Just Love The Other?

- An examination of the narrative of “the other” in Hauerwas’ and Bonhoeffer’s theologies
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Abstract

The processes of “othering” often create coarse images of “the other”, therefore there is a need to rethink the narrative of “the other”. A fruitful narrative of “the other” could be helpful in the interaction in multi-religious and multicultural social settings. The aim is to scrutinize the narrative of “the other” in Christian thought, in order to see if there is a Christian particular and fruitful narrative of “the other”, and if so, if this representation is useful in peace-processes. This study investigates how the representation of “the other” from a Christian context may be helpful in shifting attitudes. Specifically, it investigates the history and settings of “the other” and “othering”, and tries to find a more inclusive approach.

In order to test the hypothesis that a fruitful narrative on “the other” could be beneficial in peace-processes, an analysis is done of “the other” within Christian faith. This takes place in distinction to the phenomenological and ethical perspective, with a broad set of literature and articles. This qualitative literature analysis examines the Christology and ecclesiology in Stanley Hauerwas’ and Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s theological writings, with the help of a theoretical framework, which is developed to classify structural features. The results suggest that there is a potentiality in redefining “the other”, and that Bonhoeffer’s and Hauerwas’ understanding of the narrative of “the other” leads to belonging (inclusivism) rather than exclusivism. On this basis, this narrative should be taken into account in peace-processes, because an understanding of “the other” is beneficial in accepting differences as something that unite us rather than divide us.

Keywords: The other, othering, otherness, narrative, belonging, Bonhoeffer, Hauerwas
“Making space for the other in the self” and of re-arranging the self in light of other’s presence and renewing the covenant entails self-giving.\(^1\)

**PART I**

1. **Introduction**

Everyone is always someone’s other. “The self” requires something distinct to constitute “the self” and therefore it is reasonable to say that “the other” is unlike, or something else than, “the self”.\(^2\) It appears that “the self” constructs “the other” as opposing to “the self” and are seemingly dependent on each other. The action of creating “the self” furthermore constructs the notions of “the other”, “othering”, and “otherness”. In life we encounter many “others”, and these relationships always change due the variations of contexts. Often, we find ourselves in “we contexts” where “we” are drawn together by similarities. When we define ourselves as a “we” we simultaneously construct a “they”, and here the process of “othering” stems. “Othering” describes the act when the socially subordinate category of “the other” gets excluded from the social accepted group.\(^3\) Some examples of “othering” is e.g., the historical attempts to justify colonization by ideas about the superiority of the colonizers, and thereby create unequal relationships.

A contemporary example of “othering” is the ethnic-based conflict in Myanmar. Ongoing conflicts have been evolving between the Myanmar military, Buddhist, Muslim, Christian, and other minority groups since 1948. The government has used laws and political power to deny the rights of the minority groups in Myanmar. In 1982 the Muslim Rohingya lost their citizenship, and rendered them stateless, and this marginalization led to the Rohingya genocide in 2017. “Othering” has been used to degrade, alienate, discriminate, and abuse, and persecute different group(s).\(^4\) Hence, this is why this conflict in Myanmar is significant to mention, because several vital interfaith dialogues, and several attempts of religious peace building to promote reconciliation and peace between members of the Buddhist majority and the Rohingya Muslim minority have been implemented.\(^5\) Even though participants have hoped for peace, major issues continues to exist, since the conflicts are increasing, and the inevitable contradictions with “us” and “them” are predominant. Accordingly, UN Human Rights

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Council Fact-finding Mission discovered that “othering” was a key component in the persecution of the Rohingya in Myanmar. John A. Powell, the Director of the “Othering & Belonging Institute”, maintains that the opposite of “othering” is belonging. The word belong does not subordinate anyone. Instead, the word belong invokes recognition and celebration of differences, in a society where “the group” should include all individuals.7

There are numerous wars and conflicts in the world, and often they originate as an act of ”othering” in demonstrating power relations and hierarchy, such as gender, culture, class, and religion.8 Religion has likewise exposed a history of great violence towards “others” who does not belong to a certain religious group, and may facilitate prejudice and hostility toward “the other”. Whereby religion inherently is conceived to be divisive and conservative. Christianity is no exception, and theologians within Christianity have tried to bridge differences in peace-processes, therefore Christianity is relevant to examine.

1.1 Aim, purpose, and questions
The aim of this study is to scrutinize the narrative of “the other” in Christian thought, in order to find if there is a fruitful Christian narrative of “the other”. The sought ambition is to discover an approach in which Christianity may contribute to “belonging”, rather than “othering”. Within Christianity Jesus has an impact on ethics through the stories of his life. Consequently, Jesus is the paradigm for Christian moral life in his preaching on loving the enemy.9 Therefore, there is a potential in scrutinizing the narrative of “the other” from a Christian perspective. Hence, the research question that this study seeks to answer is the following: Is there a particular Christian narrative of “the other” and, if so, can this narrative not only be interpreted in the sense of belonging, but also be used to create a resourceful interaction within religious and secular communities in peace-processes?

Given the purpose of the study, the research process is undertaken by a literature review to identify and highlight the understanding of “otherness”, “othering”, and “the other” from phenomenological, philosophical, and theological perspectives. The chosen literature and articles introduce comprehensive background to the understanding of “the other” from

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8 E.g. the Nazis persecution of Jews during WW2, the persecution of Native Americans and the forced relocation of people in Syria.
9 William C., Spohn, Go and do likewise, Jesus and ethics. New York: Continuum. 2007, 1.
different contexts. The objective is to understand how the narrative “the other” is used in language, how it affects societies, how the narrative of “the other” has developed and how “othering” has been used to explain genocide in political as in religious spheres. Equally, these perspectives identify gaps, and create a fuller image of how “the other” has been narrated, and defines how this narrative has developed through the process of “othering”. The primary concern of this thesis is the Christian perspective of “the other”, especially in Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s and Stanley Hauerwas’ theologies.

1.2 Relevance of the research

There is limited research undertaken on the topic of the narrative of “the other” within Christianity, and how this narrative could be beneficial in peace-processes, even though there are numerous articles on “the other” and Islam. By beneficial, I refer to a conception of “the other” that is compatible with a sense of belonging as compared to “othering”. Awareness of “the other” is not recent, having possibly first been described during the seventeenth century as a response to missionary activity. The term “othering” has been used to describe marginalization and exclusion, and is generally understood to be connected to the idea of “otherness”. “Otherness” is the construction of dissimilarities between “the self” and “the other”. There are other uses of “the other” that are actually fruitful. Therefore, “the other” should be studied.

There is a potential in scrutinizing narratives of “the other”, equally how they are perceived, and the negative aspects of the discourse. John A. Powell refers to attributes of who gets defined as “other”, and defines words giving meaning to power structures, where definitions are used to control minority groups. Powell supposes that power structures in language strategically create fear around a perceived “other”. Therefore, Powell argues that the definition of “othering” is socially and culturally constructed. He assumes that the narrative “the other” is changeable, and should consequently be re-defined, and in doing this will create a bridge across differences. Powell posits that when we bridge, we open to

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“others”, and adjust our lives. He states that it is participation in co-creating a society to which all belong.11

Throughout most of its long history, various Christian movements have idealized pacifism, and attempted several peace building efforts. A few of the protestant and Catholic Churches insists that the church should reinforce peace and maintain nonviolence.12 Within Christianity there are several doctrines on pacifism13, such as Just peacemaking,14 radical pacifism,15 and theological pacifism.16 These doctrines hold that forgiveness, reconciliation, and mercy are essential. The Christian pacifist view is founded on love, forgiveness, and reconciliation, because Jesus Christ himself has said: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself”.17 The Just Peacemaking doctrine is concerned interactive relations. The rationale of this doctrine is that Jesus thought and practiced pacifism, took care of the sick, helped people in need, and showed mercy, and love to everyone. The influence of the doctrine shows the importance of love rather than hate, non-violence instead of war, caring instead of unresponsiveness and to understand and accept “others”.

These doctrines have useful presumptions, but they are, as this study will argue, not sufficient considering they do not target the core of the problem with “othering”. The question is instead about how we view and talk about “the other”, and how understandings lead to behaviours. In order to work for the bridging over differences among individuals, this is an opportunity to increase the awareness of how and why we conduct “othering”, and perhaps reconstruct a more positive approach to “the other”. Accordingly, it is motivating to study and develop a narrative of “the other” from a Christian point of view, considering a new understanding may influence the conception of belonging. An unmasking of the narrative of “the other” may establish compassion regarding “otherness”, and validate reconciliation in conflict situations.

12 See theologians as John Dear and Thomas Merton.
13 Christian faith contains both pacifists as non-pacifist moralities. The Quakers, as well as the Amish, are an example of Christians who have turned to pacifism.
14 Just peacemaking theory is a new paradigm for Christian ethics alongside just war theory and pacifism. The ethical norms of just peacemaking focus in preventing war. They are interactive, which engage in dialogue with diverse others.
15 Radical pacifism is a nonviolent movement. They refuse to fight in any war.
16 Theological pacifism is a theoretical understanding of human socio-political reality in relation to God and God’s desires for human sociability.
1.3 Previous research of the narrative of “the other” in religious contexts

Extensive research has shown that religious hegemony is a central factor in historical colonialism. Religion has functioned as an excuse to conquer “others”, and to rule over lands and people. Some examples of colonialism are when America and India were “discovered”, and specific religious, and cultural convictions were declared as superior to those already existing there. Colonialism creates “othering”, and constructs a view of “the other” as someone to rule over, someone to convert, educate or oppress, and equally establishes racism. Work by historians has recognized that the religious systems have thereby contributed to oppress “the other”. “Othering” has been used to point at differences, rather than similarities, and opposing convictions of life and faith has led to grouping, i.e., meaning hegemony.

An example of religious hegemony is when the European Christian missionaries played a crucial role in the development of ethnic ideologies in Africa. Ideologies are used to exercise power over subordinate groups and uses discourses to sustain power relations. Ideologies are consequently applied in ideas, social contexts, knowledge, and institutions. Timothy Longman, a professor of political science argues that missionaries were instrumental in creating cultural identities with “us” and “them”. Consequently, it strengthened the growth of stereotypes of “the other”, and shaped new ethnic ideologies, which created the deep social divisions that are at the root of ethnic conflict in many African countries. It could be stated that religion defines ethnic distinctions as well as justify actions of dominant groups, as genocide. The English historian Ian Kershaw notices that “othering” has legitimated the use of violence against “others”. He argues that religion is an important ingredient in singling out “the other.”

When diverse groups do not agree on power structures, economy or religion, conflicts, and war become a reality. Religion is utilized to promote war, and to act violently towards other dominations. Religion has shown to promote exclusivism, especially when interpreting the Bible. This interpretation of the bible texts creates an un-reconciling space between “us”, and “them”, because the religious individual seems to think that only one particular religion is true,
while others are not. The theologian Wesley S. Ariarajah22 argues that people find ways to differentiate religious groups because they need spaces to be themselves. They try to find social, economic, political, and spiritual spaces. He furthermore asks religious communities to rethink the issue of identity, in the richness in seeing neighbors as a normal part of their lives.23

A handful theologians have therefore developed narratives of “the other”, which can be contrary to coarse narratives. One of them is the theologian Miroslav Volf. He works with the question of the Christian interpretation of “the other”. He has for instance written about the conflict in the old Yugoslavia and in Rwanda, and has studied topics like “otherness”, exclusion, genocide, group-identities, and identity. He has noticed this hegemony and exclusion as domination, spread all over the world, as in the caste system in India and former apartheid policies in South Africa.24 Volf’s harshest perception of how we observe and act against “the other” is when “the other” is assigned the status of inferior being. In doing that, Volf argues that we repress “others” so we can exploit them to increase our wealth or simply inflate our egos. Therefore his argument is that the others are among us; they are part of us, yet they remain others.25

The world appears to be more religious, and religions have a great part in conflicts. It is therefore important to understand how “othering” works and how and why people have a need to differentiate themselves from “others”. In a comprehensive study of “the other” the professor of social sciences Corneliu Constantineau have found that it is important to understand how people relate to “the other”. By drawing on the concept of Christian faith, Constantineau demonstrate that faith must be embodied in concrete displays of love, peace, reconciliation, harmony, tolerance, and consideration for “the other”.26 Therefore, he urges people to spend time together, to learn and even bridge the gaps between “us” and “them”.

In another major study the topic of bridging has also interested Yiftach Ron and Ifat Maoz, from the department of Communication in Israel. They have found that learning about “the other”, and choosing to communicate with “the other” launches discussion and understanding.

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22 Wesley Ariarajah is a theologian and Methodist minister from Sri Lanka who has worked for the World Council of Churches.
They interviewed Jewish Israeli people and Palestinian people who sat down and talked to each other. Ron and Maoz reported that in seeing the face of the Palestinian “other” leads to better understanding of their sufferings, and emotions, as well as their perspectives on the history and reality of the conflict.27

There is a consensus among theorists that knowledge is power, however that is not enough according to theologian Hans Harmakaputra. He realizes that coexistence is not enough to form relationships. Therefore, he proposes something called the pro-existence paradigm. His idea is that interfaith relations may occur when a community works with love and care for each other. His findings illustrate relationships as important in being a human, and that humans cannot live without other humans. He indicates that one cannot avoid tensions, and conflict, but when we forgive we similarly transform.28

During the last decades some theologians and scholars have tried to push forward a new paradigm on Christianity, to promote love, understanding, and forgiveness. Many scholars have worked with how to create a positive environment for thoughtfulness toward each other. The professor in religious studies Mohammad Hassan Khalil has studied the role of affirming the desirability of positive relations with “others”.29 He claims that the very word Islam comes from the Hebrew word shalom, which stands for peace. Even within Islam there are strict rules of engagement that are not dissimilar to those of the Christian just-war theory.30 Therefore, it is benevolent to work with similarities, rather than dissimilarities within religious communities. The initiative “A common word between us and you” with Christians and Muslims, have identified that there is a need to study similarities between religions, which could contribute to peace and justice.31

The American Roman Catholic theologian William T. Cavanaugh argues that it is important for the church today to address a pluralistic society. He claims that theology cannot be directly politicized, but must first be translated into some more publicly accessible form of discourse, to have an influence in civil society. The church, according to Cavanagh, is an indirect influence through the individual, and he considers the church to be given a privileged position for

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mediating God’s will for the ordering of society.\textsuperscript{32} He maintains that it is necessary to bridge the gap between “us and them”, to be able to act responsibly. He states that this requires that we not only know “the other”, but also know ourselves.\textsuperscript{33}

Collaboration between Christians and “others” is necessary. Peter C. Phan, an American Catholic theologian, considers that it is vital to share everyday life, and learn about each other, to be able to act responsibly. He describes that plenty of models of peace promoting work is found in e.g., Nigeria, Guatemala, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines. Phan emphasises that collaboration between Christians and “others” is crucial for liberation of people. He argues that sharing in between, to pray and contemplate, and hold dialogue of religious experiences are steps toward peacemaking and reconciliation, and may even constitute the process of peacemaking and reconciliation itself.\textsuperscript{34} His study confirms that the process of reconciliation is connected to being human, and existing in the world. He observes that different religions apprehend reconciliation to be important in inter-faith discussions.\textsuperscript{35}

Inter-faith discussions goal is to encourage peace and reconciliation, for instance in the Just Peacemaking doctrine. Many recent studies have indicated that biblical faith and political engagement are combined in these tendencies, and they aim to unite faiths and cultures. Still, there are many examples in history, and in the world today of war and conflicts. In his review of love and war, the church father Augustine observes war as a part of the human world, and develops thoughts on how to make war in a righteous way. He progresses the Just War doctrine. The Just War doctrine may focus either on the basis for war, as in the just war idea of \textit{jus ad bellum}, on the way that the war is being fought, as in the just war idea of \textit{jus in bello} or on the expected outcome of the war, as in the idea of \textit{jus post bellum}.\textsuperscript{36}

The American ethicist Lisa Sowle Cahill considers the Just war theory and pacifism to represent fundamentally different conceptions of Christian identity. She considers Just war theory as trying to retain the biblical love command as a functional moral guide. Cahill argues that the theory nonetheless justifies war by setting love provisionally aside, and investigates the

\textsuperscript{33} Cavanaugh, William T. The myth of religious violence: Secular ideology and the roots of modern conflict, 1 Ed, Oxford University Press, 2009, 14.
different forms love can take in conflict cases. Cahill demonstrates that sin, justice, and love are three realities that must fight together so that this new Christian social action can have an effect. Thus, the consensus among some theologians show that the ethics, which are justified in Jesus’ teachings support nonviolent action grounded in the commandment of love. They acknowledge responsibility for conflict, seek forgiveness, and work for human rights, and foster sustainability. 37

Awareness of the biblical love command, as a functional moral guide is the foundation in Christian faith. Harmakaputra observes that Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew chapter 22 refers to concerns important to the relationship between God and humans, understanding the law and issues of forgiveness. It states: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind", and "your neighbor as yourself". 38 Thus, many theologians have different understandings of love. The Trappist monk Tomas Merton sees love as unique. He argues that all can learn to love anyone even in their sin, as God loves all. He argues that only love can drive away fear, which is the root to all evil. 39 He claims that love accepts “the other” as “the self” with the same sorrows and sufferings, hopes, needs, and so on. He writes that when people realize that they are similar, they also understand that war is the enemy. 40 He believes that if people can’t trust each other, maybe the solution lies in trusting God. This belief in trusting God questions the acceptance of other traditions and religions. This perception widens the perspective to include a pluralistic view on religion. If acceptance among traditional religious systems could accept differences, it could nurture relationships.

