

J.I. DE KEIJZER

Bonhoeffer's
Theology of the Cross

Dogmatik in der Moderne



Mohr Siebeck

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The Influence of Luther in "Act and Being"

Mohr Siebeck

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For Annekatrien Saromani

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List of Abbreviations

CD I/1	Karl Barth, <i>The Doctrine of the Word of God, Church Dogmatics</i> , vol. I/1
DBW 2	Dietrich Bonhoeffer <i>Werke 2: Akt und Sein</i>
DBWE 1	Dietrich Bonhoeffer <i>Works 1: Sanctorum Communio</i>
DBWE 2	Dietrich Bonhoeffer <i>Works 2: Act and Being</i>
DBWE 3	Dietrich Bonhoeffer <i>Works 3: Creation and Fall</i>
DBWE 4	Dietrich Bonhoeffer <i>Works 4: Discipleship</i>
DBWE 5	Dietrich Bonhoeffer <i>Works 5: Life Together and Prayerbook of the Bible</i>
DBWE 6	Dietrich Bonhoeffer <i>Works 6: Ethics</i>
DBWE 7	Dietrich Bonhoeffer <i>Works 7: Fiction from Tegel Prison</i>
DBWE 8	Dietrich Bonhoeffer <i>Works 8: Letters and Papers from Prison</i>
DBWE 9	Dietrich Bonhoeffer <i>Works 9: The Young Bonhoeffer: 1918–1927</i>
DBWE 10	Dietrich Bonhoeffer <i>Works 10: Barcelona, Berlin, New York: 1928–1931</i>
DBWE 11	Dietrich Bonhoeffer <i>Works 11: Ecumenical, Academic, and Pastoral Work: 1931–1932</i>
DBWE 12	Dietrich Bonhoeffer <i>Works 12: Berlin: 1932–1933</i>
DBWE 13	Dietrich Bonhoeffer <i>Works 13: London: 1933–1935</i>
DBWE 14	Dietrich Bonhoeffer <i>Works 14: Theological Education at Finkenwalde: 1935–1937</i>
DBWE 15	Dietrich Bonhoeffer <i>Works 15: Theological Education Underground: 1937–1940</i>
DBWE 16	Dietrich Bonhoeffer <i>Works 16: Conspiracy and Imprisonment: 1940–1945</i>
LW	Luther's <i>Works</i>
Romans	Karl Barth, <i>Epistle to the Romans</i> , 2 nd edition

Chapter 1

Introduction: Confessions of a Crypto-Lutheran

1.1 A Forest of Bonhoeffer Interpretations

Bonhoeffer's popularity is at an all-time high. More than seventy years after his death, publications about his life and theology continue to pour forth from the press. This is simple evidence for the fact that Bonhoeffer is widely considered to be one of the most beloved and important theologians of the twentieth century whose work and thought continues to inspire and enthrall thousands of people today. Bonhoeffer has been relevant in and for contexts that were vastly different from those of the Weimar Republic and Nazi Germany. The recent upsurge of populism across the Western world, however, seems to infuse the interest in his theology with renewed urgency.

Bonhoeffer's tremendous popularity comes with the dual dangers of redundancy and obfuscation. One might ask whether there is still a need for yet another work on Bonhoeffer. The answer to that question will have to be left up to the readers as well as the narrower community of Bonhoeffer scholarship. The danger of obfuscation, however, needs to be addressed before I begin this project. Is this study going to add yet another version of Bonhoeffer in the already conflicting forest of interpretations?

Many Bonhoeffers have emerged, all with their claim to both fame and authenticity.¹ According to Haynes,

interpreters continue to claim Bonhoeffer as a 'true' radical, liberal, or conservative. He is invoked as a champion of orthodoxy, neo-orthodoxy, the theology of secularity, political and liberation theologies, religious pluralism, and postmodernism.²

Bonhoeffer's professional career began in the Weimar period and ended abruptly just before the end of the Second World War. His life was, like the times in which he lived, characterized by turbulence. The intellectual legacy he bequeathed to us is far from unified and complete. Bonhoeffer's life came to an end in the "midst of life,"³ before he could have even begun to think about the articulation of his mature thought. What we have from him fascinates and con-

¹ Stephen R. Haynes, *The Bonhoeffer Phenomenon: Portraits of a Protestant Saint* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004).

