



NUI MAYNOOTH
Oliacail na hÉirann Mú Nuad

BÖHME AND HEGEL:
A STUDY OF THEIR INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT
AND SHARED READINGS OF TWO CHRISTIAN
THEOLOGOUMENA

NEIL O'DONNELL

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ACTING HEAD OF DEPARTMENT DR MICHAEL DUNNE

SUPERVISED BY DR CYRIL MCDONNELL

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PREFACE

I would like to thank the two supervisors involved in the development of this thesis: the late Professor Thomas Kelly, who was responsible for the initial period of germination of the seed of the idea, and to Dr Cyril McDonnell, who cultivated the growth to its maturity.

I hereby declare that this project represents my own work and has not been submitted, in whole or in part, by me or by another person, for the purpose of obtaining any credit/grade. I agree that this project may be made available to future students of the College.

Name: Neil C'Donnell

Date: 30/10/08

ABSTRACT

This thesis, *Böhme and Hegel: A Study of their Intellectual Development and Shared Readings of Two Christian Theologoumena*, explores the connections which exist between both the intellectual development of Jakob Böhme and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and in their readings of two Christian *theologoumena*. As such, this thesis is divided into three chapters.

Chapter One consists of a comparative study between the intellectual development of Böhme and Hegel. The course of this development is divided into three phases, periods in which Böhme and Hegel will be shown to share. The examination begins with their reaction against Christian orthodoxy, their subsequent interest in the heterodox, and their eventual return to the Reformation. Through the course of this chapter it will be realised that the progression of Böhme and Hegel from one period to another constitutes development in language, but not in content. Both seek to find a mode of expression which adequately represents eternal truths which they consider to be perennial.

Chapter Two analyses an occasion in which Böhme and Hegel attempt to render this perennial content. Through their examination of the Christian concept of God, both are endeavouring to represent a kernel of religious truth, beyond its representational trappings. As such, both Böhme and Hegel will examine, in detail, Christian notions such as the nature of the unrevealed God, the Trinity and its supposed personhood, and the doctrine of the Incarnation.

Chapter Three continues Böhme and Hegel's line of investigation, in attempting to unveil the speculative meaning between the Christian *theologoumena* of the creation

of the world, the psychology of the first created being, and the fall from his original nature. Through the course of this chapter, Böhme and Hegel's shared thoughts on notions of the conflicting accounts of creation, the primordial unity with the divine, and the necessity of the Fall of Man will be examined.

Throughout the course of this comparative study, it is hoped that a clear and direct influence on Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's philosophy of religion by Jakob Böhme will be shown.

ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

Jakob Böhme

- I Apol. Tilke* = *The first apologie to Balthazar Tylcken: being an answer of the authour concerning his book the Aurora, opposed by an enemicitious pasquil or opprobrious libel*, trans. by John Sparrow (London: Printed by M. S[immons] for Giles Calvert, 1661)
- II Apol. Tilke* = *The Second Apologie to Balthazar Tylcken: Treating of the Eternal Predestination and Election of God, and of the Incarnation, or Becoming Man and Person, of Christ, and Concerning the Virgin Mary*, trans. by John Sparrow (London: Printed by M.S. for Giles Calvert, 1661)
- Apol. Richt.* = *An Apology in Answer to Gregorius Richter*, trans. by John Sparrow (London: Printed by M. Simmons, 1665)
- Aurora* = *The Aurora*, trans. by John Sparrow (London: Printed by M. Simmons, 1656; John M. Watkins, 1960)
- Clavis* = *The Clavis*, trans. by John Sparrow (London: Printed by M. Simmons, 1647)
- Contemplation* = *On Divine Contemplation*, trans. by John Sparrow (London: Printed for M. Simmons, 1661)
- Epistles* = 'The Sixty-Two Theosophic Epistles', in *The Remainder of Books written by Jacob Behme [sic]*, trans. by John Sparrow (London: Printed by M. S[immons] for Giles Calvert, 1662)
- Forty Questions* = 'Answers to Forty Questions Concerning the Soul', in *Forty Questions and the Supersensual Life*, trans. John Sparrow (London: n. pub., 1647. Reprint, Kessinger Publishing, 2005)
- Grace* = 'De Electione Gratiae', in *De Electione Gratiae and Questiones Theosophicae*, trans. by John Rolleston Earle (London: Constable, 1930)
- Incarnation* = *Of the Incarnation of the Christ*, trans. by John Rolleston Earle (London: Constable, 1934)
- Letzte Zeit* = *Of the Last Times: Two Epistles to Paul Keym [hereafter Letzte Zeit]*, trans. by John Sparrow (London: Printed for M. Simmons, 1649)
- Myst. Mag.* = *Mysterium Magnum*, trans. by John Sparrow (London: 1654; John M. Watkins, 1924)
- Princ.* = *Concerning the Three Principles of the Divine Essence*, trans. by John Sparrow (London: Printed by M. Simmons, 1648; John M. Watkins, 1909)
- Schriften* = *Sämtliche Schriften*, ed. by Will-Erich Peuckert and August Faust, 11 vols (Stuttgart: Fromann, 1955–1961)
- Seel. Frag.* = 'Vierzig Fragen von der Seelen [hereafter *Seel. Frag.*]', in *Sämtliche Schriften*, vol 3
- Sig. Rer.* = *Signatura Rerum: The Signature of All Things*, in *The Works of Jacob Behmen, The Teutonic Philosopher*, trans. by John Sparrow, vol. 4 (London: Printed for G. Robinson, 1810)
- Stiefel* = 'The Considerations upon Esaiah Stiefel's Booke [sic] Concerning the Threefold State of Man and the New Birth', in *The Remainder of Books written by Jacob Behme [sic]*, trans. by John Sparrow (London: Printed by M. S[immons] for Giles Calvert, 1662)
- Tab. Princ.* = *A Table of the Three Principles*, trans. by H. Blunden and John Sparrow (London: Printed by M. Simmons, 1654)
- Theos. Frag.* = 'Questiones Theosophicae', in *De Electione Gratiae and Questiones Theosophicae*, trans. by John Rolleston Earle (London: Constable, 1930)
- Theos. Punkt.* = *Six Theosophic Points and Other Writings*, trans. by John Rolleston Earle (University of Michigan Press, 1958)
- Threefold* = *The Threefold Life of Man*, trans. by John Sparrow (London: n. pub, 1650; reprinted by Watkins, 1909)
- Way* = *The Way to Christ*, trans. and introduction by Peter Erb (New York: Paulist Press, 1978)

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

- Briefe* = *Briefe von und an Hegel*, ed. by Johannes Hoffmeister and Rolf Flechsig, 4 vols (Hamburg: Meiner, 1952–1961)
- EL* = *Encyclopedia Logic*, trans. by T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting, and H. S. Harris (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991)
- ETW* = *Early Theological Writings*, trans. by Thomas Malcolm Knox (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1979)
- Geraets = *The Encyclopedia Logic*, trans. by T. F. Geraets et al. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991)
- Glockner = Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Werke*, Jubiläumsausgabe, ed. by Herman Glockner, 26 vols (Stuttgart: 1927–39), xv, 53. The first 20 vols, containing Hegel's writings, are a reprint of the 1832–1887 edition (19 vols). Vols 21–22 contain Glockner's *Hegel* and vols 23–26 his *Hegel-Lexikon*
- Hoffmeister = *Berliner Schriften*, ed. by Johannes Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Published for Felix Meiner, 1956)
- Letters* = *Hegel: The Letters*, trans. by Clark Butler and Christianne Seiler (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984)
- LHP* = *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, 3 vols., trans. by E. S. Haldane (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1892)
- LPH* = *The Philosophy of History*, trans. by John Sibree, with an introduction by C. J. Friedrich (Ontario: Batoche Books, 2001)
- LPR* = *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, ed. by Peter C. Hodgson, trans. by R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson and others, 3 vols. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984, 1985, 1987; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). The reference *LPR* without accompanying volume numbers refers to *Lectures on Philosophy of Religion: One-Volume Editions — The Lectures of 1827*, ed. Peter C. Hodgson (Berkeley: University of California Press; One-Volume edition, 1988)
- Nohl = *Hegels Theologische Jugendschriften*, ed. by Hermann Nohl (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1907)
- PhM* = *Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. by J. B. Baillie, 2nd edn. rev. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1949)
- PN* = *The Philosophy of Nature*, ed. and trans. by M. J. Petry, 3 vols. (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1970)
- Postivity* = *The Positivity of the Christian Religion*, in *Early Theological Writings*, trans. by T. M. Knox (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1948)
- PhS* = *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).
- Sämtliche Werke* = *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by Hermann Glockner, 20 vols (Stuttgart: Frommann, 1937–1957)
- Spirit* = *Spirit = The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate*, in *Early Theological Writings*, trans. by T. M. Knox (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1948)
- VPH* = *Philosophy of History: Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Welgeschichte*, ed. by Georg Lasson, 4 vols (Hamburg: Meiner, 1934)
- VPR* = *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, ed. by Walter Jaeschke, 3 vols (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1984–1987)
- Werke* = *G.W.F. Hegel: Werke*, 20 vols, ed. by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986)
- WL* = *Wissenschaft der Logik*, 3 vols, ed. by Hans-Jürgen Gawoll (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1986–1992)

