traditional Christology sought to explain the relation between the human and divine, the finite and the infinite, the worldly and the transcendent, the Kantian Christology concerned the relation between the historical and the ideal in the person of Christ. For the Kantian philosophy of religion, the Christ of history is no longer a revelation of a transcendent God but a material example of the ethical ideal, something like a role model, that is needed because the sluggish and sensuous nature of finite man prohibits him from attaining the ideal moral behavior he should be able to reach in and through reason alone. "Thus [Hegel writes] Christ is dragged down to the level of human affairs, not to the level of the commonplace but still to that of the human" (LPR, 82).

On Hegel's reading, this project of salvaging religion was eventually renounced when victorious reason became more confident with its triumph. In Kant and his heirs, the triumph of philosophy over religion was so great that in 1802, only a decade after Kant's *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, Hegel wrote that "a philosophical struggle against the positive, against miracles and such-like, is now regarded as obsolete and unenlightened. Kant tried to put new life into the positive form of religion with a meaning derived from philosophy, but his attempt was received poorly, not because it would have changed the

meaning peculiar to these forms, but because they no longer appeared worth the bother” (FK, 55). On Hegel’s reading, enlightened philosophy had won so great a victory that when its very own philosophy of religion tried to save religion its attempt seemed empty, futile, and vain.

Hegel is quick to observe, however, that philosophy had really only vanquished the positive forms of religion (FK, 55). He doubts, therefore, that this victory really defeated the foe it intended. The philosophy of religion may have emptied the religious form of its positive content, and it may have preserved whatever of this content still stood after it had passed through the tribunal of reason; but, precisely in this way, the philosophy of religion failed to capture the content of real religious faith: namely, God. The religion it won out over was not a real faith, but only a weak caricature of faith and therefore the victory is no victory at all.

The fact that faith still reached outside and above what so-called Reason could comprehend was the best sign that Reason’s victory was still incomplete. Enlightened reason “acknowledges its own nothingness by placing that which is better than it in a *faith outside and above* itself, as a *beyond*” (FK, 56). Lacking its better part, Enlightenment philosophy, on Hegel’s reading, was unsatisfied—and unsatisfactory—because it had won a victory over religion only by leaving what was essential to the content of religion (God) over and above Reason. Once again, Hegel is asserting that Kantian philosophy is both embedded in and the actualization of what exists in the surrounding culture as the feeling “God Himself is dead”!

Understood as the denial of knowledge of God and the supposition of a faith reaching beyond it, the death of God becomes a problem for philosophy itself. The death of God means that philosophy has failed to reconcile within itself the distinction between faith, with its transcendent God, and knowledge. Faith still reaches beyond knowledge toward a God who cannot be known, a God who is in this sense dead and whose death leaves knowledge incomplete precisely in what concerns its highest object.

The truth of the Enlightenment—“that heaven be transplanted to the earth below”⁹—was in need of assistance, according to Hegel, in that philosophy needed to recover knowledge of God. This is why Martin De Nys and Walter Jaeschke speak of Hegel as undertaking a “project which one legitimately names philosophical theology.”¹⁰ Through the resources of philosophy, they argue, Hegel hopes to develop the knowledge of God omitted from modern philosophy and thereby bring philosophy to completion. However, this project is only imperfectly grasped when one—like Jaeschke, for example (who is here unlike De Nys and also unlike Eberhard Jüngel)—does not add that this philosophical theology, this transplantation of heaven to the earth below, is propelled by the introduction of an idea that first appeared historically in a particular religious tradition: namely, the idea of the death of God that ap-

peared in Christianity.¹¹ It is this Christian death of God which lets us see how Hegel was able to overcome the death of God in Enlightenment philosophy, and it is this same death of God which lets us see how the philosophy of religion emerged in Hegelian philosophy.

To understand how Hegel's appropriation of this second sense of the death of God can revoke the death of God in Enlightenment philosophy, I want to return to the important passage from the conclusion of *Faith and Knowledge* where Hegel first uses the phrase "God is dead."