Many religious leaders today focus on peacekeeping. The scholar in ethics, and religious conflict Rodney L. Petersen argues that regardless traditions, creeds, or traditions all human history contains different polarities. He claims that the power of religion and its statements on the world, is something to consider, when holding peace conversations and working for conflict solutions. The work of religious actors is powerful because they can address the deepest needs of a shared public narrative, or worldview, and offer the possibility or the re-storying of a person or people’s experience. 41

40 Bochen. Thomas Merton; essential writings, 43.
More attention has been given to how organizations work with the unofficial diplomacy called “track-two diplomacy”, which is a new development in the field of international relations. The American diplomat and public policy scholar Joseph Montville created the expression “track-two diplomacy”, and considers it to be important in the work of reconciliation. The construct of “track-two diplomacy” has focused on renewing opportunities for communication with individuals from communities in conflict. They have tried to foster cross-cultural understanding, and pursue joint efforts of dialogue or action, when official dialogue is blocked or absent.\textsuperscript{12} The theorist Paolo Salvatore Nicosia appears to be positive to further develop the "track-two diplomacy". Nicosia observes that all world faiths consider peace as a central concern. He claims that religions may facilitate reconciliation, and help to prevent or solve local, and global conflicts. Drawing on an extensive range of sources, many authors of politics and religion have shown that it would be beneficiary to build a constructive approach to “the other”. In this aspect religion may help peace building approaches in the multicultural, multi-religious and secular settings.

As the previous research shows there is a need to develop the narrative of “the other”, and one way is to study the theme from a Christian perspective. There have been several academic explorations of “otherness” and “othering”, but these expositions are unsatisfactory because they are not solution-oriented. This study differs from previous research, due to the study of “the other” from a Christian perspective, and how this may be used in peace-processes.

2. Theory

The undertaking of this theory chapter is to examine specific interpretations of “the other” within Christian faith, and to give an account for the phenomenological, and ethical perspectives. Different approaches of “the other” and “othering” will be discussed, and explained as different conceptual apparatuses. Furthermore, a typology of Ariarajah’s understanding of “the other” is helpful to classify structural features, and it serves the purpose to limit Bonhoeffer’s and Hauerwas’ texts, and to answer my research question. The findings display that various scholars have somewhat different understandings of what it implies to label someone as “the other”.

\textsuperscript{12} Petersen, Rodney. L, Religion and multi-track diplomacy, Cambridge University press. 2015: 222-238. Doi: 10.1017/CBO9781139056693.015.
2.1 Theoretical framework

To be able to connect the different aspects of the research, to provide a scaffold, and to prove the relevance of the study, there is a need to develop a theoretical framework of “the other”. This theoretical framework limits the scope of theories relevant to the research problem. In order to provide conceptual clarity, a typology suggested by S. Wesley Ariarajah will be explained, in the process of defining this framework. The typology provides a structure for interpreting the conception of “the other” in the theologies of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Stanley Hauerwas. Moreover, this theoretical framework additionally gives an account for concepts by several theorist, who have critically assessed constructs of “the other”, “othering”, and “otherness”.

2.2 A typology of “the other”

S. Wesley Ariarajah argues that theology can be defined in many ways. He claims that it arises based on specific religious experience, which takes place in a particular context. He furthermore argues that the shape of theology will depend on the particular context within, in which Christ is experienced, and the nature of the commitment such context demands. Therefore, he explains that commitment to Jesus can rarely imply identical ideas in different cultural situations or in different centuries.\(^{43}\) Ariarajah has in his context developed a theology of dialogue, where he claims that dialogue must be an encounter where we do not prejudge each other’s religious traditions.\(^{44}\)

He has noticed that there are two assessments of “the other”. One perception is that people in dialogue move from “us” and “them”, to an understanding that all are a part of the human community, and in this understanding they see past “the other”. The other perception considers a spirituality, where plurality and differences are accepted.\(^{45}\) According to Ariarajah, language as form of dialogue is an additional reasonable approach to overcome differences and plurality, because it is truth-seeking and helps community-building conversations.\(^{46}\) Ariarajah distinguishes “others” as being partners on a spiritual journey. He points towards enrichment

\(^{45}\) Ariarajah. Strangers or co-pilgrims? The impact of interfaith dialogue on Christian faith and practice, 34.
\(^{46}\) Ibid., 38.
and self-criticism, whereby dialogue takes people in unfamiliar territories, and leads to transformation.

As specified by Ariarajah, dialogue begins by accepting the “otherness” of “the other”. He argues that in such a dialogue *agape* (Gr)⁴⁷, the self-giving love, can be celebrated, and not monopolized by Christians. He furthermore contends that Christians can learn a great deal not only about love, but how God deals with people who are our partners in dialogue. He discusses love as an approach, in where God relates to humanity with totally impartial, and unconditional *agape*. *Agape* refers to God’s self-disclosure of God self, as love. Even though, he argues that the Christian approach to *agape* has no meaning outside the Christian worldview, which includes an awareness of a personal God who is celebrated as creator and redeemer of humankind.

Ariarajah has identified five ways of responding to “the other”. The first one perceives the “other as a threat”. He explains threat as being real or imagined, and that it is based on historical claims and memories. Hence, the only approach to deal with this comprehension is to have new experiences of “the other”. The second practice is when we observe “the other as different”. This occurs when people overemphasize differences between religious communities, which makes listening difficult. The third is to view “the other as the alternative”, in relation to other traditions. He has observed that this occurs when organized religious traditions consider themselves to be more powerful and therefore scarcely give any mandate to “others”. The fourth perceives “the other as its own reality”, and accepts plurality where dialogue emphasizes truth-seeking, and community-building. Finally, there is the fifth, where “the other” is recognized a “partner and co-pilgrim”. This example is interesting because it treats “others” with humility, and does not claim to hold the whole truth, and has knowledge about the religious experience of “the other”, and grasps unity as founded plurality.⁴⁸ The image of the co-pilgrim gives a fruitful view of “the other”, because a co-pilgrim is someone who listens, and accepts differences. Ariarajah assumes dialogue leads to interfaith initiatives. He argues that these circumstances lead to a mutual discovery of people being similar with spiritual stories. He furthermore claims that the interaction between religious communities develop mutual

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⁴⁸ Ariarajah. Strangers or co-pilgrims? The impact of interfaith dialogue on Christian faith and practice, 35-39
correction, enrichment, and self-criticism. Knowledge of the own tradition not holding “the truth”, becomes apparent in being able to criticize oneself.

### 2.3 The conceptual apparatus on “the other” and “othering”

In order to understand “othering”, it is necessary to begin with philosophies of “being”. In social theory research a range of tendencies have attempted to explain what “being” is. During the rise of self-consciousness different theorists desired to explain actions and behaviour. In the field of phenomenology Heidegger developed the philosophy of being (Dasein) and Husserl the philosophy of life. The nature of knowledge during that time dealt with truths about the world, and how it works.

In linguistics, and in the field of post structuralism “the other” has been analyzed, and has shown to be a useful way to understand how the narrative “the other” is constructed. Post-structuralists such as Paul-Michel Foucault, who is influenced by Heidegger, Hegel, and Marx, has evaluated the ways in which discourses claim to hold the status of scientific truth. He emphasizes that there is not just one understanding of a discourse, but several. Discourses are influenced by participants, behaviours, goals, values, and locations.

Foucault apprehends that discourse is constantly testing itself at every moment, in both the person who delivers it, and the person to whom it is addressed. He concludes that injustices are affected by how we speak. He suggests that all should speak up for injustices and powerless victims. This manner of interpreting discourse is a system for Foucault to understand a system of truth-saying, which emerges from “the self”, with governing of “others.”

Foucault moreover maintains that identities are productions of hegemony, and therefore always seeks someone else to negate. Foucault consequently observes that there is a need for plurality of meaning, and argues that hegemony is something, which should be challenged. Accordingly, structures or understandings are open for interpretation.

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49 Ariarajah. Strangers or co-pilgrims? The impact of interfaith dialogue on Christian faith and practice, 41.
51 The narrative of “the other” is connected to moral identity because of Christian colonization and hegemony.
52 Michel Foucault (1926–1984) was a French historian and philosopher, associated with the structuralist and post-structuralist movements. He was influenced by the Marxist way of interpreting the world. Michel Foucault expresses “otherness” as a result of the history of cynicism, which refers to the activity where people of power decided what could be considered as truth(s).
55 Foucault and Davidson. The courage of truth; the government of self and others, 136.
Each society has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth, that is, the types of discourse, which accepts, and makes function as true.\textsuperscript{56} Judith Butler\textsuperscript{57} who likewise studies identities, is influenced by Foucault’s way of thinking. Butler systemizes linguistic construction as a part of social reality. Butler has a positive perception of how “the other” should be understood. She envisions the openness in encountering “others” and is moreover aware of that we may change doing so, a change that transfers the “I”, and this subsequently leads to recognition.\textsuperscript{58} Post-structuralists criticize pre-established and socially created structures and hold that the discourse “the other” is used to e.g., rationalize discrimination and war. Thus, understandings of how language is used, and the underlying motifs are important in how we identify “the other”. The study of language is done, for instance, in the study of social semiotics. Language forms societies, has been acknowledged to create dispositions within people, when identified in a social context.\textsuperscript{59} Although Foucault and Butler recognize language and history as something that may be re-learned, the philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer expresses the necessity for the context of history, in order to correctly clarify definitions.

Post-colonialism identify “othering” as a product of historical events where “the other” is the source of negative feelings. Edward Said studies orientalism and has applied Michel Foucault’s technique of discourse analysis to the production of knowledge. Following Foucault and Said, Gayatri Spivak\textsuperscript{60} further expands the conception of “othering”.\textsuperscript{61} Spivak agrees in that the construction of identity is connected to history, culture, and language. She concludes that language points toward differences and inequalities between “the other” and “the self”, but simultaneously give individuals an identity to relate to.\textsuperscript{62} Even though Spivak emphasises that language and politics exceed a philosophical view on “the other”, she also mentions something termed “secret encounter” when people engage in some kind of relationship with “the other”.\textsuperscript{63} She presumably apprehends that there is always a core of secrecy in “others” which is never revealed.

\textsuperscript{56} Volf, Exclusion and embrace: A theological exploration of identity, otherness, and reconciliation, 188.
\textsuperscript{57} Professor Judith Butler (born 1956) is a poststructuralist, philosopher and gender theorist who thinks that personal identity is an illusion. She discusses norms and regimes of truth through which self-recognition can take place.
\textsuperscript{59} Machin, & Mayr. How to do critical discourse analysis: A multimodal introduction, 16, 26.
\textsuperscript{60} Gayatri Spivak (born 1942) works in the field of post-colonial theory. She is an Indian scholar, literary theorist, and feminist critic. Spivak is from India and she has done extensive work on the theoretical study of gender and the colonial discourse.
\textsuperscript{63} Spivak et.al. The Spivak reader, 279.
As argued before when we encounter someone else, we are colored by language, context and history. However, we cannot live a life alone. Theorists who study ontology understand that we need “the other” to be “the self”. Someone who has reflected on relationships between beings is the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas. He recognizes that non-western philosophies and some major religions comprehend the world as a unity, and have a less centred view of the world. Within Judaism and Christianity e.g., the message is “Love your neighbour like yourself” and in Islam “Humanity is but a single brotherhood so, make peace with your brothers”. Levinas therefore realizes that all religions are valuable in understanding behaviour. He furthermore claims that encounters with “others” never are understandable, and “others” should be allowed to be themselves. He argues that the embodied life must approach the human subject as it emerges through its relations with “others”. Levinas explains that “the self” only develops through encounters with “the other”. Hence, he apprehends “the other” as “the self”, meaning that all are similar.

Levinas and Foucault agree on the fact that the term “the other” is not very disturbing, because “the other” is not dissimilar to “the self”, meaning that all are a part of God’s activity in the world. They both have an ontological way of understanding “the other”, in so far that beings do not exist by themselves, rather being exists because God is the origin of all existence. Foucault explains that “otherness” is to live a life without bonds while Levinas explains that “the other” is part of the infinity, as all humans are, therefore it transcends all comprehensions. Levinas argues that only God has all the knowledge. Levinas expands his philosophy in dialogue with Husserl, Heidegger, and Hegel, and refines the idea that every human experience is open to phenomenological description, where existence never frames an understanding of being. Levinas’ “Being-for-the-Other” is to act respectable towards “the other” through enjoyment. Levinas explains how enjoyment is passive and this passivity makes ethical action possible. Without passivity enjoyment turns into totalization. His understanding of “the other” point at the infinity of “the other”, which transcends everything, and convenes us to solidarity. This

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64 Ontology within philosophy is the study of e.g., being, existence and reality.
65 Emmanuel Levinas (1905–1995) a French Jewish historian. He theorized “the other” and created a moral philosophy which focused on ethics, ontology and subjectivity.
67 See the Holy Q’uran 49:10.
69 Foucault and Davidson. The courage of truth; the government of self and others, 255.
73 Large. Levinas totality and infinity; A reader’s guide, 261.
transcendence is illuminated in the face-to-face encounter with “others”. He suggests that when we face another human being, we also see ourselves as created by God and in God. His ontological interpretations of “the other” additionally points to his conclusion that language is utilized for the revelation of “the other”. He considers that “the other” is beyond language because language offers the transcendent, which “the other” is. Levinas’ conception of facing “the other” is not about race, gender, or ethnicity, nor about different truths or philosophies rather, concerns itself with ending all discourses.

Gayatri Spivak’s approach to ontology is contradictory to both Foucault’s and Levinas’. She imagines that the excess of study in ontology and epistemology lead to marginalization. Accordingly, in her assessment she acquires the demand to unlearn the very structure of imperial “othering”. Spivak grasps the problematic notion of speaking and acting towards “the other”, while Levinas and Foucault have an augmenting metaphysical inclusive interpretation. Likewise, both perspectives are essential, due to the internal as well as external aspects of being, in the societal and the ontological context. The external aspects of being, in this case, refer to how “the other” is treated in real life, while the ontological contexts refer to the beings existence in relation to God.

2.4 The conceptual apparatus on the emotion love and “the other”

There is a hypothesis that feelings aimed at “the other” are discernible in all encounters and that emotions are collectively constructed. Therefore, context, history, and language influence the construction of emotions. William James’s theory of emotion affirms that emotions are feelings constituted by perceptions of changes in physiological conditions relating to the autonomic, and motor functions. Love is recognized as both real and imaginary, and it is intriguing to humans. The particular emotion love is a universal theme, and useful in examining human relations.

Within philosophy Max Ferdinand Scheler researches “the other” in reference to love. He has attempted to construct a comprehensive theory about relation between beings. According to

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74 Large. Levinas totality and infinity; A reader’s guide, 41f.
75 Ibid., 73f.
76 Ibid., 195.
77 Ibid., 70.
78 Spivak et.al. The Spivak reader, 47.
79 Ibid., 185.
81 Max Ferdinand Scheler is a German pioneer in the development of phenomenology in the early part of the 20th century.
Scheler the “act of love” is a useful tool to deprive “the self”, so that one opens to the world and comprehends “the other”. He also claims that the purpose of understanding “the other” is to love like “the other”. Thus, to act towards “others” as you yourself want “others” to act towards yourself.

Love is sometimes even expressed as self-deceptive. Love is therefore a dubious argument regarding “the other” according to Levinas, Spivak and Butler. Dubious because love could be something, which unites people but it seldom is. Love is often merely a word, and seldom leads to actions of compassion or understanding. Levinas argues that love as a relation to “the other” can prove to be something that divides, rather than frees, because love requires protection and evokes dominance. It could be agreed that love restrains individuals. Overall, Levinas assumes that love grasps nothing, that it is egotistical, it primarily seeks pleasure, and pursues that, which lacks the structure of a future. Butler does not argue against this definition of love, he rather notices that love establishes dependencies on people, and that people consequently pursue aggression when they protect those they love. Spivak partly agrees. She acknowledges love as something for the privileged. She argues that love is established by microstructural heterosexual attitudes, which have spent energy proclaiming to be the correct structural explanation of all human relationships. She identifies love as having the opposite effect when it is forged or pressed on someone else, and creates the false feeling of ownership and over-protectiveness. Her perception is understandable. There are many reasons to why perceptions of love are factual. Simultaneously, it depends on if love is understood as agape or eros. Love as eros is selfish and seeks to please “the self”. Love as agape entails unselfish action towards “others”. Foucault is positive to agape, which expresses a godly love. Foucault relates love with the love from God, “God is love; and whoever remains in love, remain in God, and God in him”. There are several perspectives of love, and love is often discussed as something between individuals. However, in this case, love can be conveyed as ontological, a spiritual love between God and people.