² Haynes, *The Bonhoeffer Phenomenon*, 10.

³ Cf. DBWE 3:41.

tinues to inspire, yet it is also fragmented, incomplete, and sometimes even incoherent.⁴ Haynes notes, “Given the bewildering plethora of interpretations that attach themselves to this man, there is understandable interest in recovering the historical Bonhoeffer.”⁵

With this investigation, I’m adding my own tree to the forest of Bonhoeffer interpretations: a distinctively Lutheran Bonhoeffer who is deeply rooted in Luther systematically but ultimately bears fruit with a powerful practical theology that appeals across denominational and confessional boundaries. It is easy for the reader to assume (as well as for the writer to think) that this is merely another take on Bonhoeffer in a never-ending array of portraits fulfilling as many imaginations in hope of addressing as many audiences. It is quite true that *my* Bonhoeffer is the product of a very particular and personal trajectory in which very personal questions, set in a twenty-first-century context, were addressed that, well over seventy years after Bonhoeffer, speak to quite a different situation. Moreover, speaking of a Lutheran Bonhoeffer is potentially adding confusion to the discussion as long as the term “Lutheran” is not clarified. “Lutheran” can mean many things. In its 500-year history, Lutheranism has gone through many phases and developments. Even today, in the North American context, there are many varieties, denominations, ranging from very conservative to more liberal. When I, as a non-Lutheran, speak of a Lutheran Bonhoeffer, I do so with a certain innocence. What I mean, however, is that Bonhoeffer, as a modern theologian, steeped in the German theological liberalism of Berlin and yet having been captivated by the dialectical theology of Barth, forged a unique path in theology that, though modern, was deeply influenced by the original writings of Luther. It might well be that the encounter with Barth spurred Bonhoeffer to draw closer to Luther since Bonhoeffer showed little interest in Luther initially⁶ and is reported to have wanted to distance himself from the Luther Renaissance around Karl Holl.⁷ This development in Bonhoeffer’s thought is not part of the current investigation of this Lutheran influence, however, and I merely claim that Bonhoeffer appears to be deeply influenced by Luther by the time he starts writing *Sanctorum Communio*. For me “Lutheran Bonhoeffer” does not denote a Bonhoeffer who wants to be a Luther scholar or aligns himself intentionally with the Luther Renaissance, or becomes a classic systematician reiterating classic Lutheran doctrine. The term merely indicates for me that time and again, at crucial moments of decision in the labor of theology, Bonhoeffer makes use of fundamentally Lutheran insights even when they

⁴ Bonhoeffer’s charge against Barth of “positivism of revelation” for instance, has caused a lot of debate and even left Karl Barth wondering as to its meaning. See DBWE 8:362, 588.

⁵ Haynes, *The Bonhoeffer Phenomenon*, 10.

⁶ See Charles Marsh, *Strange Glory: A Life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (New York: Vintage Books, 2014), 44.

⁷ Marsh, *Strange Glory*, 44, 50.

are couched in modern jargon or make use of modern philosophical language. This is the case to such an extent that in hindsight, irrespective of whether this was Bonhoeffer's overt intention, one can speak of Bonhoeffer's entire work, and notably his *Act and Being*, as a *theologia crucis*.

Ultimately, I hope that in spite of my own shortcomings and the personal nature of the questions addressed, there is something about this particular version of Bonhoeffer that warrants some attention and will aid Bonhoeffer scholarship to come to a better understanding of the sources and structure of Bonhoeffer's thought.

1.2 A Lutheran Bonhoeffer

The above leads perhaps to the suspicion that Bonhoeffer is hijacked for an ideological purpose or that at the very least this Bonhoeffer too is a flawed one. The threat of such a misuse can never be completely avoided. Indeed, the particular Bonhoeffer I am pursuing in this inquiry is admittedly a contextual interpretation. All that can ever be achieved is a portrait painted with concern for historical accuracy and theological fidelity. As such, the product of this attempt will enter the field of Bonhoeffer studies and be weighed by more knowledgeable and more experienced Bonhoeffer scholars. But as it becomes part of a larger discussion it may contribute something valuable, spark some interest, and bring something new to the table. As but one element in a larger communal hermeneutical attempt, it will also be judged wanting here and there as falling short of perfection.