But the pure concept of infinity as the abyss of nothingness in which all being is engulfed, must signify the infinite grief [of the finite] purely as a moment of the supreme idea. Formerly, the infinite grief existed historically in the formative process of culture. It existed in the feeling that "God Himself is dead," upon which the religion of more recent times rests; the same feeling that Pascal expressed in so to speak sheerly empirical form: "la nature est telle qu'elle *marque* partout un Dieu *perdu* et dans l'homme et hors de l'homme [Nature is such that it *signifies* everywhere a *lost* God both within and outside man]. By *marking this feeling as a moment of the supreme Idea*, the pure concept must give philosophical existence to what used to be either the moral precept that we must sacrifice the empirical being (*Wesen*), or the concept of formal abstraction [e.g., the categorical imperative]. Thereby it must reestablish for philosophy the Idea of absolute freedom and along with it the absolute Passion, *the speculative Good Friday in place of the historic Good Friday. Good Friday must be speculatively reestablished in the whole truth and harshness of its God-forsakenness. . . .* The highest totality can and must achieve its resurrection solely from this harsh consciousness of loss, encompassing everything, and ascending in all its earnestness and out of its deepest ground to the most serene freedom of its shape [my emphasis] (FK, 190).

There are two important points to notice here.

(1) The first sense of the death of God is now superseded, not annihilated, by a second, according to which the first is only a moment in the unfolding of its idea. The proposition "God is dead" is no longer absolute in its first sense but is now read as a truth which belongs to God Himself. As Jüngel writes,

By designating the feeling that "God Himself is dead" as a moment of the supreme idea, talk about the death of God gains a twofold meaning. First of all, in talk about the death of God, the situation of absolutized finitude expresses itself, which corresponds to abstract infinitude as empty negativity. Once that feeling is grasped as a moment of the supreme Idea, then the death of God is understood as an event of the *self-negation* of God, who does not desire to be "in and for himself" and does not desire to forsake the world in its finitude.¹² (GMW, 74).

What Jüngel points out is twofold: (a) on Hegel's reading, talk about the death of God gives expression to the Kantian standpoint insofar as it had absolutized finitude and correlatively posited only an abstract and empty infinite. (b) Hegel has made that death of God a moment in the procession and return of God Himself. Thus understood, the atheistic feeling of the modern age, given

philosophical articulation in Kant and the Enlightenment *philosophes*, stands within the unfolding of the Absolute, not as having truth on its own but as the moment of God's self-negation, the moment when God passes over into his opposite, leaving behind the remoteness of his transcendence and infinity in order to enter finitude.

(2) By philosophically interpreting an idea given in revealed religion, in particular, the Christian religion, it becomes possible to overcome the atheistic feeling of modern times. Hegel's task, as Jünger says, was to reconcile faith and knowledge, heaven and earth, "against the apparently satisfied Enlightenment, by recapturing philosophically the content of faith. Philosophy had to grasp that in revealed religion heaven itself *has come* to earth. Philosophy had to reconcile Christianity with the Enlightenment. To do that, it needed and used the dark statement, the Death of God" (GMW, 89). In Christianity, as interpreted by Hegel the philosopher, the death of God means that the abstract and unknowable God has descended into finitude, even to the point of death, in order to be known by man. The process begun by the Incarnation is thus completed in the death of God on the Cross. The Christian proclamation "God is dead" means that heaven has been emptied and indeed come to earth, that the truths of faith are not in heaven but fully revealed in and for the finite world—precisely as the truth of the Enlightenment had wished. The feeling "God is dead," which arises for the modern mind of the Enlightened because of its absolute separation from God, is indeed true in its feeling that the heavens are empty; but if it is to realize its truth and complete the project of reconciling heaven and earth, this feeling must be reinterpreted in light of the Christian tradition where the heavens are empty precisely because they have emptied themselves kenotically in their revelation here on earth. Only in and through its acceptance of the Christian sense of the death of God will philosophy achieve its final satisfaction in the knowledge of a wholly immanent totality.

If the death of God is a truth belonging to God, or if the wisdom of the heavens has indeed died and descended to earth, overcoming the separation of God and man, then the so-called Hegelian philosophical theology does not find its object in the remote or abstract heavens but here on earth. Where? In religion, where the knowledge of God is actual. As Hegel himself says, "the doctrine of God is to be grasped and taught only as the doctrine of religion."¹³ Hegel's philosophy of religion therefore will differ significantly from that which issued from Kant. Whereas the Kantian philosophy of religion arises precisely out of the unknowability of God, the Hegelian belongs to and serves the knowledge of God. Jaeschke will speak of Hegel's philosophical theology "passing over into philosophy of religion, or vice versa: the philosophy of religion is for Hegel only one part of philosophical theology, that part in which philosophical theology reaches its conclusion."¹⁴ In recovering knowledge of God, not just reflecting on the positive forms of religion, Hegel's philosophy of

religion revokes the death of God which had been instituted in Kant's philosophy. In so doing, it reconciles the last distinction within itself, overcomes the last transcendence resisting it, and realizes the death of God taught in Christianity. The Hegelian philosophy of religion at once presupposes the death of God and completes it.