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83 Large. Levinas totality and infinity; A reader’s guide, 254.
84 Ibid., 266.
86 Spivak et.al. The Spivak reader, 76, 95.
87 Foucault and Davidson. The courage of truth; the government of self and others, 330.
2.5 The Christian conceptual apparatus on love, “the other”, and “othering”

The Christian awareness of love is associated with Jesus. That which Jesus did for the world signifies what true love is. Christians perceive love as un-selfish, self-sacrificing, and never ending. Jesus said: “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, […] Love your neighbor as yourself. No other commandment is greater than these.”

Love is repeatedly mentioned by Jesus, therefore it is necessary to briefly explain the Christian understanding of love.

Christians discern love as something given by God, freely, to humanity even though it seldom gets appreciated. The demand to love the enemy and the neighbor is one of Christianity’s greatest and hardest demands. Displaying love is consequently showing discipleship. The Christian discipleship entails action according to many Christians. Discipleship can be described as involving ethical reflection and accountability. If Christians are disciples of Jesus, it implies that his life and teachings are normative for them, and that they should act accordingly. Therefore, “the other” is associated with the emotion love, as explained in the term agape. In Christianity love is commonly dedicated to support “the other”, but simultaneously Christians are not able to live up to God’s expectations.

The Bible has been interpreted to support people’s actions, good or bad, and sometimes theology has turned to explain so-called notions of truth. Notions of truths have in many cases supported temporary political movements, and Christians have “forgotten” their ethical Christian background. Other interpretations of truths have basically contained essentially matters of God’s salvation and grace, meaning that Christians have distinguished themselves as people of “the one true God”, and others must be saved from their ignorance.

The theologian Karl Barth influences theology to a particular path of understanding the Christian faith. He rejects any criterion outside the revelation of God in Christ, and denies a priori that any truth is compatible with Christ’s revelation. His development of dialectical theology displays a transcendent God in opposition to a human explanation of God. Consequently, God is not knowable, and only faith may answer the question of who

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90 Spohn. Go and do likewise, Jesus and ethics, 10.
91 Karl Barth, a liberal theologian in the 1900's, was influenced by Harnack and Schleiermacher and influenced e.g., Moltmann, Bultmann and Bonhoeffer. In Christian ethics he influenced e.g., Yoder and Hauerwas.
God is. As a result, one without faith in God is “the other”, and is someone who is not Christian. Barth apprehends that God’s love only comes through being God’s partner. In this identity of being a Christian love is important, and without the Christian identity religion only turn into a human construction.

The liberal theologian Paul Tillich reflects substantially on love. He considers that all problems concerning the relation of love is connected to power and justice, individually as well as socially. This relation becomes insoluble if love basically is to be understood as emotion without the capacity to change laws or structures of power. Tillich recognizes love as unifying, but he understands it to be impossible to unite that, which is essentially separated. In Christianity love is argued to be a spiritual love and has been comprehended as self-sacrificing love, in so far that it is not selfish or greedy. Tillich claims that love is a loving joy of “the other”, and in its own a self-fulfillment. Tillich henceforth speaks of God’s love as spiritual (agape), and the human understanding of love as (eros). Spiritual love is something unending, something which cannot be separated from God’s love. This spiritual love unites since God is love. In the unity of the loving God, Christians imagine that anything can be united. Tomas Merton argues that unity is to find stability in the own faith. He asserts that it is about realizing your own unity to be able to affirm others. Merton concludes that, “The more I am able to affirm others, to say yes to them in myself, by discovering them in myself and myself in them, the more real I am. I am fully real if my own heart says yes to everyone.” Thus, when a Christian understands that God unites all Christians, one can take this forward in an act of love towards “others”.

There are several examples of how love should be communicated. The Croatian Protestant theologian Miroslav Volf explains “embrace” as the center of “the self”, which emerges as “self-giving love”. “The embrace” is the doorkeeper, which makes decisions about the fate of “otherness” at the doorstep of the self, meaning that he undoubtedly finds God’s love unlike the selfish emotional love. Volf claims that “embrace” is an act of showing love and accepting identities. He explains it similar to the embrace, which Jesus unconditionally gives all, when he opens the heart to embrace all. Volf maintains that the feeling to belong in God creates space

94 Paul Johannes Tillich was a German American Christian existentialist philosopher and Lutheran protestant theologian who wrote a lot about systematic theology concerning existentialism. E.g., Hauerwas was influenced by him.
96 Bochen, Thomas Merton; essential writings, 48.
97 Miroslav Volf (born 1956) is a Croatian protestant theologian that focuses on how Christian theology affects culture, politics, and economics.
99 Ibid., 106.
in us to receive “the other”. As a result of realizing that all may be in God, leads to finding identity and relation. Hence, he concludes that “all are families of the earth,” not associated to any specific country, culture, or family with their local deities.

Christians simultaneously argue that spiritual love is lavish. The lavish love is overflowing and accordingly given to humanity in God’s self-sacrificing love. God’s self-sacrifice shows itself in the cross. According to Volf, the cross symbolizes the renewal of the covenant, which humanity has broken. Hence, renewing the covenant includes the shifting the identity of “the other”, to make space for the changing “other in ourselves”, with the identity of “the other”. He claims that each faction in the covenant must understand its own behaviour and identity as corresponding to the behaviour and identity of other factions. Love is in this situation inclusive and connected to God’s love. Love makes it easier to make space for “the other”. Volf describes it like making space for “the other” in “the self” and of re-arranging “the self” considering “other’s” presence, and that renewing of the covenant entails self-giving. According to Volf the act of loving each other changes things, in how we conduct “othering”. He acknowledges that people have a hard time with the emotion love, but finds it important to learn a self-giving love, instead of indulge in self-love. Love, as a Christians’ greatest commandment, is explained in Corinthians 13:4-8. Love is described as patient and kind. It does not envy, does not boast and is not proud. It does not dishonor anyone, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, and it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil rather rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and perseveres. Love never fails.

2.6 Concluding discussion

Historically, rudimentary “othering” has led to dehumanizing “others”, but it is not necessary to draw this conclusion of “the other” when discussing the findings in this chapter. “The other” can be apprehended as different but this does not have to lead to “othering”. “The other”, as shown, could be grasped as “the self” or as an equal partner. Ariarajah apprehends five understandings of “the other”, as an enemy, as different, as an alternative, as a part of the reality, as an equal partner or as an equal partner.

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100 Volf, Exclusion and embrace: A theological exploration of identity, otherness and reconciliation, 36.
101 Ibid., 26f.
102 See 1 John 3:1
103 Volf, Exclusion and embrace: A theological exploration of identity, otherness and reconciliation, 113-114.
and as a partner/co-pilgrim. The interpretation of the partner/co-pilgrim shifts the focus from rudimentary “othering”, to the knowledge that “the other” is similar to “the self”.

Ariarajah’s description of “the other” as a co-pilgrim is useful to find a view of “the other” in Hauerwas’ and Bonhoeffer’s theologies. A co-pilgrim is someone who discerns all humans drawn equal by the Creator, and someone who appreciates that there are different cultures and understandings in life. In mutual respect individuals can travel together in life, in dialogue, to learn more about each other. This can lead to reconciliation, understanding, and knowledge. Thus, language is conducted from a perspective of acceptance and love. Nevertheless, love (agape)\textsuperscript{104} can be explained as the love in and from God, and not similar to human apprehension of love understood as (eros). It can be argued that agape is an ontological love, because this love is an unselfish spiritual love, where individuals act without concern to negative consequences to “the self”.

3. Method and material

This study implemented a qualitative method to find if Hauerwas’ and Bonhoeffer’s theologies have a fruitful perspective of “the other”, which could be beneficial in peace-processes. To manage to study their theologies a theoretical framework had to be designed to provide a scaffold, in part one, which could limit the scope of theories relevant to the research problem. To understand different interpretations of “the other” this study turned to the research fields of phenomenology, ethics, and theology. Through searching in articles and in literature, I found Wesley S. Ariarajah’s typology of “the other” to be beneficial, because it explains five different understandings of “the other”. The most beneficial approach was the perception of “the other” as a co-pilgrim. A co-pilgrim is as a partner in life, one who is close to “the self”.

The theoretical framework with the apprehension of “the other” as a co-pilgrim, as mentioned was, in part two, to gain insights into Stanley Hauerwas’ and Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s Christologies and ecclesiologies. These topics in their theologies, were most relevant because Christology explains what Jesus did and how we can relate Jesus words and life to our own. Ecclesiology is the study of the Christian Church, its role in salvation, its

[104] Agape is God’s self-disclosure of Godself as love as stated in Matthew 22:35-40. The opposite is Eros which is the erotic self-pleasing love. Philia is the affectionate love between friends.
leadership, its eschatology\textsuperscript{105}, and its relation to Jesus. I furthermore studied the theologian’s interpretations of reconciliation, forgiveness, fellow man, and love, to extend the research. A major advantage in the choice of these theologians is that they offered reliability and validity to the research, on account of their support in Christian pacifism. Hauerwas and Bonhoeffer have an inside-perspective on lived theology and they are equally existentialists and not merely systematic theologians.

Primary materials were Bonhoeffer’s books \textit{Life together}, which is concerned with Christian fellowship and \textit{The cost of discipleship}, where he discusses what it is to follow Christ. I also chose secondary material on Bonhoeffer, because many scholars have already examined his theology and found interpretations of “the other”. These books were \textit{The theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer} and \textit{The Cambridge companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer}. In the study of Hauerwas I chose his book \textit{War and American difference}, where he discusses the theology of war, the church, justice, and nonviolence. In \textit{Resident aliens} he suggests that the role of Christians is not to transform government, but to live lives which displays the love of Christ. \textit{The peaceful kingdom} is about the significance of letting Jesus shape the moral life and the necessity of a historic community and tradition for morality.

To undertake an analyse of the theologians’ I applied an narrative analysis based on Gadamer’s hermeneutics, which states that understanding occurs between the interpreter and the text as a dialogue, and an idea analysis by Grenholm\textsuperscript{106}. The benefit of these methods was that they offered an understanding in how our words acquire meaning, helped to understand how to comprehend and explain a narrative, and helped to capture the complexities in their texts and It furthermore allowed a deeper insight to identify and characterise their ethics and morals, which lay the foundation of inclusivism and exclusivism in reference to “the other” in Christianity. To find their meaning, I found it essential to disclose their understandings of “the other” and discuss if their narratives of “the other” are implicitly or explicitly relevant for the interpretation. When implementing the interpretation, I found that Carl-Henric Grenholm’s three principles for reasonable interpretation was suitable. In order to apply a reasonable interpretation Grenholm argues that experience, generosity and coherency are significant. The criterion of experience is accepting that human experiences are helpful to explain different attitudes. The principle of generosity emphasises a generous interpretation of the text, so that it is consistent and acceptable. The principle of coherency

\textsuperscript{105} A part of theology which studies death and the “last things” connected to the judgement of souls.

means that an opinion should be logically coherent.\textsuperscript{107} Through this method I examined if it was possible (i) to find a Christian narrative of “the other” that (ii) does not result in “othering”, but instead in belonging.

In part three, Bonhoeffer’s and Hauerwas’ narratives of “the other” were put into a context. Finally, through discussions, and conclusions in regard to the purpose, and aim, and the research question, I examined different peace-processes and found that the narrative of “the other” can be re-contextualized and (iii) can fruitfully contribute to peace processes.

\section*{PART II}

\subsection*{4. Stanley Hauerwas}

In this chapter Hauerwas’ and Bonhoeffer’s texts are analyzed with the help of the theoretical framework. The goal is to find a fruitful narrative about “the other”.

Stanley Hauerwas (born 1940) is alleged to be America’s most influential theological ethicist today. He has renewed the centrality of ecclesiology and has developed a narrative theology.\textsuperscript{108} Hauerwas’ work ranges from the renewing the centrality of ecclesiology in the Protestant context, to his critic of mainline Protestantism. He has theologically criticized political liberalism and illuminated new paths towards a public theology.\textsuperscript{109} Interestingly, Hauerwas is named America’s best theologian, even though his work is directed on the detachment of the church, and the American society.\textsuperscript{110}

Drawing on an extensive range of sources, discloses that Christian ethics has a great impact on moral questions, therefore a person may be judged for not living morally correct according to Christian values. Christian ethics consists of different theories of duty, one point toward a teleological orientation and the other towards a deontological. Teleological ethics establish how actions have consequences and how these actions are judged by the actions moral position. Deontological ethics constitutes that the characteristics of the action per see defines its moral status. Hauerwas claims that both tendencies are necessary because it otherwise leads to a separation in Christian ethics from its rational background by


\textsuperscript{109} Berkman and Cartwright (eds.) \textit{The Hauerwas reader}, foreword.

subordinating theological beliefs to a formal ethical argument. Arguably, it can be concluded that Christian ethics are associated with theology.

In theology, many theologians base their sources of ethics either on the foundations of the Bible (the dogma) or the narrative of Jesus. Hauerwas argues against foundationalism systems, meaning that he finds Jesus to be the role model of Christian behaviour, and not dogma. Hauerwas shows that the narrative, and the Christian expression of faith within the Christian community is central, and the basics in virtue ethics. His narrative describes how God deals with creation. Likewise, he argues that narratives are not connected to either history, specific communities, or biblical stories. This standpoint is not uncommon. The Roman Catholic moral theologian William C. Spohn also considers that the framework for New Testament ethics is set by a narrative, in the story of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, through whom God brings history to its turning point. This narrative is in its core not very flexible, because it is drawn from the story of Jesus Christ. The story of Jesus Christ is his narrative.

Hauerwas’ research is influenced by for instance John Howard Yoder, and Alistair MacIntyre. Yoder is known for his pacifism, which is grounded on the endeavor to follow Jesus. Yoder and Hauerwas mutually argue for a Christian ethic, which takes its position in the life of Jesus, and in the words in the Bible. Therefore, Hauerwas has developed his ethics from a position where he first and foremost assumes that the Christian life should initially be lived in a Christian context. In this setting the Christian will learn how to live and believe. Hence, the narrative of Jesus is the Christians’ guideline, and constitutes practices of virtue ethics. Virtue ethics determines the moral status of the subject, which in turn determines the moral status of an action. Alistair MacIntyre is known for his Aristotelian and communitarian perception of the world, which is apprehended as a moral philosophy based on virtues. Several studies indicate that virtue ethics examines character, and is suitable when approaching scripture since it discloses the character of God.

Phillip W. Gray describes Hauerwas’ ethics as a communitarian ethic based upon a narrative. Communitarianism is a political and social understanding of the world where community surpasses single individuals, and is comprehended to contrast with liberalism and universal traditions. Gray does not support Hauerwas’ theology, rather believes it to create Christian

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111 Hauerwas. Det fredliga riket, 68–70.
112 Spohn. Go and do likewise, Jesus and ethics, 28.
114 Phillip W. Gray is an American professor in political science.
separatism in the secular world, and presents problems in communicating truth to those not already in the community. Gray argues that this is problematic because it turns into sectarianism where certain communities follow their own paths rather than what is decided by the state. Thus far, Hauerwas’ theology could be accused to exclude the Christian environment from the rest of the world and vice versa. The narrative, which Hauerwas stands for is probably not open for change, because his Christ is not changeable. This narrative of Jesus may be said to hold one truth, which cannot be challenged even though variances in Christian communities may create diverse narratives of Jesus Christ. Therefore, it may be hard to acquire new influences in communities that perceive their narratives as the most truthful. On the other hand, findings show that Hauerwas does not expect everyone to be a part of his community, neither Christian. He rather attempts to find a relationship with the world from a Christian perspective. The literature upholds that Jesus is the central character of the narrative, and that faith seeks to encounter the living Christ. In Hauerwas’ writings the findings indicate that his attention is preferably turned to the Christian context, and the Christian narrative. When discussing this, it is easy to draw the conclusion that Christian narratives exclude “others”, and if these narratives are lost, the foundation will also disappear. This can be explained as a kind of sectarianism. It is problematic when Hauerwas turns to the narrower Christian context, which is suggested in the discipline of communitarianism. His theological conception might alienate, even though Hauerwas tries to widen the idea by claiming that Jesus’ kingdom is larger than the church.

Hauerwas’ ethics draws the attention to the traditional theological virtues of faith, hope and love, since the church is maintained by these natural virtues. He claims that an ethic, which solely is based on rule-based duties abstracting from its narrative, makes our existence look like nothing more than a cursed thing after another. Therefore, even if a narrative is normative it is not to be taken as a total law, rather it needs to be interpreted in and from its context. Nevertheless, his virtue ethics are hard to grasp because he is not able to explain them convincingly, because his theology can be understood to derive from a teleological, and a deontological tradition.