In accordance with recent scholarship, Jakob Böhme ('Jakob Bem' according to some Görlitz annals; 'Jacob Behmen' to his English early translators; and 'Jacob

Boehme' to the British Museum) will be referred to according to this spelling throughout the text. Due to the enormous variety of editions and re-printings of the Böhme corpus,¹ references made to John Sparrow's English translations of Böhme's works will take the form of part (or volume or book), chapter, and paragraph. For example, a later reference to part two, chapter three, paragraph twenty-six of Sparrow's translation of the *Incarnation of Jesus Christ* would take the form of *Incarnation*, II, 3. 26. If a text is not divided into parts, then the reference will be to chapter and paragraph, e.g. *Aurora*, 7. 10. If a text is divided into neither parts nor chapters, references will be made simply to paragraphs, e.g. *Clavis*, 20. References made to Hegel's works, whether the original German manuscripts or to their English translations, are made either to page (indicated by p.) or to paragraph (where the p. shall be absent).

For the sake of clarity, the long, medial 's' characters used in the typography of the prints of Sparrow's English translations of the Böhme manuscripts have been replaced by their modern counterparts. Capitalization has been modernised. This thesis shall follow the convention of Hodgson's English editions of Hegel's works, and use the lower case for Hegel's philosophical terminology. 'Spirit', therefore shall be written in lower case (including the philosophical name of God, 'absolute spirit'), except when it is in reference to the (Holy) Spirit of the Trinity. Words of special technical meaning in Böhme and Hegel's philosophical systems will also be provided with their German equivalent

¹ Which, as of 1957, total six hundred pages across two volumes of Werner Buddecke's bibliography of Böhme's work, *Die Jakob Böhme-Ausgaben*, 2 vols (Göttingen: Häntzschel, 1937–1957). See also Buddecke's *Verzeichnis von Jakob-Böhme Handschriften* (Göttingen: Häntzschel, 1934).

from the original editions of their works.

Quotations from scripture will come from the *The Holy Bible: The New Revised Standard Version* (Nashville, T.N.: Catholic Bible Press, 1993).

INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the connections which exist between German mystic and ‘Teutonic philosopher’ Jakob Böhme (1575–1624) and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), with specific reference to their intellectual development and shared interpretation of two *theologoumena* central to Christian thought, namely, the concept of God and the creation of the world and its fall.¹

The relationship between the work of the Jakob Böhme, a sixteenth century Saxon mystic, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, an eighteenth century Enlightenment philosopher, is not as obscure as once may have been thought. In recent years works devoted to this subject have been produced, such as, for instance, David Walsh’s essay, ‘The Historical Dialectic of Spirit: Jacob Boehme’s Influence on Hegel’, which draws upon his Ph.D. dissertation, *The Esoteric Origins of Modern Ideological Thought: Boehme to Hegel*.² There is also Cyril O’Regan’s book, *The Heterodox Hegel*, in which it has been commented that there are, in fact, ‘massive structural correspondences’ between Böhme and Hegel’s work, particularly at ‘the level of central *theologoumena* such as the Trinity, creation, evil, etc., as well as the

¹ In reference to these two Christian notions, the term *theologoumena* is used, instead of, perhaps, ‘doctrines’ or ‘confessions’, as both have not, as will be shown, been satisfactorily or coherently posited by Christian orthodoxy. It is the argument of both Böhme and Hegel that the concept of God and the creation of the world and its fall, as posited by the mainstream of the Christian religion, are, at their very core, deficient. See Chapters Two and Three of this thesis.

² David Walsh, ‘The Historical Dialectic of Spirit: Jacob Boehme’s Influence on Hegel’, in *History and System: Hegel’s Philosophy of History*, ed. by Robert Perkins (Albany, N. Y.: State University of New York Press, 1984), pp. 15–35; ‘The Esoteric Origins of Modern Ideological Thought: Boehme to Hegel’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Virginia, 1978).

depth-narrative level'.³ O'Regan surmises that Jakob Böhme holds the position of 'the singlemost important modern precedent of the type of religio-philosophical scheme articulated by Hegel'.⁴

This precedence of Böhme's thought upon Hegel's religio-philosophical scheme will be examined in three main chapters. Chapter One begins with a comparative study of the philosophical development of Böhme and Hegel's thought. This study should not be considered a mere historical vignette on the intellectual climate of the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, rather this chapter focuses on the shared theological, philosophical, and cultural forces at work on Böhme and Hegel's thought, in addition to the central problem with which they concern themselves. This problem is in how to express truths which, for both, are considered to be perennial. In this way, their periods of engagement and disengagement with the values posited by the factions, institutions, and currents of thought of their time are to be considered movements in modes of expression, in finding a language through which these eternal truths can be expressed. As will become apparent, it is only Hegel, and not Böhme, who escapes this wheel of representation and finds an adequate vehicle for the expression for these truths.