Yet, I trust that the Bonhoeffer I present will not merely join the fray of conflicting interpretations but will genuinely contribute to a better understanding. My hope is based on two things: (a) There is a strong case for the Lutheran interpretation of Bonhoeffer that suggests that Bonhoeffer's connection with Luther is at the heart of Bonhoeffer's theological project. Notably, two recent projects, one by Michael DeJonge and one by Gaylon Barker, point out to what extent Bonhoeffer is guided by insights that come directly from Luther's theology;⁸ (b) The Lutheran Bonhoeffer seems endowed with a remarkable ability to offer clarity in certain problems that Bonhoeffer scholarship is characterized by. To say it in a different way, the Lutheran Bonhoeffer has quite a bit of explanatory power. He helps to clarify Bonhoeffer's relationship with Barth, as will become evident in the following pages, but also provides a missing link between the systematic and the practical Bonhoeffer. There are three problematic areas

⁸ Gaylon Barker, *The Cross of Reality: Luther's Theologia Crucis and Bonhoeffer's Christology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015) and Michael P. DeJonge, *Bonhoeffer's Reception of Luther* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

in Bonhoeffer studies for which the Lutheran Bonhoeffer, and in particular the reading of *Act and Being* as a *theologia crucis*, can be useful. These problems are the following.

1. *A One-sided approach to Bonhoeffer scholarship.* Generally speaking, there is a strong emphasis in Bonhoeffer literature on Bonhoeffer's later works. Bonhoeffer's theology is subject to a dichotomous approach in which his academic work (esp. the dissertation and the *Habilitationsschrift*) are often ignored in favor of his later more accessible and practical works. De Gruchy observes that "generally there has been much more interest in Bonhoeffer's life and thought outside the academy."⁹

An informal survey I did of Bonhoeffer publications from 1988 to 1995 listed in the *International Bibliography on Bonhoeffer*¹⁰ reveals that of the about 750 publications listed for that period roughly 54% are related to ethics, practical theology, or political theology, while a second group of historical, critical, and biographical publications accounts for roughly 24%. Only 18% intentionally engaged Bonhoeffer's systematic theology and its confessional and philosophical underpinning, while a mere 4% concerned itself with an integrative approach to the totality of Bonhoeffer's systematic and practical writings.

As such Bonhoeffer is the topic of theological excitement but his work is also prone to misinterpretation. Bonhoeffer interpretation is easily marred by incompleteness. Frick laments,

In spite of the plethora of Bonhoeffer studies there is a large lacuna regarding studies that have addressed Bonhoeffer's intellectual grounding in a thorough, comprehensive and methodical manner. Scholarly attention to this important subject matter has indeed been scarce.¹¹

It is not that an emphasis on the later works is lamentable or that the interest in Bonhoeffer, fueled by an interest in ethics and practical theology, is to be deplored. On the contrary, such a focus continues to be needed. Rather, such attention, by limiting its focus only on the later Bonhoeffer, runs the risks of becoming one-sided and suffering from an impaired interpretation. Proper attention for the whole Bonhoeffer, with special regard for his intellectual development, as a reliable foundation for interpretation, ought to result in a better understanding of Bonhoeffer's more accessible works.

The Lutheran Bonhoeffer forces one to look at the heart of this problem as it draws the attention to Bonhoeffer's formative academic years. If it is true that Luther was important for Bonhoeffer, it follows that a Lutheran-system-

⁹ John W. de Gruchy, "Bonhoeffer's Legacy: A New Generation," *Christian Century* 114 (April 1997): 343–345.

¹⁰ Ernst Feil and Barbara E. Fink, eds., *International Bibliography on Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Gütersloh: Kaiser, Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1998).