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116 Spohn. Go and do likewise, Jesus and ethics, 20.
118 Ibid., 70.
4.1 Hauerwas on the Christian community

Reading Hauerwas, provides an understanding of his approach to Christian doctrine as ecclesiocentric in how he assesses theology. “Ecclesiocentric” refers to that he holds the church as the most important in Christian faith. Hauerwas recognizes the Christian narrative as a Christian ethic determined by the fact that Christian belief take the form of a story that form a tradition. These traditions shape communities, and he identifies that communities are crucial because they are locations for growth and fellowship. He draws attention to that we develop character through other people’s expectations. Thus, Hauerwas argues that people become who they are through the embodiment of the stories in the communities, in which people are born.\(^{119}\)

Church and services, as celebrating mass are important, because they focus on the story of Jesus. Hauerwas even more identifies that communities need to learn how to trust and love each other. Therefore, Hauerwas comprehends the church as a community, which must be founded on understanding rather than doing. He defines the church’s task, which is to try to comprehend the world as it is with all its madness and irrationality.\(^{120}\) This definition can be said to go against the Christian teaching, which promotes helping others, and challenging perfections of power as Jesus did. Traditionally, Jesus did not turn his back on anyone in need. The Bible demonstrates that he seeks the outcasts, the lonely, the unprotected, and the marginalized.

The literature furthermore describes that when a Christian falters the church’s role is to up build and correct behaviour, and therefore Hauerwas’ theology implies a teleological ethic. His approach to Christianity is Christological in character because Jesus deeds are commendable, and that the church is important to maintain the Christian community. His awareness illustrates that an individual’s character is shaped by the community, and likewise actions and behaviour. Hauerwas holds the opinion that the community offers an understanding of that people do not create their own characters. Thus, the character is a gift from “others”.\(^{121}\) He acknowledges that the existence of “the other” is a gift to the creation of “the self”. Therefore, the community offers a place for both spiritual as moral growth of “the self”.

Hauerwas moreover refers to the death of Jesus as a challenge of powers. He highlights that Jesus was accused and sentenced but did not do anything to escape his predicament when he let

\(^{119}\) Berkman and Cartwright (eds.) \textit{The Hauerwas reader}, 250.
\(^{120}\) Hauerwas. \textit{Det fredliga riket}, 189f.
\(^{121}\) Ibid., 102f.
himself be crucified. Accordingly, Hauerwas argues that Jesus’ death was a political death, in which Jesus proposes salvation through the reign of God. He understands the church to be a political alternative to the world, where the church is a political institution, which calls people to be an alternative to the world. Thus, conflicts are a reality as well as conflict solutions. However, his objective seems not to make the world more just, but to identify the world as the world. It could be proposed that Hauerwas’ arguments about objectivity solely concerns Christians, where the Christian create the world by being different in regard to other people. However, he seems to suggest that Christians can act as role-models in the world.

Consequently, Hauerwas can be held responsible to confine Christians to the Christian context by creating a sub-group outside the social community. In Resident aliens he proposes that America is a melting pot with people from different parts of the world but argues that there is a need for the specific Christian narrative, because the melting pot is not especially blended. Hauerwas maintains that the Christian context creates a unifying story, where people without a truthful story fail to achieve a melting pot and can do little but lie about their differences.” In reviewing the literature, his arguments establishes norms between “us” and “them”, which are hard to overcome. In a way, he clearly contends that there are significant differences between Christians and “others”, even though he does not distinctly express this. However, Hauerwas seems to wish for a Christian enlightenment for all people in the world, all though he realizes that this may be impossible. Again, it would be interesting to have him develop thoughts about worldly injustices, and how one can connect to various sub-groups. One unanticipated finding when reading Hauerwas, is that there are no clearly expressed opinions on gender, race, or economical differences.

4.2 Hauerwas on narrative, language, and stories

The research suggests that the stories in the Bible hold narratives with specific Christian language. Therefore, language connects narratives to how people speak. When people speak it entails an action. It is stated that uttering a sentence is acting, and it can change the knowledge of an entire group of agents. Hauerwas argues that relationships exist between social

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122 See Mark 14-16.
123 Berkman and Cartwright (eds.) The Hauerwas reader, 533.
ethics and narratives. He has found that the form and substance of a community is narrative-dependent, and that which counts as ‘‘social ethics’’ corresponds to the content of that narrative. Accordingly, a principal narrative is the narrative of Jesus’ life, death on the cross, and resurrection. Therefore, Hauerwas argues that the Christian faith forms lives and meanings, and furthermore that life becomes comprehensible in the light of such a determined narrative. Hauerwas identifies that the biblical narrative is the major source in Christian ethics. A Christian narrative, Hauerwas argues, emphasizes on Jesus’ whole life. He considers it to be central for the status of the individual in relation to the community, in questions about freedom versus equality, and the interrelation of love and justice. The strongest argument in his reasoning is his idea of practices, which entail that a Christian milieu creates good deeds and decisions, thus nonviolence. But nonviolence as a virtue has a discrepancy. To be able to be a community acknowledging “others” it also should entail virtues in democracy and national identity.

In his writings, Hauerwas draws the attention to a normative theology. Most of his theological interpretations are deeply connected to the gospel. The reading of The peaceful kingdom confirms that the stories in the Bible are connected to Hauerwas’ way of comprehending the world. Christology and Ecclesiology have a central role. He explains his theology through the story of Israel and the life of Jesus. He defines these stories as teaching people to be actors in God’s creation, and that the existence of the entire universe is nothing more than dependent realities. He claims that this participation begins in the world of God, where history has a role, and where people with their specific reasoning interprets the world through the revelation. The revelations point to Jesus’ life, as an action that changed the world, and accordingly Christians should do the same.

In Hauerwas’ analysis on understanding language, he refers to a story in the Bible where God scatters people, and gives them different languages. He interprets this story as a gift to humankind where people must face “otherness”, which has been created by separateness of language and place. He argues that this separateness has taught people to fear “others”, and from within this framework people try to impose their culture and language on “others”. He defines his argument with examples of westernization, different conflicts, and general alienation. Hauerwas expresses that “the other” is a part of God’s created world, just as “the

126 Berkman and Cartwright (eds.) The Hauerwas reader, 112.
128 Ibid., 71-72.
self” is, so everyone belongs. Therefore, every person is part of God’s plan for humankind. Hauerwas considers that the Spirit unifies so we understand “the other” as “other”,\textsuperscript{130} as an explanatory idea of belonging. He apprehends the Holy Spirit to overcome differences, and barriers between people, which may divide and separate. Accordingly, there is a reason for “us” being “us” and “them” being “them”, and this lies in God’s plan for creation.

Indeed, Hauerwas believes in not coercing humans together through a single language because people may lose their own stories and forget their own history. It is likely that Hauerwas apprehends language to be more than letters and words, because it contains community through narratives and stories. A possible explanation for his comprehension is that when the narrative is lost the foundation also disappears, and when the stories are untold the history and milieu fade. Therefore, Hauerwas explains that Christians need to learn other languages and stories to be able to respond to those who suffer and be able to have compassion with those in need. A possible implication of this is that the stories of Christians, as the stories of “others”, are stories embedded in the narratives of particular linguistic communities. This relationship can be explained by the fact that when people speak, they also need to understand, and in order to understand people need to speak.

Hauerwas concludes that we are united by what divides us.\textsuperscript{131} Thus, when we realize and accept differences in language, in history, and in stories, and speaking, and additionally recognize these differences in “others” it creates a place for consensus. Consensus in this aspect, is when people have a joint awareness of communication that looks beyond the own perspective, in this case the historical context of Jews and Christians. Hauerwas refers to a specific narrative, in the Jewishness of Jesus. The Jews are a part of the narrative of Jesus, and thus a part of the Christian narrative as well. He argues that Christians must struggle to understand their Jewishness\textsuperscript{132} in accepting them as a part of the same narrative, instead of something alien and distant. A possible way to explain his suggestion is when Christians understand that their roots come from the Jewish context, they may even understand that “the other” is as “us”.

Hauerwas draws the conclusion that the Christian theological language can be translated into a language, which could be meaningful, and compelling to those who do not share the same convictions as the Christian. He refers this example to the apologists of the past who sought relationship with those outside the Christian context. The apologists found that they had much

\textsuperscript{130} Berkman and Cartwright (eds.) \textit{The Hauerwas reader}, 145f.
\textsuperscript{132} Berkman and Cartwright (eds.) \textit{The Hauerwas reader}, 644.
in common with “others” to legitimate an apologetic strategy, but they never left their own belief to invite “others”. In this mindset Hauerwas possibly argues that relations with “others” are not impossible if Christians stay faithful to the covenant.

4.3 Hauerwas on fellowman

Hauerwas interprets the creation and the fellowship of humanity through the embodiment in e.g., relationships, speaking, stories, narratives, humility, and in accepting differences. He argues that people need to recognize that they have been given one another, both as a gift and a struggle. This struggle involves the reminder that “the self” is a gift, and created by God to “others”. As described before, “the self” is not something that we ourselves create but is created by means of “others”. The experience and knowledge of “the self” is limited by its social and cultural contexts. Hauerwas assumes we develop character through other people’s expectations. The context we live in shape our attitudes and behavior, and these are limited by the society’s expectations. When people leave their contexts, they are faced with the fact that the world is shaped by “others”. Hauerwas argues that communication and differences in self-concepts challenge “the self” to acknowledge that perspectives are limited by people’s self-preoccupation. Meeting “others” lead to self-evaluation when “the other” threatens “the self” because “the self” often only has a meaning within the own social context.

Traditionally, the Christian community explains the kingdom of God as it is revealed in Jesus’ relationships with “others”. Hauerwas explains it to be a discipleship where God calls people to live together in a certain context, with certain narratives. Hauerwas argues that these environments create “the self”, which becomes a possession, and therefore claims that these possessions are not easy to lose, because people never willingly give up all that they have. The consequence of this unwillingness to part of this possession is because it induces a feeling of powerlessness, and accordingly tries to constitute some kind of truth claim. People with truth claims often have the feeling that they need to control “others”, and therefore invent rules, which “others” should follow. Hauerwas explains this in how “the self” feels threatened by “others”. He argues that this feeling to lack control leads

133 Berkman and Cartwright (eds.) The Hauerwas reader, 52-53.
134 Hauerwas. Det fredliga riket, 102f.
135 Berkman and Cartwright (eds.) The Hauerwas reader, 132.
to the creating of enemies, where the enemies need to be manipulated or eliminated. Hauerwas wishes for people to accept this as a challenge, to accept the stranger with his own story. He argues that to be able to be a holy people it is of interest to maintain a life of charity, hospitality and justice. He claims that Christianity can be perceived as false if Christians’ do not live up to those convictions. Hauerwas draws attention to preaching, that it is not enough to preach, rather it is important to live as you speak. His studies indicates that the constant challenge of “the other” is a reminder of how well or how poorly we have drawn the story of Jesus to our story. When not living up to the stories told or the virtues explained, faith becomes irrelevant according to Hauerwas.

The existing theological interpretation of ecclesiology is that the church and the world are intertwined. Hauerwas explains this like a journey where it is impossible to travel or survive without the other. He furthermore demonstrates that the church’s mission is not to impose Christianity on “others” rather to discover that other religions may manifest God’s peace better. Hauerwas considers that everyone should learn humility, to let go of power and truth claims. His theories seem to support the notion that he accepts other religious traditions. Thus, there is an ease in his conviction that could be explained with the fact that he accepts people to make their own choices. Two important themes emerge from his arguing, one is that people should treat “others” with respect, and the other is his inclusiveness in the narration of “the other” as “other”. Hauerwas awareness is not a soteriological exclusivism, meaning that an individual only through a certain type of faith becomes saved or enlightened. His understandings entails exclusivism in so far that he does believe that Christianity is the best way for Christians to be saved, but not necessary for all. Therefore, it could be stated that he is a pluralist when he discusses faith, meaning that religions seek the same goals in unity with God.

Hauerwas discernment of conflicts, identifies that conflicts occur, and that they challenge our preconceived world view. He argues that one way to handle conflicts is to speak to each other. He considers that in speaking to “others” in dialogue fosters friendships, and furthermore change us. Speaking turns into a chain reaction, and he draws the conclusion that when one of us change, our original relationship changes. Therefore, all hard conversations are important according to Hauerwas, especially in discussions on differences in religion. Hauerwas seems to think that the search for similarities should be the main thing in human relationships, as well as

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137 Berkman and Cartwright (eds.) The Hauerwas reader, 385.
138 Soteriology is the doctrine of salvation.
139 Hauerwas. Det fredliga riket, 255.
interpreting relationships.\textsuperscript{140} The literature indicates that there are many perspectives which accepts “the other” without creating “otherness” as a narrative. Even though some may accuse him to express a normative theology, his interpretations are still open for the conscious change in oneself. The findings show that he does not seem threatened by “others”, or other religious and cultural differences.

4.4 Hauerwas on love

Love is useful, according to Hauerwas, but not everything. Hauerwas’ approach to love is associated to the crucifixion, where the cross does not merely symbolize sacrifice. Rather, it unites a will to give rather than to receive, to love rather than hate, and the truth of a “real” human nature.\textsuperscript{141} Even though he interprets the message of the cross to include the narrative of love, he emphasizes that such “love monism” presupposes an inadequate Christology. Therefore, Hauerwas finds love to lack the political significance of Jesus’ proclamation of the Kingdom of God. Christology, according to Hauerwas, is to make Jesus as everything’s beginning. Jesus shows the nature of Gods kingdom in his teachings, healings and miracles, and not only through the ontological significance and eschatology.\textsuperscript{142} The crucifixion is accordingly an eternal witness to the transcendent power of a forgiving love and nonviolence.\textsuperscript{143}

Hauerwas suggests that a broader viewpoint of the gospel is necessary to not diminish love to simply account for a sentiment. Accordingly, love is not merely a feeling because it entails an action. Love is a choice to live as you learn, a decision to act rather than simply preach about how to love. Hauerwas reinforces his belief by referring to the teachings of Jesus, when Jesus say, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you.\textsuperscript{144} Hauerwas argues that the way to love your enemies is to pray for them, and to show nonviolent resistance.

Hauerwas argues that love is mere a word if it does not contain \textit{agape}. As discussed before, \textit{eros} is an expression of human lust and will, while \textit{agape} contains God’s spiritual love. Hence, love begins with loving “others” for their own sake. Consequently, this path of love

\begin{thebibliography}{144}
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\bibitem{140} Hauerwas. \textit{Det fredliga riket}, 199.
\bibitem{141} Ibid., 169.
\bibitem{142} Berkman and Cartwright (eds.) \textit{The Hauerwas reader}, 117.
\bibitem{143} Ibid., 413.
\bibitem{144} 1 John 4:20-22.
\end{thebibliography}
creates an environment to make friends, and leads to overcoming hate and intolerance. Fear, Hauerwas argues, is humanity’s enemy, and an enemy to love.\footnote{Hauerwas. War and the American difference, 90, 120.} To be able to conquer fear people need to learn how to love, and this love furthermore is a resource for a nonviolent awareness of “the other” as “other”.\footnote{Ibid., 137.} Hence, love generates acceptance and understanding. However, he mentions that a lack of love shapes a habitat where people instead try to gain power over “others”. This power is alienating when it turns into fear, a fear of losing those we love. Hauerwas explains this circumstance as trying to gain power to ensure, and protect ourselves from the loss of the loved one’s love. He suggests that this act alternates between exchanges of power through love and our relationships with others.\footnote{Berkman and Cartwright (eds.) The Hauerwas reader, 591.}

In The peaceful kingdom Hauerwas continues to explain that when a belief in a resurrected Christ is present, it creates an environment where people take the risk of love. Precisely, as the cross teaches people unconditional agape, this love helps the awareness of that “the self” has been shaped by God’s love, and accordingly there are no reasons to be afraid of “the other”.\footnote{Hauerwas. Det fredliga riket, 175.} He suggests that fear can be taken away from the equation by remembering the path of love. Love is one of the church’s virtues,\footnote{Ibid., 193.} and is shown by being hospitable and hospitality is a Christian virtue, in which Jesus shows new ways of existence. Hauerwas identifies hospitality as someone who is always ready to share meals with strangers. Thus, when sharing meals, when opening up your home to strangers or enemies, it also contributes to agape. This agape experience consists of forgiveness and reconciliation.\footnote{Hauerwas and Willimon. Resident aliens, 99.}

A problematic understanding of love is when the Christian faith expresses a need to forgive enemies, and pray for those who persecute you. Hauerwas recognizes how radical this demand for love is. He claims that the act of love moreover includes the action of love towards the enemy and even the hangman. Hauerwas explains this love as a non-preferential love.\footnote{Hauerwas. War and the American difference, 314.} This love of the enemy includes a human complexity. Within this complexity of humanity, he notices that social questions are complicated, and that loving “the other” entails a reasonable way of loving oneself.\footnote{Berkman and Cartwright (eds.) The Hauerwas reader, 445.} Hence, rights and wrongs are not important, neither moral laws according to Hauerwas. Trespassing laws is a part of being human. Jesus, Hauerwas argues, is a role model.
for how to live a “good” life but he likewise comprehends the difficulty to imitate Jesus, because Jesus is the only anointed one. He mentions that Jesus is, and was the prefect role model, but humans cannot be Jesus. Therefore, people are called to be like Jesus not to be Jesus. He furthermore argues that when humanity is trying to be like Jesus, they also change their way of thinking, and doing things, and it opens up for being citizens of God’s non-violent kingdom of love.  