This interpretation of the death of God as a fundamentally Christian truth about God is closely related to Hegel's description of Christianity as "the revealed religion." For a religion to be revelatory, according to Hegel, means precisely that its God can be known or cognized by the finite, human subject.

Those who say that Christianity is not revelatory do not speak from the standpoint of the Christian religion at any rate, for the Christian religion is called the revealed religion. Its content is that God is revealed to human beings, that they know what God is. Previously they did not know this; but in the Christian religion there is no longer any secret—a mystery certainly, but not in the sense that it is not known. For consciousness at the level of understanding or for sensible cognition it is a secret, whereas for reason it is something manifest (LPR, 130).

The secret of the mystery having been removed by God's revelation in and as the Christian religion, consciousness can know God completely and unreservedly. The mystery being known, the secret no longer a secret, Hegel's philosophy of religion realizes the conquest, or the descent, of the heavens by comprehending the religious consciousness where the knowledge of God is actual.

The revelatory character of Christianity stems from the determination of God not as substance but as spirit. Whereas substance consists entirely in remaining in itself and needing no other for its existence, spirit is itself by manifesting itself in and for an other. "Spirit is an absolute manifesting. Its manifesting is a positing of determination and a being for an other. 'Manifesting' means 'creating an other,' and indeed the creating of subjective spirit for which the absolute is" (LPR, 129). The determination of God as spirit means that God is not God if he does not manifest himself, does not leave his abstract and empty infinitude to manifest himself in and as the finite. If God as infinite spirit has emptied himself into finite spirit, the finite knowledge of God is not simply a relation of the finite to the infinite, but the infinite's self-relatedness back to itself. The religious consciousness is not simply knowledge of God—or it is knowledge *of* God where the genitive is read as both objective and subjective. In the knowledge *of* God actual in the religious consciousness, God knows himself and thus returns to himself from his self-othering in finitude.

Religion, however, does not yet know its own consciousness as such. A philosophy of religion is therefore needed to comprehend the truth which religion already is. This is why, as Hegel says in the passage from the conclusion of *Faith and Knowledge*, "Good Friday must be speculatively reestablished" and why the "pure concept must give philosophical existence" to what previously was a historical or moral doctrine. Noting differences between the subjective

perspective of religion and the speculative perspective of religion, Hegel writes, “In its concept, religion is the relation of the subject, of the subjective consciousness to God who is spirit. In its concept regarded speculatively, it is therefore spirit conscious of its own essence, conscious of its own self” (LPR, 104). The difference here noted stems from the standpoint adopted. For the understanding that starts with man, religion is a relation of two independent and external beings, a subject and object transcending one another. For speculative philosophy, by contrast, where the starting point is God as spirit, religion is the closure of the circle whereby infinite spirit realizes itself in and through the subjective consciousness of it itself.

In this way, the philosophy of religion is not simply a description of man. Likewise, the philosophy of religion is not simply an interpretation of religion in light of philosophical knowledge, salvaging what accords with it and discarding what does not. Nor is it an attempt to demonstrate the necessity of religious views. Rather, religion is of interest to Hegelian philosophy because religion is a self-relation of spirit to itself; considered in the speculative philosophy of religion, the religious consciousness of God is the return of spirit to itself. This is why the philosophy of religion completes the philosophical theology undertaken by Hegel. And, if philosophy itself remained incomplete to the degree that it failed to reconcile itself with what faith holds of God, then the philosophy of religion completes philosophy itself.

But, the philosophy of religion achieves this task only on condition that it accept the determination of God by the harsh word “God himself is dead” or else by the (equivalent) determination of God as spirit whose essence is the full manifestation of all mystery—both determinations given in the Christian religion. Though Hegel negates the Enlightenment death of God and thereby brings metaphysics to its end, he does so only by a second, Christian death of God where the first is revoked in and through its interpretation as a negative realization of the full manifestation of God as spirit. There is thus no escape from the death of God, only its being enshrined as the very essence of God grasped in a finally completed and fully revelatory immanence.