¹¹ Peter Frick, ed. *Bonhoeffer's Intellectual Formation: Theology and Philosophy in His Thought*, vol. 29 of *Religion in Philosophy and Theology* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 2.

atic Bonhoeffer will bring much-needed clarity to this under-developed work in Bonhoeffer studies.

2. *Bonhoeffer's theological method.* Bonhoeffer is seen by some as a thinker who was not very systematic. His work allegedly exhibits an ad hoc approach to issues as they confronted him.¹² Because of this, Bonhoeffer is not always accorded the full appreciation and attention that his theology warrants. Bonhoeffer's thought, however, is rather complex. In it, theology and philosophy are woven together in a multifaceted tapestry. According to Frick, "The complex relation between philosophy and theology in Bonhoeffer's thought is further complicated by the question of how specific philosophers and theologians shaped his intellectual development."¹³ This makes for a puzzle, but also for the contention that it would be wrong to overlook the systemic muscle power of his thought. The suggestion in this study is that Bonhoeffer's theology is informed by a robust, albeit somewhat implicit, theological method that, when uncovered, will lead to a better understanding and application of his more accessible work. I claim that this theological method is essentially a reworking of Luther's *theologia crucis* with the help of philosophical concepts, notably ones borrowed from Heidegger. Not only interpretation of the later Bonhoeffer will benefit from this, but Bonhoeffer will emerge as a theologian who was on his way to make an important systematic contribution in his own right. The question of Bonhoeffer's relevance leads us back to Bonhoeffer which in turn leads us back to the theological method that framed his thought and action.

Since Bonhoeffer's early academic work, in which serious efforts are underway to formulate a theological method, is deeply influenced by Luther, it is more or less self-evident that research into the Lutheran influence in Bonhoeffer will bring clarity to Bonhoeffer's work as a systematic theologian.

3. *Unity in Bonhoeffer's thought.* Talking about Bonhoeffer as a systematic thinker brings to attention the third issue in Bonhoeffer studies. Where there seems to be a lack in focus on Bonhoeffer's intellectual development, those studies that actually do pay attention to this area are not always successful in relating the different parts in Bonhoeffer's intellectual development to each other. This may well be intentional in many instances since a genealogical approach ought to be less interpretative and more concerned with the material details of evidence. Moreover, such research often focuses on the influence of one thinker or the development of just one thematic element. But it still does not bring Bonhoeffer scholarship closer to the emergence of a possible unity in Bonhoeffer's thought.

¹² Barth, "To Rector Eberhard Bethge, Ringsider near Neuwied," in *Letters 1961–1968*, ed. Jürgen Fangmeier and Hinrich Stoevesandt, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 252.

¹³ Frick, *Bonhoeffer's Intellectual Formation*, 6.

To illustrate this it is interesting to note that according to Adam Kotsko, Bonhoeffer's entire project is informed by a systematic outworking of the Hegelian spirit,¹⁴ while Ralph Wüstenberg believed that Bonhoeffer stayed loyal to a Kantian approach to epistemology.¹⁵ This does not deter Charles Marsh from giving due attention to the important influence of Heidegger in Bonhoeffer's thought,¹⁶ in spite of the fact that Ernst Feil never mentions Heidegger at all in his study on Bonhoeffer.¹⁷ In scholarship that pursues a thematic understanding there is equal discord, for while Gaylon Barker emphasizes a rootedness in Luther's theology of the cross that goes back to Bonhoeffer's encounter with Karl Holl, who provided the impetus to the Luther Renaissance,¹⁸ Reggie Williams maintains that the crucial source for it is to be found in Bonhoeffer's encounter with African American Christianity in Harlem.¹⁹ Clifford Green emphasizes sociality as the kernel of Bonhoeffer's theology,²⁰ but for Barker, it is the theology of the cross,²¹ while Pangritz considers it self-evident that Bonhoeffer remained within the Barthian camp.²² If all these takes on Bonhoeffer would absolutely and simultaneously be true, the law of non-contradiction would be violated multiple times.