4.5 Hauerwas on co-pilgrimage

Hauerwas claims that Christians need to be holy, as the holiness, which is shown through God’s faithfulness. He develops this thought by suggesting that in following Christ, people realize that lives are determined by a narrative. Therefore, people are pilgrims on a journey even if they do not know what the journey means. Traditionally, the journey for a Christian is to follow on the path of Jesus. This means to be like Jesus. The journey needs to be constant, and requires to trust one another when the going gets rough.

Hauerwas realizes that a journey, and a dialogue are important parts of a Christian life. Furthermore, his comprehension on the journey has a strong connection to history. Hauerwas connects the Christian journey to the Israeli adventure, in the story of Moses’ journey from Egypt as well as when Jesus commissioned his disciples and sent them out. This is a journey, in which they were supposed to take confidence only in his empowerment, and the single thing they brought with them on this journey was Jesus’ promise of an adventure.

He considers this adventure to include the knowledge of that the follower changes when he discovers that everything found valuable, even himself no longer counts as anything at all. Therefore, this journey transforms every embarking pilgrim. Hauerwas argues that the Christian claim that life in a pilgrimage, is an approach how to show the necessary and constant growth of “the self”, of how to live the story of Christ. His interpretation of the gospel is that Jesus is the Master, and from him people learn to live in faithfulness to the fact that our world is the

154 Ibid., 138.
155 Hauerwas. Resident aliens, 64.
156 Berkman and Cartwright (eds.) The Hauerwas reader, 84.
157 Hauerwas. Resident aliens, 54.
159 Hauerwas. Resident aliens, 60-61.
world of God, and that we all are God’s creations.\textsuperscript{161} In his interpretation of the Christian journey, sins are confessed, and become a place for the truth about reality. The journey is where the pilgrim grows, and this place leaves no room for self-confidence or boasting.

Hauerwas argues that to be able to travel, Christians need the constant hearing, and the renewing word of the gospel. He argues that the Scripture offers such a story, where one understands that God struggles with his creation.\textsuperscript{162} Hence, the journey leads to the shaping of the Christian existence and living. Hauerwas thinks that in following Jesus the Christian comprises the Kingdom of God. He acknowledges that Jesus accompanies them as their companion, and instructor on a road where he himself is the route.\textsuperscript{163} These examples in his texts lead to the understanding that friendships become a way of life, when people learn to rejoice in the company of “others”. If the journey is without “others”, the journey which is the Kingdom of God becomes impossible. Hauerwas argues that people only know where they are walking when walking with “others”,\textsuperscript{164} and therefore the journey involves the company of “others”.

\section*{4.6 Conclusions on Hauerwas}

Hauerwas’ understanding of Christian ethics is that Jesus’ life establishes an ethic, and is not merely a moral directive to follow. Jesus and his work are intertwined, and starts from the meaning of the cross. At the cross the nonviolent love of God surpasses the world’s social norms and sufferings. Hauerwas argues that the cross is a sign of Jesus’ proclamation on peace, love, forgiveness, and equality. These ethical deeds are the benchmark for Christians. It could be argued that Hauerwas’ theology and understanding of “the other” are inclusive, because he grasps the kingdom of Jesus larger than the church, and in this context people of different religions are able travel together. This journey may be undertaken by acknowledgement of “otherness”. Therefore, there is plenty to retrieve from his theology. It seems that Hauerwas accepts differences, forgiveness, hospitality, acceptance, and love as foundations for communicating with “others”. He turns his attention to understanding the world, in that “others” are a gift to “the self”, and in that we need to accept “others” as “others”. His positive perception of the journey is that we encounter friends, and foes who challenge us in many ways. The findings furthermore

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Hauerwas. \textit{Det fredliga riket}, 140.
\item Berkman and Cartwright (eds.) \textit{The Hauerwas reader}, 251.
\item Ibid., 120, 122.
\item Hauerwas. \textit{Det fredliga riket}, 175.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
explain that friendships are beneficial, and that love, *agape*, is central in God’s world because this love helps the comprehension that “the self” has been shaped by God’s love. Accordingly, there are no arguments to be afraid of “the other”. Even though, the findings may suggest that his attention is solely turned to the Christian perspective, the findings moreover suggest that his understanding of “the other” is fruitful.

5. Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (born 1906) was a Lutheran pastor and theologian. Many theologians are influenced by in his resistance against the Nazis, and the persecution of the Jews. He was hanged in 1945 after being accused of being associated with the plot to assassinate Hitler. His life and his writing on war has been an inspiration to many Christians, other religions, and ideologies. Bonhoeffer was a part of the ecumenical Confessing Church, and was influenced by theologians as the Protestants Adolf von Harnack and Karl Barth. Harnack was a liberal theologian who did not interpret Jesus Christ as a dogma, rather as the gospel of life. Even though Harnack supported the First World War, Bonhoeffer probably found parts of his Christocentric theology attention-grabbing. The theologian Karl Barth was Christocentric as Bonhoeffer, and strongly influenced by the Trinity and dialectic theology. Research has shown that Bonhoeffer tried to re-interpret Barth’s dialectic theology in other ways, because it solely focused on God’s transcendence.165 Barth found that the only way to apprehend God is by faith, and not through human comprehension, because God is beyond all human knowledge.

Bonhoeffer argues that Jesus’ action is a guide in human lives, and develops a practical theology founded on Jesus Christ. His theology is practical because when people are in need, as in economical or oppressive situations, they may turn to Jesus’ life for direction. In *Letters and Papers from Prison* Bonhoeffer suggests that faith enables people to take the whole world into themselves, to understand God’s will and action. This could suggest that faith helps people to co-carry the cross of Christ, and relate their lives with Jesus’. Accordingly, he supposes faith to be helpful when living in difficult situations. He possibly draws this conclusion from when he was imprisoned.166

The literature displays that Bonhoeffer’s ethic is established on the person Jesus Christ, in how he interprets God’s will for the world. He argues that Jesus is the centre of the Bible, the church, theology, humanity, reason, justice, and culture. He claims that Jesus, as the reconciler of the world, has stepped into the middle of God and the world. It could be suggested that Bonhoeffer’s theological perspectives overshadow all kinds of ethics because ethics are constructed by ideologies. The ethical endeavor and statement for Bonhoeffer, is thus that history is an endeavor and statement. History demonstrates how to act ethically, and what not to do. He argues that God comes to people throughout history and people access God and the world through Jesus Christ. Jesus is human and Jesus is God, and comes to people in every single social context. Bonhoeffer discusses that this conception of sociality of being exists in relation to history and in relation to God. Therefore, it could be argued that this insight constitutes a form of theological anthropology.

Andrew Root interprets Bonhoeffer’s ethics to spring from anthropology and theology. Thus, to be human is to act ethically. Root explains Bonhoeffer’s theology to include some sort of atheistic theism, due to his interpretation of Bonhoeffer’s fear of theistic idolatry. Root suggests that Bonhoeffer distances himself from the conception of God as being solely transcendent, and that his theology includes a more practical narrative of Jesus. Thus, he means that the only way to grasp God is through Christ as the God incarnate, and the only way to be a Church is through Christ. Root explains Bonhoeffer’s theology as interdisciplinary, practice-oriented, and ministry-focused. Therefore, he describes Bonhoeffer as a practical theologian. It can be maintained that Bonhoeffer’s theology is deontological in so forth that it is duty oriented, meaning that it is a duty of a Christian to act practically in the world.

It has been argued that Bonhoeffer during his later years established a political theology, when he developed a theology of resistance, and based his ethics on responsible action. Later theorists connect Bonhoeffer’s peace activist theology to the contemporary Just peacemaking paradigm. However, this acknowledgement may seem unlikely when it is well known that he was involved in the plot to kill Hitler. Even though, Bonhoeffer is still apparently

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167 Feil, The theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 141.
168 Ibid., 88.
169 Andrew Root is a professor of youth and family ministry at Luther seminary in USA.
a role model for Christian pacifism. Just peacemaking began as the vision of the theologian Glen Stassen\textsuperscript{172} in 1998, and is built on its optimism, and is grounded in the classic tradition of Christian realism. Christian realism studies the gap between the biblical vision of God’s rule, and the realities of modern industrial society.\textsuperscript{173} Later Christian ethicists and international relation specialists have expanded these thoughts,\textsuperscript{174} in how to act ethically as a human in conjunction with peace and conflict solutions.

Bonhoeffer’s awareness of God displays that God is the transcended one, not someone distant. He interprets God’s transcendence as closeness. He argues that God is someone for all, not anyone who cannot be reached or experienced. Equally, Christ is not merely a religion rather the lord of the world.\textsuperscript{175} He finds Jesus as the mediator of the all-loving God. Bonhoeffer furthermore relates Christ’s suffering on the Cross as peacemaking. He grounds this idea on the story when Jesus did not refuse imprisonment, and neither the charges against him. Jesus chooses the peaceful path. Bonhoeffer’s idea is drawn from the situation when Jesus was condemned by enemies, and deserted by his disciples at the cross, yet he let peace enter when not fighting back. Hence, all Christians should do the same.\textsuperscript{176} Bonhoeffer’s interpretation is problematic because it is easy to draw the conclusion that his understanding of non-resistance has a fatalistic tendency, in so much as God holds the life of the individual in his hands, and whatever happens in life it has some kind of unknown godly meaning. Certainly, this is not difficult for a Christian to understand, even though it may seem problematic in a secular context.

5.1 Bonhoeffer on community and the church

The analysis of Bonhoeffer’s approach on ecclesiology displays that the church is Christ presented as community, where community without Christ is no community, and thus no Church. Therefore, a person only exists through community. Bonhoeffer comprehends the church as something given by God’s action and presence, hence not an organization to fulfil religious desires. He expresses that when intellectual or spiritual instruments are

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{Stassen} Glen Stassen is a Baptist theologian who is known for his social justice ethics and political theology.
\bibitem{Stassen} Feil. \textit{The theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer}, 92.
\end{thebibliography}
taken from the community it always insinuates itself, and robs the fellowship of its spiritual power, and effectiveness for the church, thus drives it into sectarianism.\footnote{177 Bonhoeffer. Life together, 19.}

In church, the theological doctrines such as creation, sin, and revelation can only be fully understood in terms of sociality.\footnote{178 Berkman and Cartwright (eds.) The Hauerwas reader, 113.} Therefore, he discerns that people are created in and for sociality. This sociality is community, and communities consist of persons. This insight is apparent when Bonhoeffer discusses the inseparability between individuals and communities. Bonhoeffer’s awareness of community consists of different social forms. He argues that marriage, family or friendship, a nation, and the whole church is community,\footnote{179 Geffrey B., Kelly, Prayer and action for justice: Bonhoeffer’s spirituality. The Cambridge companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer. John W., de Gruchy (ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, 117.} and that the Holy Spirit works in these communities. Whether he finds this to be obvious in other contexts, outside the church, is not seemingly discussed. In Act and being Bonhoeffer develops the theme of community of the church as the condition of revelation, where the church is the center of the world.

Bonhoeffer claims that the spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit lives in social relations of the church in the world.\footnote{180 Andrew, Root. Practical theology as social ethical action in Christian ministry: Implications from Emmanuel Levinas and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 2006: 69. (https://digitalcommons.luthersem.edu/) (Accessed: 2021-04-10).} Bonhoeffer’s perception includes Christ as the church embodied in each and every individual. It is therefore through Christ people encounter God. Bonhoeffer argues that the Body of Christ is identical to a new humanity, and Jesus Christ is at once himself, and his Church. He draws the conclusion that if we are in church, we are verily and bodily in Christ.\footnote{181 Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. The cost of discipleship. Touchstone; 1st edition. 1995, 269.} Bonhoeffer explains that this concludes faith as being enlightened, and that people encounter Christ with and for “others”. When discussing the subject of “the other” Bonhoeffer considers the Christian life as not being full filled, if there is no connection to “others”, because Christianity is about fellowship and community. It is therefore a Christian’s obligation to turn to all kinds of relationships. But then again, he does not state if “others” include non-Christians. Arguably, it still seems that his perception of humanity is wider than the Christian Church.

During the Nazi period Bonhoeffer noted that the church left its Christian values. Therefore, he proclaims a need for a radical conversion of the church.\footnote{182 Geffrey B., Kelly, Prayer and action for justice: Bonhoeffer’s spirituality. The Cambridge companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer. John W., de Gruchy (ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge university press, 1999, 250.} Historically, Bonhoeffer was a participant of the Confessing Church of Germany, which had broken
away from the German National Church who swore allegiance to Hitler. Bonhoeffer criticizes the church and state and shows extreme risk-taking. He recognizes differences in God’s kingdom and the earthly kingdom, and thinks that the state should be separated from the church. Bonhoeffer arguably even steps out of his Church’s traditions, when he gets accused of endangering the Christian proclamation, in going against the German national church.

Bonhoeffer’s action illustrates that the words in the Bible are not merely simple words. It can be argued that he finds that it is necessary to take the gospel seriously, especially the Sermon on the Mount. He imagines that the church has to live as the community of God and has to be truthful to God’s word. Bonhoeffer sees it as a privilege for Christians to live among Christians, but nevertheless the church should not leave its true calling. Therefore, Bonhoeffer realizes that the church’s true calling is to proclaim Christ’s teachings. Bonhoeffer expresses in Life together that acceptance of Jesus’ suffering is the main reason to why the community should be faithful to Christ. He finds it to be a reason to endure the many conflicts, which may occur in every community.

Bonhoeffer argues that the church is an educational place for Christians. He claims that in the Christian community people gather and listen to the gospel. When people do not come together, they are outside the community. He asserts that this life is insufficient and not a “good” life, when trying to live life on one’s own resources. He believes that in a godless world people are cheated out of the truth. Truth accordingly, is the truth of God and his relation to humanity, which people learn about in community. Hence, he identifies this community to be correspondingly spiritual, and not merely emotional, and therefore apprehends it to differ from other communities. Accordingly, he values the community as a place for meaning, where people of faith come to celebrate God, and not to fulfill their own emotional needs.

Nevertheless, Bonhoeffer explains that being a community is not an easy task. History has exposed that during the church’s history the Christian communities have disagreed on many theological matters. Countless theologians may reason that the fall is the ground for conflicts within communities, but Bonhoeffer has another opinion. He acknowledges that the love for God is the reason for many arguments and conflicts. Bonhoeffer mentions that conflicts arise from the basis for the common love for God. He explains this as when individuals wish to serve

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183 Kelly, The Cambridge companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, xxi.
184 Bonhoeffer. Life together, xiv.
185 Bonhoeffer. Life together, 13.
the divine will, they wish to serve the community in his/her own way.\textsuperscript{186} Defining Bonhoeffer, it can be concluded that he tries to explain turmoil in the church as being a natural occurrence. He maintains that there is a great necessity for Christians to come together to get their story right and get on the same path. The discernment of Bonhoeffer’s church is that it leads to a life in common, on the path of Christ according to God’s will. Spoon agrees and claims that the “full story of Jesus” becomes the paradigm for Christian life, which is primarily a life in common.\textsuperscript{187}

### 5.2 Bonhoeffer on fellowman and Dasein

Several theologians have studied Bonhoeffer’s view on fellow man and Dasein. This section will firstly give an account of these conclusions.

Previous research has presented that Heidegger’s ontology of being reflects upon Bonhoeffer’s explanation of human existence in his Christology, as Dasein. Dasein is another word for presence, as “Being-in-the-world”, in how being acts in the world. The research shows that Bonhoeffer is not satisfied with Heidegger’s characteristic of being, due to its lack of theological terms. Alternatively, Bonhoeffer describes being as someone “being for others”. Bonhoeffer claims that Jesus is for “others”, and that this is the freedom from himself given in him.\textsuperscript{188} This being is in relation to Christ, who is in relation to the church, and the church is in relation to the world. Bonhoeffer proposes that the interrelation of belief as an act, and revelation as being. Therefore, God is Christ incorporated in himself, and without relation with the reincarnated Christ there is no “us”, meaning no Church or community.

Jesus Christ reveals himself to everyone in the world as God’s being as “being-in-relation-to-us”. Therefore, being in the world entails being like Christ. Whenever Christians encounter “the other”, and “otherness”, it is explained as an encounter of Christ in “the other”. Bonhoeffer points out that if the individual is the concrete “I”, then “the other” is also the concrete “thou”, which is the image of the divine “thou”. When we encounter “others” we face God.\textsuperscript{189}


\textsuperscript{187} Spohn. Go and do likewise, Jesus and ethics, 5.

\textsuperscript{188} Feil. The theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 93.

\textsuperscript{189} De Gruchy. Dietrich Bonhoeffer; witness to Jesus Christ, 46f.
Bonhoeffer develops this theology of person with putting the “self” in the center of all relations, and shows that this perception of sociality starts with a Christian conception of being. The centrality in Bonhoeffer’s thought of Dasein is when a being knows the connection to Jesus. When the person realizes that there is something outside of “the self”, which always is in relation to “the self” the person apprehends that “the self” is not without relation. Bonhoeffer furthermore proposes that the individual exists because “others” exist, but that we never grasp the reality of “the other”. From this reasoning it could be argued that people have a core, which is always hidden, and that this core comes from and belongs to God.

