

of Jesus," which Knox dismissed as a "forced attempt to depict Jesus as a teacher of . . . Kant's ethics." This is the only one of Hegel's early manuscripts that is technically not "fragmentary." It has come down to us complete—with the dates of commencement and conclusion (May 9–July 24, 1795)—but Hegel gave it no title. Between these two pieces, the translators have placed the series of fragmentary meditations on the difference between the Hellenic folk-religion and the dogmatic tradition of the Christian gospel which Hegel wrote during his first year as house-tutor for the von Steiger family in Berne (1794). These fragments were never part of a continuous whole, so the title of the present book is rather a misnomer.

The "Tübingen fragment" is, of course, enormously important. I have sought to find in it the key to the distinctly variegated pattern of essays and drafts that followed in the next seven years; and I do not yet see any reason to repent of that effort—though my account did make the story of those years a bit too much like the unfolding of a Leibnizian monad. In the eyes of the other good students in the Tübingen seminary, Hegel was an "eccentric." Neither he nor Hölderlin counted as one of the recognized "Kantians" in the recollections of his fellow-student Leutwein: "His hero was Rousseau, whom he was forever reading." Fuss and Dobbins are therefore quite right to direct our attention to the "Savoyard Vicar" (in *Emile*) rather than to Kant. In the Tübingen essay, Lessing's *Nathan* stands beside Kant's *Religion* and Fichte's *Critique of Revelation*; Hegel is openly critical of the Kantian concern about "pure respect" as the only moral motive. So, although he deliberately puts the categorical imperative in the place of the so-called "Golden Rule" in the "Life of Jesus" (p. 115) Hegel was not trying to turn Jesus into a Kantian in 1795. K. I. Diez, whom Leutwein calls a "Kantian engagé," was a teaching assistant in the seminary while Hegel was officially studying theology. It is not surprising that he did not stay there long, for he maintained openly that Kant, not Jesus, was the true Messiah. To my mind, Hegel's stretching of the Gospel message to embrace the categorical imperative, was his way of indicating that an enlightened teacher must *reconcile* the religious wisdom of the past with the latest philosophical insight—not set up an opposition between them. *Nathan*, not the sage of Königsberg, is the real model for his Jesus.

What is undeniable, in any case, is that the "Life of Jesus" is a document of the Enlightenment. It satisfies the first canon of a genuine "folk-religion as laid down in the Tübingen fragment: 'Its teachings must be founded on universal reason'" (p. 49). But one would hardly suspect that its author had also required there that "Imagination, the heart, and the senses must not go away empty-handed in the process"; or that he had *criticized* enlightenment as "the will to actualize by means of the understanding" (p. 39) quite trenchantly. What set Hegel apart from the proper "Kantians" in

the seminary was not his penchant for reading Rousseau and Lessing; it was what set Hölderlin apart as well. They read not just Kant, but "Kant and the Greeks." In philosophy this meant Plato; but beyond that it meant the Greek dramatists, especially Sophocles. Even in the "Positivity of the Christian Religion"—the earliest essay that Knox translated—we can see that Hegel's project was to integrate the Kantian "scientific" consciousness into a Platonic comprehension of the "ethical substance." But at Tübingen, and again at Frankfurt, Hölderlin himself constituted for Hegel, a sort of reincarnation of the Greek spirit. There is evidence enough in the Berne manuscripts, that Hegel could bring the Greek spirit to life by himself. But I do now wonder whether the Hegel who wrote the "Life of Jesus" could have produced the "Spirit of Christianity" without being restored to the living presence of the author of *Hyperion* and of the *Empedocles* drafts, as he was in 1797.

My chief quarrel with the editorial introduction in this volume, is that it leaps right over this immediately following context of these early essays, in favor of a discussion of Hegel's mature theology and Christology. The editors provide a useful analysis of the pieces that they have translated; and beyond that it was sensible to avoid any unnecessary summarizing of what others have already said more copiously. But the relevance of these early pieces of enlightened theology to Hegel's mature philosophy of Christian experience is debatable. There was, of course, no room for a full debate in their introduction. So if they wanted to contribute a proper opening salvo for that debate here, they would have done better, perhaps, to point to the analogy between the Hegelian "Life of Jesus" in 1795, and the book which D. F. Strauss published (without any knowledge of this essay, I assume) in 1835. As it is, the reader is faced by an unbridged abyss between the manuscripts the editors have translated, and the philosophy of thirty years later that they have written about.

