

(p. 150): ‘Paul is able to identify Jesus with God ... through scriptural exegesis, yet he is able to keep him distinct and subordinate to the Father.’

The final substantive chapter of the book explores some of the implications of what it meant for Paul to call Jesus ‘Lord’ and thereby to associate him with the name YHWH. Capes addresses those who think too much is made of Paul’s application of the divine name to Jesus, since there are some Jewish texts where OT texts associated with the divine name are applied to another figure. He also criticises the scholarly construct that views Christianity as moving from a ‘low’ christology, such as some see in Paul’s letters, to the ‘high’ christology of John’s Gospel. In dialogue with Larry Hurtado, James Dunn, Richard Bauckham, N. T. Wright, A. R. Johnson and Richard Hays, he explores how Paul can remain a ‘monotheist’ even though he applies YHWH texts to Jesus as the subject of religious devotion. Capes also looks at the catalysts for Paul’s christological uses of YHWH texts and the way that the impact that Jesus made on his followers was a source of conviction that Jesus was the embodiment of Israel’s God.

This is a thorough, careful and cogently argued book, well worth reading – and rereading.

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## **Molly Farneth, *Hegel’s Social Ethics: Religion, Conflict, and Rituals of Reconciliation***

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Hegel is enjoying something of a Renaissance in English-speaking scholarship at the moment, especially as his thought relates to religious topics, a post-war trend that began with the pioneering work of Emil Fackenheim and Charles Taylor, complemented by the more recent writings of neo-pragmatists like Robert Brandom and Robert Pippin. Molly Farneth’s book is in the debt of both of these traditions, but ultimately she sides with scholars who reject a ‘metaphysical’ reading of Hegel, and who instead regard him as a champion of the Kantian critique of dogmatic metaphysics whose project is ultimately epistemological rather than metaphysical in the pre-Kantian (i.e. ‘Spinozist’) sense of the term. Farneth nevertheless claims that her project should be of interest to those with ‘religious commitments’, including theologians and scholars of religion (p. 7), because Hegel shows how Kant’s watershed epistemological achievement – the transcendental unity of apperception – allows for the development of a social ethic in which religion plays a key role. At the heart of Hegel’s social philosophy, Farneth argues, are responsibility and accountability, ethical moments which stand in ‘dialectical’ relation to one another, and out of which emerge a communal knowledge and an ethic rooted in forgiveness and reconciliation.

Farneth’s invitation to theologians is something of a bait and switch, since the speculative highpoints of Hegel’s thought, particularly his christological and trinitarian

speculation, have been ruled out of the story in advance. This is something of a puzzle, because Farneth does cite some recent scholarship which grapples with these crucial features of Hegel's speculative logic, indisputably inspired by the patristic and medieval tradition of philosophical theology (e.g. Desmond, Bubbio and O'Regan), but this patient tradition of Hegel scholarship seems to have had little or no influence on the argument of the book. Farneth's 'nonmetaphysical' or 'post-Kantian' reading of Hegel, as she prefers to call it, not only rules out treating Hegel's speculative thought but, seemingly by extension, a systematic approach to it. Historically, one way to ignore the speculative dimension of Hegel's thought has been to concentrate, as Farneth does, on *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, and then one or two passages within it. This approach is usually adopted by left-wing Hegelianism, but Farneth does not situate herself in this tradition, and she is explicitly critical of its most recent representatives like Žižek. Nevertheless, the limitation to one text is problematic in that one would expect a book on Hegel's social ethics to include a word or two about the *Philosophy of Right* where Hegel actually makes his 'social ethics' explicit. And in light of the title's further claim to deal with Hegel on 'religion, conflict, and social rituals of reconciliation', the fact that Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* are ignored is, to say the least, disappointing.

If Farneth is not interested in Hegel's body of work taken as a whole, never mind the later Hegel with whom we've become acquainted thanks to his posthumously published lectures on religion, the history of philosophy and the philosophy of history, what does she find attractive about the Hegel she finds in the *Phenomenology*? According to Farneth, even though it is clear that Hegel was 'no democrat', he remains useful for thinking about democratic politics as they ought to be – an 'ought' that is intentionally left open in order that we might look to Hegel for a way forward. Given the strong influence of feminist philosophy on Farneth's argument (she is especially attracted to the work of Bonnie Honig), her support for Hegel's democratic credentials may seem surprising; but Farneth, *pace* Judith Butler, does see a proto-feminism in Hegel's reading of Sophocles' *Antigone*, a tragedy born in part of Greek gender essentialism. For Farneth, Hegel was headed in the right direction.

Farneth admirably wants to restore a dialectic of authority through accountability and responsibility into contemporary political discourse, which, she argues, would be achieved by heeding Hegel's emphasis on sacrifice, forgiveness and reconciliation. Farneth is doing something attractive here, but I think she ultimately misses what is most powerful in the Hegelian ethic, which is his defence of the ancient notion of piety and its 'dialectical' relation to a person's willingness to die for the sake of the good; this is the piety that motivated Antigone, and which Hegel found to be such a powerful witness to the potency of the ethical standpoint. Ethical beings find themselves in situations that they do not choose but accept in a spirit of gratitude, the proof of which is discovered in the willing of their suffering unto death. Here is another tradition, alongside natural theology, that Christians and Platonists have always shared: ethical life is at bottom a *meditatio mortis*. For Hegelian idealists, meditation on death is the first logical moment on the way to sharing in the infinite subjectivity of Christ. Had Farneth taken things in this direction, she might have had more reason to expect to hold the theologian's attention on ethical matters, even if she asks that he hold his speculative attention in abeyance. One might even wonder if these missed opportunities are somehow dialectically related.