Bonhoeffer progresses his thought further when he argues that to be understood as a built up inter person depends on the uniqueness and separateness of persons. The uniqueness of “others” is accordingly built on reasoning of God’s creation. This thought of uniqueness of person seems to make him draw the conclusion that there is no reason to apply to “the other” person what does not apply to “the self”. It is likely that he associates this reasoning to Luke 6:31, where Jesus says that “just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise”. Whether he apprehends “the other” as a sinner in not accepting Jesus as Messiah, is not conveyed directly in his writings. Simultaneously, he accepts the varied tendencies in society, and accepts that not all people are called to be Christians.

Bonhoeffer likewise thinks that a Christian should serve “others” by listening, helping, and carrying. He argues that a Christian’s role first, and foremost needs to listen to “others”, the second is to help everyone in any way possible, and the third is to be patient and carry each other’s burdens. This again explains his practical theology in an obvious manner. Thus, this does not specifically mean that Jesus is in all, possibly only in Christians. The author William Green summons Bonhoeffer’s theology of person to be ahead of his time. Green writes that long before post-modernists discovered “otherness”, the “you” as “other” was crucial in Bonhoeffer’s theological anthropology.

Bonhoeffer’s understanding of fellowship begins with the ministry of the word and in the communion. He explains that in this theory of worship, the Christian realizes that Jesus is alive and not dead. The church as a place of worship contains the Holy mass. Bonhoeffer

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190 Floyd Jr., Wayne Whitson, 1988, Theology and dialectics of Otherness; on reading Bonhoeffer and Adorno, University Press of America. 122f.
191 Bonhoeffer. The cost of discipleship, 205.
193 Bonhoeffer. Life together, 116f
194 Kelly. The Cambridge companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 114f.
195 Bonhoeffer. The cost of discipleship, 250.
explains the act of celebrating the mass as a concrete way to put forward Jesus to the world. When sharing wine, and bread one also choses fellowship.\textsuperscript{196} Bonhoeffer’s argumentation shows that fellowship is important for him. He believes that when the church is not one, it scatters, and the truth gets lost. Therefore, if a person wants fellowship with Jesus the option is to participate at a daily fellowship at table, and at the table fellowship of the Lord’s Supper is the final table of fellowship in the Kingdom of God.\textsuperscript{197} Bonhoeffer envisions that through fellowship and communion with the incarnate Lord true humanity is recovered, and simultaneously delivered from individualism, which is the consequence of sin. From this conception Bonhoeffer draws the conclusion that in communion people can retrieve solidarity with the whole human race.\textsuperscript{198} In reading Bonhoeffer, it could be maintained that a Christian needs the gospel, the community, and the Holy Communion to learn how to be a good Christian. Therefore, it can be argued that in sharing among Christians, will also teach everyone how to share with “others”, and to share is not to be selfish.

It is interesting that Bonhoeffer claims that a Christian must release “the other” person by not attempting to regulate, coerce, or even dominate them with love. Instead, he argues that “the other” needs to maintain his independence, and be loved for what he is. Bonhoeffer seems to draw these conclusions from the awareness of “the other”, for whom Christ became man, died, and rose again, and bought forgiveness of sins and gave eternal life.\textsuperscript{199} Love and forgiveness, towards “the other” stems from God, who is love. Therefore, this love is not coercive or dominating. He writes that, “Greater love hath no man than this, which a man lay down his life for his friends. This expresses the love from the Crucified”.\textsuperscript{200} In this notion he develops his thought that there are no argues to reject “others”, because of their religion or environment, since if someone does that he/she rejects Christ. Therefore, showing love towards “the other” entails showing respect. An illustration of respect is when Bonhoeffer discusses how the Jews were treated during World War 2, when he refused to benefit from the traditional Christian condemnation of Jews. He did not accept the accusations drawn against them, neither the fact of their enforced inferior status.\textsuperscript{201} He argues that the disciples, and likewise Christ was treated as strangers, therefore he argues that Christians should love, understand, and have sympathy.\textsuperscript{202}

\textsuperscript{196} See Luke 24:30-31.\textsuperscript{197} Bonhoeffer. Life together, 97.\textsuperscript{198} Bonhoeffer. The cost of discipleship, 341.\textsuperscript{199} Bonhoeffer. Life together, 18.\textsuperscript{200} Bonhoeffer. The cost of discipleship, 146.\textsuperscript{201} Kelly. The Cambridge companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 190-205.\textsuperscript{202} Bonhoeffer. The cost of discipleship, 121-122.
Taken together, it could be suggested that Bonhoeffer accepts the fellowman as an equal. One reason for this interpretation is because he defended Jews against his own Christian fellowship. He firmly states that serving “the other” as a brother, to please him, to allow him his due, and to let him live, is a way of self-denial, therefore the way of the cross. The stories about how the disciples once were strangers in the world, as some are today, is a clue to understand Bonhoeffer’s reluctance not to accept treating “others” the same way. He seems to believe that not all need to be Christians, rather that all have the right to their own beliefs. Even though Bonhoeffer’s theology appears to point toward a Christocentric world view he nevertheless maintains that in the same manner Christ bears all humanity’s burdens, Christians ought to bear the burdens of all fellow men. It could be concluded that his theology presents a practical way of lived theology, not merely a theology to be read in books. Bonhoeffer’s theories on transcendence and the world concludes that both are inseparable, and Jesus is the one for “others.”

5.3 Bonhoeffer on love

First and foremost, it is stated that love comes from God in Bonhoeffer’s theology. He argues that there can be no genuine love, if it is not the love which is shown in God’s love for and in Jesus Christ. Bonhoeffer argues that Christ has opened the way to God and fellow humans. He claims that the only way people can live together peacefully is to live in Christ, and in this manner, they are capable to live with one another in peace. In this peace they will also learn how to love and serve each other. One possible implication of this thought is that Bonhoeffer probably draws conclusions from the theologian Martin Luther’s perception on love. He argues that love is Luther’s greatest ethical duty, imposed upon humanity, which draws a relational bond between Christ and the disciple. Bonhoeffer is influenced by Luther’s theology, in where Luther separates the world of God from the world of humans. Bonhoeffer proclaims that there is a difference between the church and world, between the Christian life and the worldly citizenship. He recognizes that people cannot be Jesus or even be like him, due to all the evil in

203 Bonhoeffer. The cost of discipleship, 100.
204 Fell. The theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 95.
205 Bonhoeffer. The cost of discipleship, 110.
206 Bonhoeffer. Life together, 8.
the world. He furthermore argues that it is important to not go astray from the path of love. Hence, to be a Christian is to live accordingly.

In *Life together* Bonhoeffer develops the alteration between the emotional and spiritual love. He concretely describes the dissimilarity between *agape* and *eros*. He claims that emotional love cannot love an enemy. This love therefore turns into hatred, contempt, and slander. Thus, this is where spiritual love begins, where the emotional love turns into hatred. It happens when it encounters genuine spiritual love that does not desire but serves. It is possible that this emotional love can be translated as *eros*, while the spiritual love is *agape* because the spiritual love is something that comes from Jesus Christ. This kind of love, Bonhoeffer describes, has no direct access to other persons, and it loves an enemy as a brother or sister. He further states that emotional love can never understand spiritual love because the spiritual love is from above. He finds that the spiritual love will prove successful because it commends “the other” to Christ in all that is said and done. Bonhoeffer suggests that the biggest discrepancy is the question of truth, due to that human love has little regard for the truth considering that it makes the truth relative. Human love, is thus, something incomprehensible because the general idea of love is distorted. The easiest way to know love is through what Christ tells in his word. Bonhoeffer considers that Jesus Christ will tell us what showing love toward “the other” really is. He continues explaining that spiritual love recognizes the true image of the other person, which the person receives from Jesus Christ, in the image, which Jesus Christ himself embodies, and stamps upon all men.

In general, therefore, it seems that when knowing what love is, people can learn to love the enemy. This kind of love, Bonhoeffer argues is only possible in a life of discipleship. Bonhoeffer expresses that this kind of love is hard, because people sometimes encounter people who are utterly unresponsive to love, who forgive nothing when they are forgiven, and who avenge love with hatred and service with contempt. He believes that everyone should be ready to treat enemies in the same way, in the same manner people treat their friends. He describes that love for “the other” is like a walk on the path of the cross, which brings people to fellowship with the Crucified. Bonhoeffer maintains that love is the only path to forgiveness and peace, and includes that people need to love the one’s they hate. In loving your enemies, you live like

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210 Bonhoeffer, *The cost of discipleship*, 149.
Jesus teaches. Equally, the disciple might perceive that even his enemy is the object of God’s love. Bonhoeffer emphasizes that it is not easy to love the enemy, and explains that showing love for the enemy demonstrates what God means by showing love, and the attitude which is needed to display it.²¹¹ Even if Bonhoeffer has experienced hate, he keeps a positive attitude to love.

Bonhoeffer argues that objectification of “the other” destroys love in so far that it fails the ability to forgive, and the means for unconditional love.²¹² Bonhoeffer maintains that one’s will is not oriented by individual acts, but is qualified by acting out of faith and love through an experience with God.²¹³ When reading Bonhoeffer, it could be argued that a good Christian is one who is faithful to the gospel, which is often hard to follow. It can thus be suggested that a being is often an object of emotions and thoughts, and these emotions sometime get in the way. Still, a question to answer is if there is such a thing as unconditional love? Bonhoeffer seems to think so, but again this is not an emotional love, which only people are capable of. Rather, his perception of love is that it is spiritual, which one experiences in and from God.

5.4 Bonhoeffer on language, narrative and stories

Many aspects in reading Bonhoeffer points to the comprehension that Bonhoeffer’s theology is undoubtedly Christological. This is demonstrated in both his understanding of language, and in his stories, and narratives. The author Ernst Feil suggests that Bonhoeffer’s view on theological language is that it is a language of mystery, in which silence is appropriate. Feil writes that Bonhoeffer apprehends that language is a place from where mystery alone rises.²¹⁴ This finding is supported in reading Life together where Bonhoeffer argues that it is a problem when language is used without meaning. Bonhoeffer connects talking to the act of justifying one’s actions. These actions are not always correct, but by using words in the “wrong” way they legitimate one’s actions. He states when people talk without any meaning, they should be silent instead.²¹⁵ Therefore, he argues that he prefers silence, although silence is not about being silent for the sake of silence, rather to know when to listen, and when to speak. Bonhoeffer claims that silence does not necessarily lead to loneliness, and that talking does not necessarily lead to

²¹¹ Kelly. The Cambridge companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 164f.
²¹² Bonhoeffer. The cost of discipleship, 205.
²¹⁴ Feil. The theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 47.
²¹⁵ Bonhoeffer. Life together, 108f
belonging. To be quiet is not the same as being lonely. He argues that when someone is quiet there is a possibility to hear God’s words, which speaks within. This aspect of silence is interesting in dialogue with “others”. He believes that when people can learn how to be quiet, they also know when it is time to use the words in beneficial ways. To be quiet leads to listening and to the right use of words.  

Bonhoeffer moreover promotes the silence of the church. This reasoning is a reminder of Hauerwas’ idea about the church observing rather than doing. It is possible that this thought by Bonhoeffer’s offers a discrepancy between what people really do, and what they think they should do. In Bonhoeffer’s case this can be in reference to Hauerwas’ conclusion that the church can learn much in observing the world, and not always turn to politics. It may be so that he apprehends that language is connected to the ethical decision-making process. A possible explanation is that Bonhoeffer thinks that God’s language and significance is clear enough, and should not be misused to promote own self-interests, which are not connected to the church’s teachings. Subsequently, his ethics are intertwined with the theological language in the tradition of the church and the world around. It is a language of reality.

According to the theologian Trey Palmisano, Bonhoeffer often reworks concepts like love and peace, and locates them within Christ into his relational ethic. As argued before, Bonhoeffer tries to make his theology practical and understandable for everyone. This relational ethic derives from God. Bonhoeffer claims that the New Testament provides patterns for metaphorical frameworks, allegories, and the overall narrative pattern of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Thus, when Bonhoeffer discusses language he perceives it as a form of freedom, especially in the language of the Bible. It could be suggested that Bonhoeffer’s understanding of freedom does not consist of rules, rather it is a freedom to choose to believe or not.

Bonhoeffer argues that the stories in the Bible offers a certain kind of freedom, because freedom is freedom for. This freedom of narrative is a freedom to reinterpret sociality in any given context. The word of God even offers freedom to whomever wishes to listen. His Christological discernment proposes a freedom of choice and is not exclusive. Bonhoeffer suggests that the

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216 Bonhoeffer. Life together, 92f
217 Feil. The theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 47.
218 Palmisano. Peace and violence in the ethics of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 34.
219 Ibid., 42.
220 Spohn. Go and do likewise, Jesus and ethics, 4.
221 Kelly. The Cambridge companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 129.
word of God does not contain any power relations prompted on “the other”, rather exemplifies how people accordingly may enjoy the freedom of interpreting their own relationships. It could be stated that his theology points to a difference between how-to live in God’s image, and in the freedom of and in God. He argues that in the obedience of God people are liberated to believe.222

5.5 Bonhoeffer on belonging and co-pilgrimage

Ernst Feil suggest that Bonhoeffer affirms that Christians are wanderers who love the earth, which bear them,223 or rather should be. It could be suggested that in his idealized perception of Christianity there is much seriousness. The interpretation of Bonhoeffer displays that despite differences there is an “us”, which do not distinguish between “us” and “them”. Bonhoeffer accepts that everyone is a part of God’s plan and creation, and that people should not try to figure out why, because God’s plans are always hidden and incomprehensible.

It is possible that Bonhoeffer realizes that all people should be treated as co-pilgrims, in so far that all are beings of God. A pilgrimage includes belonging, because the path is Jesus Christ himself. Bonhoeffer argues that on this path people will not go astray. He supposes that on this journey Christians should be confident that God walks with them, and therefore should not worry about dangers. Accordingly, one might say that the only way dangers become truly dangerous is when people gaze at the road instead of Jesus who walks in front. Bonhoeffer alleges that when losing eyesight of Christ, the road will be lost. He explains Jesus as the narrow way and the strait gate. Taken together, the only interest in the journey, on the path is the end, which is Jesus himself. Jesus as the end of the path, is when Christians comprehend that they can proceed along the narrow path through the strait gate of the cross. Bonhoeffer believes that eternal life awaits at the end, and the very narrowness of the road will increase people’s certainty.224 Arguably, the path of life has its own struggles, and through following Jesus and not losing sight of Jesus’ teachings people can travel ever so far, and likewise be good co-pilgrims. It can be conceived that pilgrimage involves a following of Christ, in co-creating with “others”.

222 Bonhoeffer. The cost of discipleship, 92.
223 Feil. The theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 140.
224 Kelly, The Cambridge companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 212.
To be able to travel the Christian first needs the communion. As argued previously, the fellowship at the table is an act of solidarity. Spohn explains the supper as a willing identification of Jesus, with the hunger of his disciples to be pulled into his mission. Jesus is the bread of life, and the disciples feed one another, and serve one another into a union with the life of Jesus. Spohn further suggests that solidarity is reenacted when the bread, which is shared, also is shared with “others”, and in doing something about “others” hunger. Spohn explains the supper as a willing identification of Jesus, with the hunger of his disciples to be pulled into his mission. Jesus is the bread of life, and the disciples feed one another, and serve one another into a union with the life of Jesus. Spohn further suggests that solidarity is reenacted when the bread, which is shared, also is shared with “others”, and in doing something about “others” hunger. Spohn further suggests that solidarity is reenacted when the bread, which is shared, also is shared with “others”, and in doing something about “others” hunger. 225 Bonhoeffer identifies the supper (the Holy Communion), in the same manner. In Life together he suggests that there are several understandings in regard to the supper. Bonhoeffer claims that in the fellowship with other Christians every action in the church, as the fellowship of the table teaches humility and connectedness. He presumes that the supper explains that all are a part of a larger pilgrimage of life. Therefore, when Christians share the bread with one another it as proclamation of God's kingdom to come.226 It could be claimed that his identification with sharing meals gives hope for a new humanity, where peace and love is the main concern. Thus, he argues that it is not the Christians role to step in the shoe of the disciple or any other of the New Testament characters. He probably realizes that this is a far reached goal. The only constant factor throughout is the sameness of Christ and his everlasting calling.227 Even though it could be argued that the Christian community only offers fellowship with each other, there is still something profound in Bonhoeffer’s understanding on prayer and celebrating mass. Even though Bonhoeffer is not a virtue ethic like Hauserwas, he still finds it necessary for Christians to gather, and practice how to be good fellow men to “others”. When Christians are reminded of what Jesus’ proclamation is, they can repeat this action and mindset outside the Church.

When travelling with “others” people need to talk. It seems possible that Bonhoeffer’s use of language includes communication as dialogue between people, as communication between human and God, as communication through actions and prayer and the forgiveness of sins. Communication occurs when people read the word of God and teach each other. Bonhoeffer argues that if we pray for “others” especially those we are in conflict with, we realize that people do not have to be enemies, and that all people are alike.