When no attempt is made to uncover an underlying unity in Bonhoeffer's thinking, one continues to be confronted with the fragmentary nature of Bonhoeffer's work and the stark difference between the young and the mature Bonhoeffer. The underlying unity between the early and the later Bonhoeffer and the unity between his academic-systematic and ethical work must, therefore, be subject of study. If this is not attempted, only an incoherent collage of fragmentary evidence will result, historically interesting and devotionally inspiring, no doubt, but prone to rhetorical abuse and lacking the punch of relevance. There will be ethics without identification of the proper theological sources. That is lamentable because Bonhoeffer's work exhibits an organic integration of sys-

¹⁴ Adam Kotsko, "Objective Spirit and Continuity in the Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer," *Philosophy and Theology* 17 (2005): 17–31.

¹⁵ Ralf K. Wüstenberg, *A Theology of Life: Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Religionless Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 46.

¹⁶ Charles Marsh, *Reclaiming Dietrich Bonhoeffer: The Promise of His Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 111–134.

¹⁷ Ernst Feil, *The Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1985).

¹⁸ Barker, *The Cross of Reality*.

¹⁹ Reggie Williams, "Developing a *Theologia Crucis*: Dietrich Bonhoeffer in the Harlem Renaissance," *Theology Today* 71, 1 (2014): 43–75.

²⁰ Clifford J. Green, *Bonhoeffer: A Theology of Sociality* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999).

²¹ Barker, *The Cross of Reality*.

²² Andreas Pangritz, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer: 'Within, Not Outside, the Barthian Movement,'" in *Bonhoeffer's Intellectual Formation: Theology and Philosophy in His Thought*, ed. Peter Frick, vol. 29 of *Religion in Philosophy and Theology* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 245–282.

tematic and ethical/practical theological motifs. One of Bonhoeffer's early concerns was that of method, or in his own words "theological concepts":

At the heart of the problem [i. e., of epistemology and ontology] is the struggle with the formulation of the question that Kant and idealism have posed for theology. It is a matter of the formation of genuine theological concepts, the decision one comes to between a transcendental-philosophical and an ontological interpretation of the theological concepts. It is a question of the "objectivity" of the concept of God and an adequate concept of cognition, the issue of deterring the relationship between "the being of God" and the mental act which grasps that being.²³

In short (and highly simplified): How can one make theological claims after Kant and Hegel? Bonhoeffer's answer is to develop a theological method out of a Lutheran orientation in dialogue with dialectical theology and continental philosophy. His endeavor was set against the backdrop of the instability of the Weimar period, efforts in ecumenical work, resistance against the Nazis, the acknowledgment of secularity, and an ongoing interaction with his liberal theological heritage. In all of this, Luther's influence was central. Bonhoeffer tellingly finished his lecture course *The History of Twentieth-Century Systematic Theology* with: "Who will show us Luther?"²⁴ The Lutheran Bonhoeffer, then, will be portrayed as one in whom during his academic years the theology of the cross proves formative after which it bears fruit in his later works (as well as his personal life). The driving force behind, and unifying motif in Bonhoeffer's theology is the *theologia crucis*, initially as an important component for his social ecclesiology in *Sanctorum Communio*, subsequently as an aid in making theological claims in *Act and Being*, and then increasingly as the motif for how the Christian life is lived in the world. This is a rough outline of how systematics and ethics are linked in Bonhoeffer.

1.3 *Act and Being as Theologia Crucis*

Instead of parsing Bonhoeffer's writings for hints of a *theologia crucis* (such a work has already been undertaken fruitfully and in and of itself it is not enough to pursue an exhaustive investigation into the presence of the *theologia crucis*), this exploration will narrow its focus to an examination of Bonhoeffer's *Habilitationsschrift*, *Act and Being*. I will attempt to perform a reading of *Act and Being* as a *theologia crucis*. This performance is not intended as an exercise in creativity but as an effort to bring out and make explicit what is genetic to Bonhoeffer's theology. Even though this narrows my engagement with the material, given the wide array of thinkers that Bonhoeffer discusses in *Act and Being*,

²³ DBWE 2: 27.

²⁴ DBWE 11: 244.

I have to limit this project to the two main discussions Bonhoeffer undertakes in his book so as to make it manageable, namely the discussions with Barth and Heidegger.