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IN THE SPIRIT OF HEGEL. By ROBERT C. SOLOMON. New York, Oxford University Press, 1983. Pp. xxii, 646.

Robert C. Solomon's *In the Spirit of Hegel* is a work on the *Phenomenology of Spirit* which presents a series of striking challenges to accepted interpretations of Hegel.

"Hegel," Solomon claims, "is a strictly secular, virulently anti-theological, and more or less anti-Christian philosopher, not at all the Christian apologist or the theological heretic he has so often been made out to be in traditional German and English interpretations" (p. 5). Traditional interpreters have been at fault, too, in treating Hegel as a speculative metaphysician. For Solomon, he is, rather, an epistemologist in the Kantian mold who "reduced all questions of *being* (or ontology) to questions about the structures and forms of human experience" (p. 8). Indeed, in Solomon's opinion, the *Phenomenology* is "far more in tune with the spirit of the logical positivists and the more modern pragmatism of W. V. O. Quine than the ontological speculations of Leibniz and Christian Wolff" (p. 9). Although, as Solomon admits, the work may appear on the surface to be "an exercise in *Wissenschaft* . . . a journey to the Absolute," these terms should be understood to amount to "little more than obligatory bows to the internal politics of academic professionalism" (p. ix); Solomon would have his readers reject the "easy inference" of taking Hegel at his word and seeing the *Phenomenology* as the "prelude or overture to his later work" (p. 3). The objection here goes beyond the received view of the *Phenomenology's* place within the Hegelian system. Solomon believes that the traditional picture of the system itself as a structured hierarchy is basically misconceived:

no single image has been more detrimental to our understanding of Hegel—or our ability to accept him—than the self-congratulatory idea that his philosophy is the spiral staircase upward to the Absolute, not only because there is no Absolute, but because there is no "upward" either, and no staircase (p. 25).

Yet, for all the boldness of its claims, Solomon's book is, as a whole, extremely disappointing. It is difficult to imagine that any reader not already sharing the author's perspective would emerge from a reading of it with his views substantially modified. Solomon simply never provides the sustained interpretative argument which would be necessary to make his claims convincing. Behind his "somewhat polemical" (p. xi) approach there lies a fundamental looseness of methodology.

Solomon concedes that the "existentialist" (p. 27) Hegel whom he favors must contend with the presence in the text of another more conventionally familiar version of Hegel, concerned to develop "a single all-embracing system of philosophy that will bring that discipline to its conclusion" (p. 15). Yet this aspect of Hegel, Solomon maintains, represents no more than the young philosopher "establishing the groundwork for his future professional enterprises" (p. 15). Thus, so far from being obliged to measure his own interpretation against the full range of Hegel's mature writings,

Solomon regards himself as free in principle to dismiss whatever does not conform to it as a mere expression of Hegel's willingness to adapt his views in order to further his career.

Critics of opposing views may point in vain to Hegel's many explicit statements which contradict Solomon's interpretation: his stress on the need to establish philosophical truth as a system ("The true form in which the truth exists can only be as its Scientific system");¹ on the indispensability of the ideal of proof to philosophy ("After dialectic became separated from proof the whole notion of philosophical proof became lost" (*Phenomenology*, p. 53)); on the role of the *Phenomenology* as a prelude to the *Logic* ("With this ends the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. What [the notion] prepares in it is the element of knowledge. In this the moments of Spirit now extend themselves in the form of simplicity. . . . Their movement, which organizes itself into a whole in this element, is the *Logic* or *speculative philosophy*" (*Phenomenology*, p. 33)); and on the necessity and completeness of the *Phenomenology's* treatment of its material ("The necessary progression and interconnection of the forms of the unreal consciousness will by itself bring to pass the completion of the series" (*Phenomenology*, p. 68)). To insist on taking such assertions at their face value is, presumably, to identify oneself to Solomon as a "traditional Hegel scholar" (p. 15) on whose inability to go beyond the limitations of academic orthodoxy he loses no opportunity to pour scorn.

What Solomon himself presents is more of an impressionistic paraphrase of the *Phenomenology* than a scholarly commentary. The "radical historicist" (p. 15) depicted in its pages would, undoubtedly, have come as a shock to Hegel himself; the modern reader may find the claim that this amalgam of Sartrean *activism* (dialectic is "as much *engagement* as reflection" (p. 175)) and *holism* à la Nietzsche ("Hegel's unacknowledged historicist heir" (p. 639)) represents the remedy for the ills of contemporary philosophy equally bizarre.

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¹Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1952), p. 12. Hereafter *Phenomenology*.