Bonhoeffer has a positive vision of dialogue. It could be suggested that Bonhoeffer’s view on positive co-pilgrimage is related to how he perceives dialogue. He discusses that listening is the

226 Bonhoeffer, Life together, p. 46f.
227 Bonhoeffer, The cost of discipleship, p. 252.
most important, that talking is only useful when people really have something to say, and that an individual first and foremost should talk with the guidance of God. His perception of “the other” is open for dialogue and humble meetings. Under the great “umbrella” where the umbrella symbolizes God’s creation, he imagines all created as equals. The understanding of Bonhoeffer’s writings suggests that he does not believe that all should be Christians. He argues that to be a Christian it is important to act according to God’s will, in accepting that all are created differently.

His awareness of the Jewish community could be suggested to explain his view of “the other”, in so far that all should be treated with respect and humbleness, in relation to their own traditions. Thus, the Christian life demands a certain kind of living and doing, to be able to call oneself a Christian. A Christian needs to follow the path of love and respect. This perception explains some kind of morality, which saturates the Christian life. Even though Bonhoeffer has clear convictions about Christianity, he still maintains that the most important question in life is to ask oneself “What is the will of God?”,228 and this is a hard question to answer.

### 5.6 Conclusions on Bonhoeffer

The findings indicate that Bonhoeffer expresses a practical theology, which soaks all themes in his theology. A comprehension of his practical theology is that everything should emerge from a humble approach, especially when discussing differences. It seems that the Christian approach to life, and how to understand “the other” is colored by his Christological practice. He unquestionably considers that the only way to be a good Christian is to follow Christ, and listen to the word of God. Bonhoeffer expresses respect for other traditions in his peaceful theology. Forgiveness is a large part of his vocabulary, and to turn the other cheek, and pray for those who persecute you. Bonhoeffer argues that it is important to forgive “others” anything, because God forgives the Christian everything.

Interestingly, love seems to be the greatest command of a true Christian life. Bonhoeffer expresses this in the statement that one should love the enemy. As stated, Bonhoeffer argues that spiritual love rescues, reconciles, and delivers people from the earthly love, and may also become a connection between humans. He claims that emotional love only creates enemies.

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When discussing being Bonhoeffer has established many “Being-for”, as being free for the other in love, or being for the other, and being for each other. This points to that he has thought much about being, and beings relations to “others”. The interpretation of Bonhoeffer shows that despite differences, there is an “us”, which do not distinguish between “us” and “them”. He could be interpreted as a pluralist, meaning that he accepts differences in life and in faith. One could ask oneself, in which way his theology can be used in this study, due to its Christological understanding of sociality – nevertheless there is much to gain in interpreting his knowledge of the world and “the other” in God. Interesting, is when Bonhoeffer states that the church is her true self only when she exists for humanity, and to live in Christ is to exist for “others”.229

6. Discussions on the subject of “the other”

The purpose of this study is to define whether it is possible to find a Christian view of ”the other” that does not result in “othering”, instead in belonging. As discussed previously, there are similarities between Hauerwas’ and Bonhoeffer’s theologies, which indicates that there is a fruitful narrative of “the other”. To be able to put this narrative of “the other” into a context, Gadamer’s hermeneutics’ is used to define the meaning of a text through identifying the subjective act of intending of its author. Therefore, conclusions are drawn between Bonhoeffer’s and Hauerwas’ historical background and their theologies. Furthermore, this chapter gives an account for how this fruitful narrative of “the other” could re-shape rudimentary thinking of “othering”.

6.1 “The other”, “otherness”, and “belonging”

Conceptualization in theories of “the other” have historically created destructive and marginalizing narratives of “the other”. As previously argued in this study, narratives of “the other” have been used to claim superiority in power relations. Religious hegemony has led to e.g., overzealous control needs and to exclusion. Coarse narratives have been used to differentiate between “us” and “them”. Together, Hauerwas and Bonhoeffer hold pluralistic interpretations of religions, because they do not state that other religions are wrong or false.

They both agree in that everyone have their own rights to choose their own faith. This pluralism can be argued to go against the practices and beliefs in Christian faith, but as shown these theologians are well-grounded in their beliefs, and in service of the religious “other” they express some kind of servant hood.

The study of Bonhoeffer’s and Hauerwas’ theologies has revealed that it makes a difference how we view and talk about “the other”, and that these actions lead to how we treat “others”. Bonhoeffer indicates that despite differences, there is an “us”, which do not distinguish between “us” and “them”, even though Hauerwas’ theology could be interpreted to be more secluded, and only focuses on the Christian community. Likewise, Hauerwas recognizes differences to be God’s intention with humanity. Even though they both turn against dogmas, it could be stated that the narratives intended by Hauerwas’ are more normative than Bonhoeffer’s, in how he makes a distinction between Christians and “others”. There is still an opening in Hauerwas’ narrative in accepting “others” as “others”, in the “otherness” of Jesus.

In comparison to other religious traditions there is an equilibrium in recognizing “others” as “others”, and accepting that all cannot be Christians. Bonhoeffer’s theology could be comprehended as expressing a more radical standpoint of Christianity, when he comprehends Jesus Christ as the center of the World. Simultaneously, Bonhoeffer argues that to be a “real” Christian is to truly follow in the steps of Christ and live as you learn.

The findings implies that Hauerwas and Bonhoeffer have experiences of lived theology. They mutually have close likenesses, in how the texts in the Bible should be interpreted and lived, and in the comprehension of the community of Christ. Hauerwas’ theories reflect his background in the American society, and in his thought of how the church should live according to Gods will in a secular context. He has a political understanding of the church as being called to be an alternative to the world. Bonhoeffer on the other hand lived during the World War 2, and his theology was affected by the German National Church’s conduct towards “others”. It is highly probable that Bonhoeffer’s own hardships affected his theology. He maintains that love is the only way to live according to Jesus’ teachings, and considers that the Christian life as not full filled if there is no connection with “others”, because Christianity is about fellowship, community, and peace.

The Christian faith is not uniform. There are different interpretations of narratives in Christianity, and it is reasonable to say that not everything in Christian theology offers a
positive narrative of “the other”. However, I argue that Bonhoeffer’s and Hauerwas’ theologies offer a fruitful narrative, because they are open to the notion that differences does not exclude, rather that they offer a common “we” intended by the Creator. They have solid narratives of communities, and their roles, where the narrative of Jesus is the beacon of how to live, and behave as a Christian. Their narratives on Jesus replaces dogma, and creates a place of re-interpreting narratives and language. This is one of the reasons why their narrative of “the other” is useful and not excluding.

Historically, Western philosophy starts with “self” and “others” become reflections of “the self”, as something to be known. While Levinas argues that “the self” gets too much attention, Bonhoeffer claims that “the self” is the center of all relations. Bonhoeffer argues that person exists in relation to God, and human relates to human. Therefore, people are independent of who exist in relation to “others”, meaning that God is the sole mediator between humans. This may even be comprehended in that Bonhoeffer is trying to redirect the attention from “the selfish self” to “others”, in so far that “the self” is equally important as “the other”.

Thus, a sustainable world commits to the teachings of Christ, while acknowledging the “otherness” of “others”, and accepting these variances as God’s gift to humanity. Together Hauerwas and Bonhoeffer agree on that the study of ontology shows that people need an “other” to be a “self”. Hauerwas argues that “the self” is not something we can create by ourselves, but is created by means of “others”. Hauerwas further contends that we all are gifts to each other, because people must face “otherness”, which has been created by separateness of language and place. These differences and barriers are suggested to be overcome by the help of the Holy Spirit. It could be concluded that when we realize and accept differences in language, history, stories, and speaking, and likewise recognize this difference in “others”, it creates a place for consensus – and we may avoid “othering”.

Volf argues that people carry out “othering” by assigning “others” as inferior beings, and believes that there is a need to rethink the issue of identity. Bonhoeffer and Hauerwas express identity through accepting “others” as a normal part of people’s lives. The theologian Cavanaugh argues that we need to know “others” but also ourselves. This is another issue, which several theologians, such as Volf and Merton agrees with. Hauerwas sees the need for people to understand their context to be able to encounter “others”, and Bonhoeffer argues that Jesus opens a space in “the self” to take in “the other”. Thus, faith in Jesus Christ gives
possibilities to understand “the other”, and directs to a life in common, where knowing “the self” leads to knowing “others”.

Ariarajah’s typology identifies different perceptions of “the other”. Some imply an inclusive conception of “the other” while others do not. When someone emphasises that their own faith holds the truth, they express exclusivism. Normally, exclusivist attitudes include “the other” seen as an enemy or as different. Nevertheless, I beg to differ. As shown in Hauerwas’ and Bonhoeffer’s awareness’s of “the other”, they insist that being different is not problematic. In their theologies they express a view of “the other” as someone who is equal to themselves, someone who can choose to be different, and make their own choices of religion and culture, because God has created the world in this particular manner. Difference is therefore something that God has created. Someone may be “different”, but this does not have to lead to “othering”.

Another aspect to consider, is when Ariarajah discusses the enemy. Firstly, an enemy could be perceived as an opponent or an “actual enemy”. Rendering the analysis of Bonhoeffer and Hauerwas, it could be stated that they do not recognize the opponent as disturbing or problematic. The opponent is nothing more than “the self”. Again, they apprehend that to pray for “the other” is the best way to understand “otherness”. This signifies that “otherness” is nothing more than “the self”, in that all are the same. In prayer for “others”, they also pray for themselves, because of the sameness in God.

Jesus creates a new relationship with humanity when he sets the standard in loving the enemy and the neighbor. Ariarajah’s understanding of the enemy can therefore be challenged. When Jesus says “love your enemy”, Jesus rhetorically means “love your enemy”, meaning that there are no actual enemies. Hauerwas and Bonhoeffer agree with the apprehension that disciples must demonstrate love to all, no matter nationality or faith. Their insights of the enemy are that the enemy is like everyone else, as “the self”. The core of their beliefs are that actions are “wrong”, not the person. The action in itself can be “wrongful”, but the person is through it all ever loved by God. Thus, the enemy is someone who intends to do harm to someone, but still, Jesus is undiscriminating in his love for everyone. Therefore, one should trust God in his promise of forgiveness, even though it appears impossible to oneself. Next time, it can be “the self” who is understood as the enemy to someone else, and then “the self” probably equally wishes the same forgiveness.
and prayer. Therefore, the comprehensions concerning differences, and “the enemy” can be challenged.

Ariarajah’s typology suggests five positions in relationships with “the other”. These apprehensions describe “the other” as an enemy, as different, as an alternative, as a part of the reality, and as a partner/co-pilgrim. Inclusiveness becomes apparent in how Ariarajah explains “the other” as a part of the reality or as a partner and co-pilgrim. Ariarajah’s perception of “the other” as a co-pilgrim, is neither excluding nor marginalizing. His insights of the co-pilgrim signify how we move from “us and them”, to the discernment that all are a part of the human community and go beyond “the other”, and the acceptance of plurality, and differences as something to challenge. Whilst, when the “the other” is perceived as an alternative, it emphasises both exclusivism and inclusivism.

Ariarajah’s typology as mentioned previously, will be compared below, with the discoveries of “the other” found in Hauerwas’ and Bonhoeffer’s theologies.

As an enemy. As argued before, the word enemy is in the eye of the beholder. The presumably all loving God does not differentiate between people. The core of the human is pure through Jesus Christ action in the world, and therefore “the other” is as “the self”. In accepting “otherness” as something created by God, Hauerwas do not hold any hostilities towards “others”. In his opinion actions are what creates enemies. The enemy is thus not a human, instead they are conditions, which express truth, power, and control. His theology is therefore inclusive, and could be said to be explained as a public theology.

Bonhoeffer’s awareness of “the other” includes the same understanding as Hauerwas’. He argues that Jesus shows everyone how to live and behave. Bonhoeffer prefers to recognize Christians not following the scriptures as hypocrites or “enemies” to Jesus’ teachings, not those outside the Christian community. Bonhoeffer relates this comprehension to when Jesus is condemned by enemies, and deserted by his disciples at the cross, nevertheless he lets peace enter in not fighting back. Hence, all Christians should do the same. Bonhoeffer’s view on the Jewish community clearly expresses his opinion of “the other”. He maintains that hate is extremely destructive, and that the love for “others” is the only path to God’s kingdom.

As different. Neither Bonhoeffer nor Hauerwas observe any difficulty in relations with “others”. Differences are simply a creation by God. Therefore, as argued before “different is the same”. Hauerwas does not exclude anyone, he is rather very faithful to the Gospel,
and furthermore accepts differences as a reality and not a problem. Their understandings are grounded in a Christian context where it is important to be open, including, and encounter people with humility. Even though Hauerwas has been accused to support separatism and to exclude those outside the Christian community, there is great potential in Hauerwas’ theology. This conclusion is drawn, because his discernment is grounded in a free choice, a voluntary choice of one’s own convictions. Therefore, everyone should be left alone with their own beliefs. Seemingly, this apprehension can be interpreted as a positive image of “the other”, because no one has the right to transfer one’s convictions on “others”.

Bonhoeffer explains being different, as something without connection to “others”. Without the connection with others, the Christian life is not full filled. Christianity is about fellowship and community. “Others” may sometimes be apprehended as “different”, because people want to make “others” as themselves. When “others” are unwilling to change, they become a problem. This does not constitute a problem to God. Therefore, people have to learn how to tolerate “others”, as a part of God’s reality, and carry this burden of “otherness”. Bonhoeffer argues that faith in Jesus Christ frees people from pursuing only their own interests, and creates in all the space for the interest of others. He furthermore accepts solidarity with the whole human race, and argues that people will never be able to grasp the reality of “others”. Therefore, we do not hold the truth neither the power. Hauerwas and Bonhoeffer do not perceive dissimilarities as problematic, even though they probably would prefer all to be Christians. A conclusion is that differences are important in God’s created kingdom.

As an alternative. Hauerwas asserts that we are united by what divides us. Thus, when we realize and accept differences in language, history, stories, and speaking, and additionally recognize this difference in “others” it creates a place for consensus. He argues that people are God’s gift to each other. Thus, “the self” is not something we create by ourselves but is created by means of “others”. Hauerwas also describes the church, and the world as intertwined. Although, as shown by history, there is a discrepancy in westernized culture and Christianity in comparison with other religions and traditions, even though Christianity is not apprehended to better than other religious traditions. Hauerwas explains this in a well phrased manner, when he argues that the church’s mission is not to impose Christianity on “others”, rather to discover that other religions may manifest God’s peace better.
Bonhoeffer acknowledges that there is a difference between “I” and “You” but that this difference is to be accepted as a reality of God's created world. Instead, the “self” must treat “the other” as “the self” wants to be treated. He accepts differences in religion and culture in the world, and accepts that not all people are called to be Christians, and that it is important to approach “others” as the image of Christ. Bonhoeffer considers that “others” should be released to be themselves, and that uniqueness of “others” is important. Bonhoeffer furthermore argues that there are no arguments to reject “others”, due to their religion or context, since if someone does that they reject Christ.

As a part of the reality. Hauerwas stipulates that people need to recognize that we have been given one another, both as a gift and a struggle. Hauerwas refers to a specific narrative, in the Jewishness of Jesus. He argues that Jesus was Jewish, by some seen as different, and therefore people should refer to his Jewishness before creating coarse stereotypes. Consequently, Christians must understand that they do not hold the whole truth, and even that God chose to be born as a Jewish boy in a society, which some today may apprehend as different. Hauerwas believes that all must act like Jesus, to respect “otherness”, and allow “the other” to define him or herself. Hauerwas wishes that people preferably should see it like a challenge, where the stranger gets accepted with his own story.

Bonhoeffer claims that everyone is a part of the existence and reality. In this reality, a Christian should listen, help each other, and carry the burdens of “others”. He apprehends the church as a place to learn how to live together, in a community which is not about emotions rather concerned with the uniting spirit of God. Therefore, all relationships are mediated by God. Relationships look different depending on contexts, and all contexts have their own traditions, and are therefore correspondingly intended by God. The essence of a true human life, is to accept different realities as not being different, rather as a relationship in God's preserving action in creation.

As partner/co-pilgrim. Hauerwas explains the Christian life similar to a journey where it is impossible to travel or survive without one another. The journey needs to be constant, and requires that everyone trust each other. He conveys that the journey is a situation where Christians make the story of Christ their own. Hauerwas argues that the journey and the dialogue are important parts of a Christian life, where the dialogue with “others” should be understood as mutual equality. It is a reminder to the Christians that they must serve the world in its own terms.
To be a Christian is to be charitable, hospitable, and just. Christianity can be perceived as false if Christian’s do not live up to those convictions. Hauerwas contends that preaching is not enough, and people need to live ethically. Hauerwas’ and Bonhoeffer’s views on ethics may cause questions on how these can be applied in the world. They conjointly have a Christocentric approach, which can be said to deny other ways of thinking. Arguably, their approach stems from a Christian context – how a Christian should think and act to be a good Christian. Thus, it is not about converting “others”. From this perspective their approaches are applicable. Bonhoeffer’s and Hauerwas’ theologies could be stated to include the realm of faith, as the secular, when they let “the other” define himself, and do not treat “others” like strangers.

Hauerwas tries to explain a social setting for the Christian, when he explains that one should always be ready to share meals with strangers. When sharing meals, and opening your home to strangers or enemies, it also contributes to the understanding that forgiveness and reconciliation is a large part of this experience. Hauerwas’ understanding of forgiveness includes God’s forgiveness, and surrendering of control. The literature has highlighted that forgiveness is linked to trusting God and trusting “others”.

