

6-1-1991

# Reason in Religion: The Foundations of Hegel's Philosophy of Religion, by Walter Jaeschke

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## Peer Reviewed

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### Repository Citation

Lakeland, Paul F., "Reason in Religion: The Foundations of Hegel's Philosophy of Religion, by Walter Jaeschke" (1991). *Religious Studies Faculty Publications*. 22.  
<http://digitalcommons.fairfield.edu/religiousstudies-facultypubs/22>

### Published Citation

Lakeland, Paul F. "Reason in Religion: The Foundations of Hegel's Philosophy of Religion, by Walter Jaeschke." *Theological Studies* 52.2 (1991): 355-357.

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love to maintain a discerning watch over the senses and a continual recollection of God. In performing these and other ascetical practices (summed up as "the practise of purity"), the passions become more and more purified, until one is ready to enter the stage of sanctification and illumination, where grace illumines the mind to see the various levels of reality in different ways. B. discusses at length what and how one can know spiritually, first through concepts and symbols, and then in a state of union where no mental image is perceived. The sign of this latter state is the attainment of a freedom to be able promptly to repulse passionate impulses arising in one's heart. In this new mystical state John distinguishes two moments: an initial approach to the "cloud of divine light," and then an ever deepening penetration into it, where everything is known in God and everything is seen as God sees it. On this level one experiences the glory and beauty of the divine nature, but not the divine nature itself.

B. demonstrates impressive mastery over his subject. The vast amount of unedited material necessary for a doctoral thesis makes for heavy reading. Yet the book will be of value to everyone interested in mysticism from an academic point of view, especially the mysticism of the patristic period.

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FREDERICK G. MCLEOD, S.J.

**REASON IN RELIGION: THE FOUNDATIONS OF HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION.** By Walter Jaeschke. Translated from the German by J. Michael Stewart and Peter C. Hodgson. Berkeley: University of California, 1990. Pp. xvii + 464. \$49.95.

Jaeschke's greatest achievement has been to make sense of Hegel's posthumously published *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. Previous editions had run together and reconciled Hegel's manuscript and sets of student lecture notes from the four occasions at the University of Berlin on which Hegel had delivered this series of lectures, thus creating a text that was not Hegel's and rarely made much sense at all. J.'s critical edition, an English version of which has been published by the University of California, painstakingly separated out the four versions of the lectures. It has made it possible for students of Hegel both to see something of the development of his thought and, perhaps even more importantly, finally be able to study a text with reasonable confidence that it approximates Hegel's original intention.

In the present work, a set of substantial essays, J. claims that Hegel's purpose in his work on religion is to find a way to reintroduce the idea of God into theoretical philosophy, to have once again both a philosophy

of religion and a philosophical theology. Hegel's philosophy of religion, in other words, like so much of his work, is an answer to Kant, in this case to Kant's rejection of philosophical theology in favor of "ethico-theology," i.e., the assertion of God as a necessary hypothesis for the smooth running of the Kantian ethical system.

The first chapter examines the Kantian position in considerable detail, insofar as it led to Hegel. In J.'s view it is Hegel who reinvents speculative theology, but it is in Kant that the starting-point for Hegel's conclusions is to be found. Indeed, Hegel himself saw things this way. Kant's "victory of non-philosophy," to use Hegel's judgment, was both to convince many of the impossibility of a philosophical theology, particularly through his refutation of the ontological argument, and at the same time further to undercut the philosophical approach to God by successfully asserting the moral "proof." In the later part of this chapter, J. outlines the reaction to Kant which set in within ten years of his death. He focuses on Fichte's insertion of concrete content into Kant's abstract postulate of God, on Schelling's more frontal attack on the moral concept and the doctrine of the postulates as a way of reintroducing God through the back door, on Hegel's early historical work on the development of the moral concept of God, and on Jacobi's mystical plea for the location of the idea of God in "non-philosophy."

The second chapter examines Hegel's attempts at a metaphysical renewal of God and religion during the so-called "Jena" period, i.e., through the completion of *The Phenomenology of Spirit* in 1806. Religion is freed from ethicotheology, it is distinguished from both art and philosophy, and the history of religion is absorbed into the philosophy of religion. Most significantly of all for the final development of Hegel's thought, dogma comes to be seen as expressing metaphysical truth, though not as determining that truth.

In his central chapter J. turns his attention to the Berlin lectures. Arguing for the priority of the lectures over the *Encyclopedia*, J. sees the four lecture series as four attempts to demonstrate the possibility of the philosophy of religion as a science. Through a developmental analysis of Hegel's manuscript and the lecture notes (*Nachschriften*) that provide access to the three further versions of the series, J. demonstrates Hegel's conviction that the philosophy of religion can demonstrate "the presence of reason in religion." Religion in its highest form—Lutheran Protestant Christianity—is the perfect exemplification of the "self-consciousness of freedom." The final chapter invites participation in the controversy over the value of Hegel's religious thought that erupted so soon after his death and culminated in the late work of Schelling with the finally nonphilo-

sophical cry that Hegel's speculative retrieval of the idea of God is inadequate to the longing of the human ego.

J. is clearly of the opinion that subsequent history's overall lack of interest in Hegel's speculative philosophy of religion is not to be explained on philosophical grounds. Rather, the apparent aridity of his idea of God left it unpalatable to those who wished to believe. Indeed, J.'s protest that Hegel "did not rest content with the negative knowledge of a nonactual God," but "went on to conceive God as the idea and religion as the self-knowing of this idea in human being" nicely illustrates the difficulty of accumulating specifically religious capital from Hegel. Only Hegelians can rest content with this God.

I believe almost every word in this fine book. As befits the person who knows most about Hegel's philosophy of religion, J. ranges with deceptive ease across this notoriously difficult material, and seems to have been extraordinarily well served by his translators. It is possible that J. is a little too willing to take Hegel's side, particularly in the posthumous controversy, but on the other hand J. is quite correct that Hegel's speculative philosophy of religion has never been philosophically answered, for all that it has been countless times rejected out of hand. Perhaps the one place that J. seems a little too smooth, even overanxious, is in his assertion of the priority of the unpublished *Lectures* over the treatment of religion in the published work from the same time. While he should certainly know better than almost anyone else, it is possible that the ease with which he comes to this conclusion makes overlarge claims for the admittedly remarkable textual work on the *Lectures* for which he was responsible.

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**SPIRIT AND EXISTENCE: A PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY.** By Michael Gelven. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1990. Pp. 264, \$29.95.

The reader discovers that this book offers a distinctive approach to the topic of spirit when the first chapter begins with a description of a human experience of self-disgust. This experience cries out against the awfulness of the beast, a merely animal existence of flesh without meaning. Gelven, the author of a commentary on Heidegger's *Being and Time*, serves up a series of fresh, stimulating meditations on the theme of human spirituality. In a work which eschews the scholarly apparatus of footnotes, bibliography, and index, he attempts to grasp the fundamental meaning of spirit, without any primary concern with whether there is a thing called 'a spirit' or 'a soul.' He explores flesh and,