A further delimiter is required, however. Bonhoeffer's *Act and Being* consists of three main chapters. The first chapter is a critical assessment of how philosophy and theology in a post-Kantian world have dealt with the question of autonomous human knowledge. This, of course, problematizes the concept of revelation. In his second chapter, Bonhoeffer offers his solution to that problem by appropriating Heidegger's ontological phenomenology. This to give conceptual clarity to the relationships between Christ, believer, and the church by using nomenclature with a Heideggerian affinity: "believing *Dasein*" (believer) and "being of revelation" (i. e. Christ as well as the church). After treating the *being of Dasein* in chapter two, the third chapter zooms in on that particular *Dasein* that finds itself in the being of revelation. Since in this project my primary aim is to discover how Bonhoeffer constructs his theological method (i. e. how he arrives at theological claims and how revelation needs to be conceived with the help of Heidegger's concept of *being*), the focus will be on Bonhoeffer's second chapter where he presents the church as the being of revelation in analogy to Heidegger's *Being*²⁵ of beings. Since this study develops its argument by paying close attention to Bonhoeffer's criticism of Barth, the first chapter of *Act and Being* is also important. Though the third chapter's analysis of *Dasein*, essentially Bonhoeffer's theological anthropology, is no less fascinating, drawing it into this research would make this project extend beyond its original intended boundaries. Generally, this inquiry will also stay clear from a thoroughgoing description of the ecclesiological implications of Bonhoeffer's work. I will address ecclesiological concepts only where they pertain to an understanding of the church as revelation or the church community as *theologia crucis* (which is basically the same thing). I will, therefore, talk about the church as the Body of Christ and the church as *Stellvertreter*, but not go into detail about how ecclesiology, pneumatology, and Christology intersect in *Sanctorum Communio*, or the internal and outward ministry of the church (intercession, forgiveness, proclamation, etc.). Even Bonhoeffer himself shows restraint in his elaboration of the ecclesiological implications of his method in *Act and Being*. These limitations will ultimately have the added advantage of clarity and depth.

There are not many monographs on *Act and Being*. Two must be mentioned. One dates back from 1988: *Theology and the Dialectics of Otherness*, by Wayne

²⁵ The concept of being will not be capitalized in this study, except when it appears in the title of Bonhoeffer's study *Act and Being*, since for Bonhoeffer being is not an entity and even less does it refer to God or some such. The word merely symbolizes realistic/ontological modes of thinking and is used by Bonhoeffer because of his interaction with Heidegger. It is capitalized in this instance as well as a few others when it is expressly used as a Heideggerian concept.

Whitson Floyd.²⁶ Rather than being a monograph on *Act and Being* it compares Bonhoeffer's dialectic of otherness in *Act and Being* with the thought of Theodor Adorno. The second one is more recent and is only available in German. Christiane Tietz-Steiding's excellent *Bonhoeffers Kritik der verkrümmten Vernunft: Eine erkenntnistheoretische Untersuchung* is a thorough analysis of the theology of *Act and Being*.²⁷ In this work, Tietz-Steiding uncovers the origins of Bonhoeffer's thought in a critical manner and explains why Bonhoeffer later felt he needed to distance himself from his ideas in it. For Tietz-Steiding, *Act and Being* is the wrestling of a young theologian who yet had to achieve maturity, while for me *Act and Being*, no doubt providing just a snapshot of a project in progress on its way to maturity, also represents the arrival of a sophisticated retrieval of the *theologia crucis*. Tietz-Steiding investigates *Act and Being* primarily within the context of early twentieth-century thought, while I will, in addition to Bonhoeffer's dialogues with others, be primarily concerned with how he learns from Luther and attempts to express what he learns into a twentieth-century vernacular. I will interact with Tietz-Steiding's work when I assess the extant scholarship on Bonhoeffer's interaction with Heidegger precisely on the point where there is an apparent disagreement, namely, the appropriation of Heidegger's concept of being for the formulation of the *theologia crucis*.