Bonhoeffer indicates that the word of God does not contain any power relations prompted on “the other”, rather exemplifies how people accordingly can enjoy the freedom of interpreting their own relationships. He accepts everyone as equal. Bonhoeffer’s perception of “co-pilgrimage” is to accept “others” as partners in God’s creation. A co-pilgrim is therefore someone who accepts not to know everything in the whole existence, someone who listens, and accepts differences as well as plurality. He firmly states that serving “the other” as a brother, and to please him, to allow him his due, and to let him live, is the way of self-denial, and therefore the way of the cross. Bonhoeffer exemplifies how people accordingly can enjoy the freedom of interpreting their own relationships. This freedom includes freedom for everyone. These relationships are built up by dialogue, good communication, prayer, and forgiveness according to God’s will.

To be a good Christian is to accept all realities of life, and try to make the world a better place. To be able to be this open to the own tradition even opens up for “others”, to let “others” have their own voice in every context. Hauerwas and Bonhoeffer accept that there are differences, but simultaneously accept that God has created the world to be like it is, with different languages, and cultures, and with hardships, conflicts, and frictions.
Hauerwas and Bonhoeffer thinks a good Christian should challenge all unequal powers of the world, by praying, watching, and understanding. It seems that Bonhoeffer and Hauerwas rely on being taken care of by God, in choosing to believe in Jesus, and in this belief they likewise anticipate God’s protection. Therefore, if someone decides not to be a Christian, it seems to be thought of as their loss. It should be a free choice to believe in Jesus, just as people decide whether to e.g., believe in Mohammed or Buddha. Still, no one should be passive towards injustices. God stood against evil in the story of Jesus, therefore a Christian have to act accordingly. There is a reason to remember that Bonhoeffer’s theology stems from a time of Nazi oppression. His interpretation of the gospel is colored with upholding a Christian ethic, and to be socially critical to every tyrannical act.

A co-pilgrim is someone who discerns fairness, who enjoys same privileges in the created world as clean air, water, and food. God did not create these things for a few people, but for all. In encountering “others”, a co-pilgrim understands that there are different cultures, and comprehensions on life. In mutual respect, they travel together in life, in dialogue, to learn more about each other. When there is a release of power and control, when suspicion is replaced with openness, there is room for forgiveness and reconciliation. A co-pilgrim shares knowledge, and stands up for “the other”. Language is therefore a method to discover “others”, and dialogue is conducted from a perspective of acceptance, understanding, and love. Accordingly, lived theology seems to be important as interdependence, when creating a common we.

6.2 “The other” and love

Ariarajah considers that love, even the religious, has no meaning outside the Christian worldview. Hauerwas and Bonhoeffer on the other hand, suggest that love is *agape*, and is useful. From a human perspective it is easy to recognize that human love is limited, and that there are contradictory approaches to love. It is not easy to love someone you dislike or even pray for the enemy. Hauerwas recognizes how radical the demand for love is when you must love your enemy. Love may be explained, and understood differently in other societies. Love is similarly something unreachable in the sense of it being something that may be hard to describe and comprehend.

Bonhoeffer and Hauerwas believe that loving “others” is a part of being a Christian. Human love is therefore not enough. Hauerwas contends that to be able to conquer fear we all need
to learn how to love, because a community that lacks love shapes a habitat in which people instead try to gain power over “others”. Hauerwas deliberates on something he calls a non-preferential love, which includes everyone, and does not exclude anyone. Bonhoeffer’s description of love is that emotional love cannot love an enemy, and claims that a genuine spiritual love doesn’t desire but serves “others”.

Spivak explains this emotional love in a comprehensible way. She argues that love is something for the privileged, for those who have the possibility and feasibility to love. Thus, for those in control. Human love is fickle, and probably also for them who have food, housing, money and opportunities for education. Countless people struggle to gain these possessions, and have not got the time to think about love. In her argument, she claims that love is furthermore oppressing and controlling. There is no reason to disagree with her reasoning. Still, love known as spiritual, to be something inclusive and profound given to humanity, is an alternative perspective. Hauerwas and Bonhoeffer describe this in a comprehensible manner when they argue that spiritual love from God, creates feelings of belonging, when God makes space in us to receive “the other”. When an individual feels the love from the Creator, it may develop a sense to belong, which is superior to “the self”. Hence, the spiritual love gives room for all kinds of religiosities and contexts, because all humans may agree on a divine love to be something good. Of course, atheists may not agree on that there is a spiritual love at all, but then again may accept that there could be a common ground to meet on, if love is translated to consist in respect, understanding, and fellowship.

Bonhoeffer’s and Hauerwas’ awareness of love is that it is not a human action, rather something that is given freely in God’s grace. Thus, this love demands faithfulness to Jesus’ life, and teachings in being a good neighbor, praying for your enemies, giving to the poor, and helping people in need. Again, it is easy to just say: Just love “the other”, but it entails an action. Simultaneously, love is not apprehensible. Love can be translated into a more people friendly approach, to involve self-giving, the ability to listen, a will to understand and respect, to accept plurality, a will to transform, and to forgive and reconcile. There is not a demand to like someone or something, rather a willingness to love “others” from a perspective of humility.
PART III

7. Contextualization of a Christian narrative of “the other”

This chapter will discuss the circumstances of how and why Bonhoeffer’s and Hauerwas’ narratives of “the other” can be helpful in peace-processes.

Christianity, overall, cannot be concluded to hold a positive narrative of “the other”. History has shown that although Christians have claimed to follow Christian narratives, this has ultimately led to problematic opinions of “the other”. The analysis of Bonhoeffer’s and Hauerwas’ theologies suggests that there is a fruitful narrative of “the other”, which could replace obsolete ideas, and re-build a new understanding of “the other”. These findings suggest that this Christian narrative of “the other” is usable outside the Christian context.

This thesis has not tried to determine, which religion is the best, nor to suggest that the Christian perspective is the best. This study has instead sought to find a narrative suited to a universal context. Hauerwas’ and Bonhoeffer’s narratives are suitable because they are understood as irreconcilable with hegemony. Although it is important to recognize that Hauerwas and Bonhoeffer discuss theology from an Christological perspective, and these findings demonstrate that they do not state that Christian faith is the most valid or truthful one. A Christian theology does not need to let go of dogma, but needs to apply Christian values in worldly environments. Hauerwas accordingly expresses that public theology is ecclesial theology. This ecclesial theology stems from the life of a community of people who are seeking to give witness to God’s reign over all of life, and even keeps hope alive for a better world. Thus, this kind of public theology opens up to the creative process that enables solutions to urgent civic problems to be found.230

There are many religious convictions in the world, and many of them do not perceive their own religion as oppressive or coercive. All state that they hold the truth. There is thus something to consider, if God is supposed to be including and just, God should make all people believe in God, and so religion should not be exclusive. However, not all humans have a faith or even faith in the same God. Therefore, it could be concluded that God is inclusive, and it is because God lets people choose for themselves that people should not be exclusive. To uphold inclusivism, religious systems should find common narratives, and language to express the

notions of forgiveness, reconciliation, and mercy. When people socially interact, they also gain knowledge and understanding.

As discussed earlier, the construction of identity is connected to history, culture, language, and to make a change there is also a need to unlearn structures, which are contra-productive. New understandings that can help to overcome the past are accordingly a suitable way forward. Hauerwas and Bonhoeffer propose that barriers have been constructed by history, narrative, meaning, and the social contexts; however, these circumstances may likewise help to create new circumstances.

Hauerwas has developed a narrative theology, which is both political, and practical. Hauerwas argues that the community is a place to learn the Christian narrative, and live, and act accordingly. There appears to be a problem with this reasoning if the community teaches “wrong”, and “untruthful” narratives. Thus, narratives are closely connected to morals, and norms, and are reinterpreted and evaluated depending on their active members. Therefore, narratives may change with time, and within contexts depending on how the group is assembled.

The conclusion is that Bonhoeffer’s and Hauerwas’ theologies can have an influence in civil society because they are easy to conceptualize, and easy to translate into a more publicly accessible form of discourse. The findings display that Hauerwas apprehends history, and meaning as important in developing theology. Bonhoeffer’s discernment of theology is likewise practical, since he thinks that gospel is the lived life. His theology relates faith, and historical context. Bonhoeffer’s and Hauerwas’ theologies express a suitable insight in opposite of “othering”, which should be taken into consideration, in accepting differences as something productive. Therefore, it is benevolent to work with similarities rather than dissimilarities.

This study shows that it does not matter, which perspective is used, because faith compels the following of truths explained in dogma. Therefore, social change, and religious faith are compatible. Every act of participation in co-creating induces belonging since cooperation is an opportunity to learn about each other. Bonhoeffer’s and Hauerwas’ understanding of “the other” is fruitful because their theologies expresses that truth is relative, they are willing to discuss, and listen, and they accept plurality and other religious expressions. They work for peace, and see interaction between religious communities as important for self-criticism, enrichment, and improvement.
7.1 Assessment of relevance in Peace-making, Peacebuilding and Peacekeeping

The research on Bonhoeffer and Hauerwas indicates that their narrative of “the other” is useful in peace-processes, because their narrative of “the other” accepts differences, shows willingness to listen in mutual respect, and does not differ between people. When people arrive at this point, “the other” is understood as “the self”.

This awareness of “the other” can lead to the knowledge that one may approach the negotiating table with insight into the other person’s situation. This insight can be utilized in peacemaking. Arguably, the early Christian church is known for its pacifist sentiments, which are said to derive from Jesus, who said, “Blessed are the Peacemakers”. Peacemaking\(^{231}\) is when two parties that disagree try to negotiate peace, and involves governments, UN, regional organizations, and diplomatic action. Peacemaking efforts may also be undertaken by unofficial, and non-governmental groups.\(^{232}\)

Hauerwas argues for the need for a nonviolent approach, and suggests that peace will not be accepted through coercion, only through the worship of one God who chooses to rule through the power of love. He acknowledges that love, forgiveness, and the ability to surrender power can bring peace to the nations. Hence, peacebleness is only possible when people forgive, and learn how to be forgiven. Bonhoeffer likewise argues that the only way to live as a Christian is to work for pacifism, and considers Christ’s suffering on the Cross as a way to learn how to bring peace.

Peace building is a long-term process, which aims to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict, and is about dealing with the reasons why people fight. This approach demands listening, which Bonhoeffer emphasizes as an asset. He thinks that listening is the key to dialogue. In peace building listening is important because it addresses core issues that affect the functioning of society, and the State.\(^ {233}\)

Peacekeeping\(^{234}\) is a wide definition that include peace building, and diplomatic peace-making components. As discusses, “track-two” diplomacy is important, due to religious people may have an impact. Hauerwas’ and Bonhoeffer’s narratives of “the other” is therefore useful in how to act towards “others”. They both maintain that praying for “the

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\(^ {231}\) The word “pacifism” is derived from the word “pacific,” which means “peace making”.


\(^ {234}\) Peacekeeping operations protects civilians, assist in disarmament, gives support in elections and protects human rights.
enemy” is a way to reconcile and forgive. Peacekeeping intends to create conditions to support lasting peace, to facilitate the shift from a state of conflict to a state of peace and its values are political. It requires consent from the host, and it is non-violent.\textsuperscript{235}

The narrative of “the other”, which has emerged from this study demonstrates that it is useful in peacekeeping. Again, knowing “others”, and to respect them as co-pilgrims is rewarding. In accepting “the other” as “the self”, and acting towards “others” as you would like “others” to act towards you, there are no arguments against Bonhoeffer’s and Hauerwas’ narratives of “the other” being used in peace making or peace building situations. From their narrative we can draw a conclusion highlighting the most important findings: that peace is preferable, love is useful, talking leads to understanding and that “others” have their right to their own traditions. This narrative is fruitful in the interaction of religion, and peace building approaches in multi-religious and multicultural social settings. Leaving one’s own traditions to learn more about “others”, in order to encourage approaches to a co-pilgrimage in life, and to inspire dialogue, and partnership may build skills necessary to make peace.

8. Conclusions

These findings may suggest naïve idealism, but on the contrary they present real possibilities for change. This study has shown that this fruitful narrative of “the other” is implicit and relevant because it focused on history, context, and stories, which bind people together, and creates a basis for new knowledge. Values and ideologies shape communities, and it is clarified that it is easier to stay within your own community because individuals find that places outside the identifiable community are the most frightening places. When understandings of theologies do not lead to communication, they instead lead to a monologue in so far that the own comprehensions of the world, and religious traditions are handed down from one generation to another. Hence, these understandings of when someone supposedly holds the whole truth insinuates that “others” may be inferior, and also that something “other” is worth destroying. Fundamentalism is a way of explaining

this phenomenon. A way to avoid fundamentalism is to be able to accept that the form, and content of one’s own tradition does not contain the whole truth.

Religious and cultural hegemony occur all over the world, yet many scholars have found that there is an increase in global understanding, of how religious leadership should behave, and even how the attitudes toward religious authority have much in common across cultural divisions. When religions turn inwards to comprehend that practices shape belief, and that religious beliefs leads to the shaping of practice, it can provide a tool for reshaping practices and beliefs. There is a need to re-define the narrative of “the other” to create bridges across differences, and to find useful and fruitful narratives of “the other” are consequently of great importance in fostering friendships. Various studies indicate that prejudices lessen when people are in contact with each other.

In the case of Myanmar, the fact that peace-processes have stagnated is related to unwillingness to learn more about each other. A part of the problem is that Islamophobic narratives about the Rohingya have been reinforced, and dispersed during many years. It seems that there is neither a will to accept dissimilarities, nor accepting “the other” as “other” as a natural part of God’s kingdom, or the world.

Fear of “the other” is another influence, which disturbs the peace-processes, and fear of changes. Firstly, it is urgent to change narratives. Secondly, if people are willing to forgive and reconcile, if they are willing to sit down at the negotiation table, and really listen, instead of trying to “be right” it would lead to more fruitful conversations. Bonhoeffer’s and Hauerwas’ narratives of “the other” suggests that difference does not have to lead to “othering”. Accepting differences is a large part of accepting “the other”. In accepting that all are humans, to accept “the other” as “the self”, to therefore expect, and give the same rights, can lead to a rewarding acceptance. “Othering” can be prevented when “the self” changes from “self-preoccupation”, and it turns to “self-criticism”, to “self-giving”, to “self-recognition”, and hopefully to “self-giving” love. God’s transcendence, giving, and helping, can help “self-examination” in so far that the will to help releases “the other” from “othering”.

This found perception of “the other” in Hauerwas’ and Bonhoeffer’s theologies are useful because they point toward a new way of comprehending “the other”, which is connected to “othering”. It gives people new perceptions of strangers, of those who do not belong to the same culture. The stories of the Bible should be understood both explicitly, and
implicitly in so far that they can be combined with the life of a person living in this world. The explained narrative of “the other” in Bonhoeffer’s and Hauerwas’ theologies are explicit to the extent that it derives from the Bible, in the texts and stories of the Jewish and Christian history, and understandings of who God is and what Jesus teaches and how he lived. From an implicit point of view Hauerwas and Bonhoeffer recognizes that the real world does not always go hand in hand with what is being taught in Christian Churches. The implicit knowledge must be learned as from experiences. Hauerwas’ and Bonhoeffer’s view of “the other” is implicit knowledge since both have experiences of lived Christianity. Therefore, it is possible that the explicit Christian narrative of “the other” found in their theologies could lead towards an implicit relevant understanding of “the other”.

Love has been discussed as a path to understanding. Bonhoeffer’s and Hauerwas’ perception of love as spiritual provide a helpful way to understand love. It is not easy to love your enemy, but to realise that love as spiritual, and something given to all changes the game plan. Thus, the spiritual love could foster a culture of acceptance for every individual as equal. In this equality one feels the need to help, listen, and carry “others” burdens.

The way to start every effort in peace-processes is to look to ourselves. We must see how we act, and how we should not act. Jesus’ phrase reinforces this statement with his words in Matthew 7:3 where he says, “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye, and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?” Thus, he makes space for the other in the self, and of re-arranging “the self”, considering the other’s presence and renewing the covenant entails self-giving. Inclusivism, belonging, and bridging comes from an empathetic identification with “the other”. Learning from each other, and living together develops empathy. However, if there is no will to adjust or re-shape usages of language, narratives or actions, nothing will change.

8.1 Limitations and future studies

The limited scope of only two theologians, chosen from a pacifistic context may have limited the scope of conclusions. Therefore, studying other theologians’ perspectives can help to increase our knowledge about “the other” and Christianity.
A promising avenue for future research is to investigate the theme of “the other”, and other religions in order to find common narratives, which could be used in peace processes, e.g., Christianity, Judaism, and Islam all include teachings on peace, and reconciliation. Hence, to find common concepts is to work for inclusiveness. This research could furthermore be expanded to include other traditions, cultures, and religions.

My analysis may be somewhat subjective, since I am a theologian, and the conclusions are drawn from my personal understanding of Christianity. Still, my theoretical knowledge of Christianity is also an asset in comprehending Hauerwas and Bonhoeffer.
9. Bibliography