In connecting the Christian and explicitly Christological source of the death of God with the atheistic spirit of the times and in making this connection essential to philosophy’s triumph over the last transcendence, Hegel opened the door for an interpretation of this connection that would emphasize the atheistic spirit of the times. It is Feuerbach who, in and through his critique of Hegel’s speculative philosophy, realizes this inevitable reversal. In a reversal of Hegelian philosophy that makes its achievement explicit, Feuerbach’s philosophical reflection on religion results in an immanence that no longer happens in the name of God or Spirit, but Man.

On Feuerbach’s reading, Hegel intended the admirable end of thinking Christianity together with the essence of the modern era but he failed to real-

ize this end insofar as he reinstated theology in and through the speculative concept of God *as spirit*. Hegelian immanence is in fact an immanence of the transcendent. Feuerbach will therefore object that Hegelian philosophy “is the negation of theology from the viewpoint of theology or the negation of theology that is itself again theology.”¹⁵ What Feuerbach objected to in Hegel was the fact that theology was restored in and through the Christianization of the modern atheistic moment or, in other words, the fact that the negation of Christianity was identified with Christianity itself in the “speculative Good Friday.” Feuerbach, on the other hand, will dissociate the atheistic death of God from the knowledge of God by claiming that atheism leads not back to God—as in Hegel where the realization of the emptiness of the heavens is only the negative of the total presence of God in the world—but to man who, as an atheist, knows no God other than the one he himself creates in his own image. This is what Feuerbach means with the famous pronouncement, oft repeated, that “the secret of theology is anthropology.” What Hegel did not know, according to Feuerbach, but what his attempt to take seriously the atheism of the modern era should have led him to see, was that “the task of the modern era was the realization and humanization of God—the transformation and dissolution of theology into anthropology” (PPF, 5). Feuerbach’s atheistic humanism thus represents the inversion or mirror image of Hegel’s reconciliation of the finite and infinite, man and God, in a fully immanent movement of reappropriation. This position was an inevitable outcome once the death of God was accepted into thought of God, seeing as it always remained possible to interpret this death not from the standpoint of its Christian significance but from the perspective of the other side of the Hegelian reconciliation: namely, the atheistic modern era.

Inverting the Hegelian position, Feuerbach conceives religion not as the circuit of spirit relating to itself in and out of its state of alienation, but as man’s alienation from himself or his own nature. The formulae expressing this alienation are numerous: “To enrich God man must become poor;”¹⁶ or better:

Religion is the disuniting of man from himself; he sets God before him as the antithesis of himself. God is not what man is—man is not what God is. God is the infinite, man the finite being; God is perfect, man imperfect; God eternal, man temporal; God almighty, man weak; God holy, man sinful. . . . But in religion man contemplates his own latent nature. Hence it must be shown that this antithesis, this differencing of God and man, with which religion begins, is the differencing of man with his own nature (EC, 33).

Like Hegel, Feuerbach turned to philosophy and philosophical cognition for a therapy that would heal the tears and oppositions that divide man from the God standing over and above him in faith. Reflecting his inversion of the Hegelian starting point, however, for Feuerbach, the therapy of modernity

consists in a philosophical critique that resolves or reduces¹⁷ religion and the God of faith to their anthropological, not spiritual, essence.

For both Feuerbach and his intellectual father Hegel, the therapy consists in resolving this alienated state by removing the idea of a transcendent God—whether it be in the name of a God whose death is his very life or in the name of Man who stands in the place of the dead God. The most provocative example for understanding how Feuerbach follows from and inverts Hegel is his reading of the incarnation; for it is the incarnation that serves as the figure for the truth of all other figures of religious thought. For Hegel, as we saw, the Incarnation was in fact the truth of reconciliation shown in representational form, the reconciliation of God and Man in God as Spirit, Infinite and Finite in Infinite Spirit. On Hegel's reading, the incarnation was the first step in the process that culminated in the crucifixion. It bespoke the Christian truth overlooked by Enlightenment philosophy, that God had indeed abandoned his remote and abstract infinitude and descended to the earth where he could be known by man. For Feuerbach, the situation is the inverse: "This example clearly exhibits the distinction between the method of our philosophy and that of the old speculative philosophy. [Ours] criticizes the dogma and reduces it to its natural elements, immanent in man, to its originating and central point—love" (EC, 52). When subject to the proper form of philosophical critique, the religious doctrine of incarnation signifies in human terms. What Hegel saw as the beginning of a process starting from God is here seen as the end of a process starting with Man.