In addition to these two monographs, I should make mention of Michael DeJonge's *Bonhoeffer's Theological Formation* which engages in an excellent analysis of *Act and Being* in order to clarify the relationship between Bonhoeffer and Barth on the one hand and Bonhoeffer and the Luther Renaissance on the other.²⁸ DeJonge's study provided one of the initial impulses to look deeper into the influence of Heidegger on Bonhoeffer and I will interact with it in chapter 6.

In this study, I will undertake a systematic-hermeneutical analysis of two decisive intellectual encounters. These two encounters are with Barth and Heidegger. While Bonhoeffer absorbed many theological and philosophical influences, it is my opinion that a close examination of Bonhoeffer's interaction with Barth and Heidegger will shed light on crucial moments in Bonhoeffer's development of the theology of the cross. These two encounters, then, should aid an understanding of the third encounter, namely that with Luther's theology. By way of these two conversations, I hope to cast light on the particular nature of Bonhoeffer's innovative *theologia crucis*. This does not mean that my trajec-

²⁶ Wayne Whitson Floyd, Jr., *Theology and the Dialectics of Otherness: On Reading Bonhoeffer and Adorno* (New York: University Press of America, 1988).

²⁷ Christiane Tietz-Steiding, *Bonhoeffers Kritik der verkrümmten Vernunft: Eine erkenntnistheoretische Untersuchung*, in *Beiträge zur historischen Theologie*, vol. 112 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999).

²⁸ Michael P. DeJonge, *Bonhoeffer's Theological Formation: Berlin, Barth & Protestant Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

tory is linear, however. I start with Barth, travel back to Luther, and return to the twentieth-century again for Heidegger.

Bonhoeffer is at times portrayed as either Barthian or anti-Barthian.²⁹ He is neither. There is no doubt that Bonhoeffer was deeply taken with the Barthian revolt against nineteenth-century liberal theology. Bonhoeffer aligned himself with its primary objectives of de-anthropologizing theology and prioritizing revelation. However, in the way Bonhoeffer sought to articulate and methodologically shape these objectives, he chose a radically different path. Reading his *Habilitationsschrift, Act and Being* as a young theologian's original attempt to do what Barth tried to accomplish but in a radically different way, will untangle the complex relationship between the two. It also provides a clear direction along which the later Bonhoeffer needs to be interpreted: in dialogue with but journeying beyond and diverging from Barth.

Where Barth made use of a Kantian influence to talk about revelation, Bonhoeffer used the philosophy current and available in his own time. That is to say, there are strong indications of the influence of phenomenology in Bonhoeffer. Bonhoeffer's interaction with Heidegger, although limited in time, seems to have had a decisive and lasting impact. Because of the ambiguous and *ad hoc* presence of phenomenology, however, the intellectual relationship with Heidegger will have to be investigated and clarified.

It should also be noted that when I speak of a Kantian aspect to Barth's theology I neither mean to ignore the other aspects of his theology nor do I intend to present him as a Kantian *pur sang*. It is well established that Barth is a theological realist but also fairly well-known that the success of this realism is conditioned by a Kantian or idealistic aspect in his theology, which expresses itself in the dialectical method. It is precisely with regard to this very way of safeguarding theological realism and prioritizing revelation that Bonhoeffer criticizes Barth and diverges from his project. It is no surprise then that, in tracing Bonhoeffer's criticism of Barth, the Kantian or idealistic side of Barth is consistently highlighted.

Behind all Bonhoeffer's conversations with theologians and philosophies, and in particular his encounter with Barth and Heidegger, stands Luther's *theologia crucis*. It alone can satisfactorily explain Bonhoeffer's judgments and decisions. And only through these judgments and decisions, in turn, does one come to an understanding of the unifying motif of the *theologia crucis* in Bonhoeffer's thought.

This rather sweeping statement about Bonhoeffer's theological decisions brings me to the heart of the matter, the claim of this book: Bonhoeffer's the-

²⁹ A rather Barthian interpretation can be found in the work of Andreas Pangritz. See Andreas Pangritz, *Karl Barth in the Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), as well as Andreas Pangritz, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: "Within, Not Outside, the Barthian Movement,"* 245–282.

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