The Incarnation is nothing else than the practical, material manifestation of the human nature of God. . . . God became man out of mercy: thus he was in himself already a human God before he became an actual man. . . . If in the Incarnation we stop short at the fact of God becoming man, it certainly appears a surprising, inexplicable, marvelous event. But the incarnate God is only the apparent manifestation of deified man; for the descent of God to man is necessarily preceded by the exaltation of man to God. Man was already in God, was already God himself, before God became man (EC, 50).

The Hegelian reconciliation is here inverted, such that God and Man are reconciled not in God or the Infinite as the origin and end of the process of alienation and reconciliation, but in Man as origin and end. It could be said that the circle of immanence opened and closed by the Hegelian death of God is here so completely immanent that it is no longer thought in terms of God, the former name of transcendence.

Even though Feuerbach never speaks expressly of the death of God, the very absence of the phrase "the death of God" would, as Jüngel notes, seem to indicate the extent to which the Christian God had been banished or killed. Once the phrase has been separated from its first, Christian sense, it is only a short

step to the resurrection of this phrase where “the death of God” will signify precisely and only the death of God, that there are no gods. Opened by Feuerbach, this possibility was realized in Nietzsche. Through the mediation of Feuerbach, it falls to Nietzsche to show the conclusion of the end realized in and through the Hegelian philosophy of religion.

If Hegel enshrines the death of God in a philosophy of religion that recovers God in a positive sense, then Nietzsche does the same in a negative sense. As in Hegel’s critique of Enlightenment philosophy, for Nietzsche, too, the death of God is a word directed against those who posit an unknowable, unintelligible God. When Zarathustra desires “that your conjectures should be limited by what is thinkable . . . that everything be changed into what is thinkable for man, visible for man, feelable by man,” he joins Hegel in criticizing any philosophy or thinking that “recognizes something higher above itself from which it is self-excluded.” Like Hegel, Zarathustra announces the death of God in order that philosophy might free itself from this willed servitude to an authority above or outside it. “If there were gods, how could I endure not to be a god! Hence there are no gods.”¹⁸ Zarathustra teaches the death of God in order that man might escape belief in or subservience to a transcendent power standing over against him.

However, whereas Hegel saw this infinite gap being overcome by a death of God which belongs to the very essence of God, Nietzsche saw it being overcome in a death of God that puts an end to the essence of God. “Hence, there are no gods.” Having entered philosophy in Hegel’s thought, the death of God no longer belongs to the essence of God. By the time it reaches Nietzsche, it is no longer connected to its Christian roots, and so when Nietzsche, the madman, and Zarathustra all claim “God is dead,” this death is expressed in an unsurpassable way. Since it has been disconnected from the Christian context where it was a truth about God, the death of God does not mediate or reconcile the atheistic feeling of modern times and Christian faith. Divorced from its Christian roots, the death of God again means the impossibility of any philosophy or theology recovering knowledge of God.

In Nietzsche, the death of God no longer means the self-othering of spirit, but the emptiness of all talk about God that is divorced from the will to power which employs God. Thus, for Nietzsche, the death of God issues in a philosophy of religion that is not charged with the task of completing the knowledge of God but one that reduces God to the will to power. Nietzschean philosophy of religion therefore assumes its genealogical shape, in which the idea of God is related to the many forms of the will to power that have used it to preserve and enhance their own power. Thought in a philosophy that reduces all religious meanings to the form of will to power which they express and enhance, God is no longer over against thought as in the Enlightenment and he no longer lives in thought itself as for Hegel. In Nietzsche, then, the happy, Hegelian alliance of the philosophy of religion and philosophical theology is rent asunder by the

thought of the death of God, the very thought which Hegel had introduced in order to join the two tasks. In accepting Hegel's introduction of the death of God into philosophy but rejecting his reading of it, Nietzsche left the twentieth century with a philosophy of religion no longer attached to the project of knowing or even overcoming an already revoked transcendence.

In terms of the story I have just told, the emergence of the philosophy of religion in the nineteenth century both presupposes and consummates the death of God and the realization of a pure and total immanence. To be sure, each of the figures in this story claimed to have retrieved the sense of God in his very death—to the benefit of practical faith in God (Kant), knowledge of God (Hegel), the expression of man's nature (Feuerbach), or to God's ultimate end (Nietzsche); but none adopted a figure of philosophy that granted significance to the sense of transcendence or to a revelation that maintained this transcendence. Even Kant, who claimed to have cleared a way for faith in the existence of a God transcending theoretical reason, did so at the price of excluding this transcendence from philosophical knowledge. This short history of the birth of the modern philosophy of religion thus identifies immanence as the horizon within which such philosophy moves, and it would appear that no subsequently post-modern philosophy of religion will have been possible without acknowledging this immanence and the death of God as the signs under which it operates. Would the test of any advance in the post-postmodern philosophy of religion be its ability to articulate the significance of transcendence? And can such a philosophy of religion do so in a thought that nevertheless moves in the sphere of immanence where philosophy operates?¹⁹

Notes

1. G. W. F. Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1977); 190. Hereafter cited intertextually as FK.
2. While the "disenchantment" of the world was meant to protect divine transcendence, to protect against "reducing the sacred grove to mere timber," it had the opposite effect when the protected transcendence was simply forsaken and left to languish in its distance. As Hegel notes, "It is precisely through its flight from the finite and through its rigidity that subjectivity turns the beautiful into mere things—the grove into timber, the images into things that have eyes and do not see, ears and do not hear" (FK, 58). Hegel here would anticipate some of Max Weber's theses concerning unintended consequences in the life of ideas and the Protestant Reformers. See Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958).
3. This needs to be read in contrast with Hegel's determination of man as finite spirit, that is to say as the manifestation of infinite spirit for itself. Man as finite spirit would be the self-othering of infinite spirit in and as the consciousness which knows it. Infinite spirit would thus return to itself in man's knowledge of God. See below for how this conception of finite and infinite spirit is related to the philosophy of religion.
4. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), 528. Hereafter cited intertextually as CPR.
5. "Philosophical Theology and Philosophy of Religion," in *Reason in Religion: The Foundations of Hegel's Philosophy of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 110.
6. Walter Jaeschke, *Reason in Religion: The Foundations of Hegel's Philosophy of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 4.

7. Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Philosophical Theology* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1978), 42. Hereafter cited intertextually as LPT.
8. I should note that Hegel's interpretation of all this could not be put better than it is expressed in the following observation from Kant himself: "We now have sufficient insight to tell that we will be satisfied from a practical standpoint, but from a speculative standpoint our reason will find little satisfaction" (LPT, 27)—and we are well aware of Hegel's attitude to dissatisfied reason.
9. G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 355.
10. Martin J. De Nys, "Philosophical Thinking and the Claims of Religion," in *New Perspectives on Hegel's Philosophy of Religion*, op. cit.; p. 19. See also Jaeschke, "Philosophical Theology and Philosophy of Religion;" 1, 6 et passim.
11. Eberhard Jüngel, in *God as the Mystery of the World* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1983), writes, "The first philosophical interpretations of talk of the death of God known to us neither deny nor forget the theological origin of this expression, but rather make it very plain. It was Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel who introduced talk of the death of God into philosophy and in doing so was well aware that he was using a theological expression" (63). See also Martin De Nys in "Philosophical Thinking and the Claims of Religion": "Hegel overcomes the 'death of God' that Enlightenment philosophy brings about by philosophically appropriating and maintaining the insight into the death of God that belongs to the consummate religion," namely Christianity (25).
12. Eberhard Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*, op. cit., 74. Hereafter cited intertextually as GMW.
13. Cited in Jaeschke, "Philosophical Theology and Philosophy of Religion"; 8.
14. *Ibid.*, 8.
15. Ludwig Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future* (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1966), 31. Hereafter cited intertextually as PPF.
16. Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity* (Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1989), 26. Hereafter cited intertextually as EC. This remark obviously had a decisive impact on Marx.
17. In speaking of Feuerbach's critique, the language of reconciliation is not appropriate as it is in the case of Hegel; for what Hegel sees as reconciliation, Feuerbach sees as insoluble contradiction. Whereas Hegelian philosophy wants to reconcile opposites, finding identity in difference and difference in identity, Feuerbach's criticism reduces opposition to one of the terms—God to man—in a movement of reappropriation.
18. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in *The Portable Nietzsche* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1982), 198.
19. I take up these questions in Part III of my book *Levinas and the Philosophy of Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), where I try to show how Levinas's ethical phenomenology contributes to a philosophy of religion.