The second chapter deals with one of the central *theologoumena* of Christian thought: the concept of God as Trinity. Throughout its history as an idea, the notion of the Trinity has been treated as something of an entirely mysterious nature by

³ Cyril O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1994), pp. 18–19. See especially pp. 150–155, 180–187, 223–232, 279–285.

⁴ O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*, p. 19.

Christian orthodoxy,⁵ but that is a treatment which neither Böhme nor Hegel are willing to countenance. Both desire to formulate the Trinity in such a way as is accessible to reason, and, as such, find themselves at odds with the tradition of Augustine and Luther at a central level. Both Böhme and Hegel argue for the importance of an account of the hidden nature of God, and urge for a departure from the traditional representation of the Trinity as one as composed of real persons.

The final chapter seeks to show the influence of Böhme's account of the creation of the world and the Fall of man on Hegel's speculation regarding the same. Both will be shown to have a shared reading of the dual analogues of creation common to Christian orthodoxy: the *creatio ex Deo*, or emanationist, and *creatio ex nihilo*, or creation from 'nothing', accounts. From there, the examination will then move to their psychological evaluation of the first created being, Adam, considered as the archetype for humanity. Finally, the chapter will conclude with Böhme and Hegel's reading of the Fall of Man account present in Genesis 3, and the epistemology and moral consequences of that fall from primordial unity.

As Hegel shares an similar religious heritage, upbringing, and early education to Böhme, it will be worthwhile, throughout the course of this thesis, to contrast the thought of both against what was popularly held to be theologically true at the time. For both Hegel and Böhme, this theological anchor was Protestant orthodoxy or scholasticism. This will both allow for a clearer picture of Hegel's and Böhme's

⁵ Here, and elsewhere, the term 'Christian orthodoxy' refers to certain mainstream Christian traditions, the doctrines of which are based upon the Nicene Creed. Lutheranism and Roman Catholicism are, in this instance, specifically thought of.

theological and speculative thought to be drawn, and will situate it in its proper historical milieu.

On a final note, this thesis will consider, as per Hegel's own wishes, the language of Böhme's more Hermetic and visionary works less according to their original theosophical nature, and more philosophically. The use of symbolism and mystical language which appears throughout Böhme's work will be read as figurative, and, thus, as a cipher for what may be rationally expressed.

CHAPTER I
THE DEVELOPMENT OF BÖHME AND HEGEL'S
PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

In order to examine the influence of Böhme on Hegel, it will be useful to compare in general the content of their respective philosophies of religion. Both Böhme and Hegel's philosophies of religion can be shown to share in a three-fold development. The first stage of development begins with a rejection of their Protestant orthodox heritage, education, and early intellectual development. This is examined in Section One of this chapter. This rejection leads to a period of creative introspection and flirtation with the heterodox — from the broad mystical traditions of Hermeticism, to the language and symbolism of, what may be called, 'speculative' alchemy. This is addressed in Section Two. The third and final stage for both, however, differs somewhat. Böhme's transition from an initial rejection of Luther to a subsequent interest in dissenting doctrine leads him ultimately back again to the Reformation. Hegel's development, however, though too leading him back to the Reformation, also advances him far beyond it, to the liberation of religion from the language of representation altogether. Essentially, these three phases of intellectual development which both philosophers have in common constitute a development in form, so to speak, but not in substance. The transition between rejection of orthodoxy, dalliance with the heterodox, and return to the Reformation, are periods of creative curiosity

with modes of expression, of *language*. Each serves as a cipher which renders a content which is, for both, perennial. It will become apparent, in Section Three, however, that it is only Hegel, and not Böhme, who comes to find the ultimate medium for the representation of this perennial content.

SECTION ONE

REACTION AGAINST CHRISTIAN ORTHODOXY

The first period for both philosophers which is deserving of examination is their formative years. Both Böhme and Hegel were raised and educated as Lutherans, and both later came to reject this faith. Their rejection of the claims of Protestant orthodoxy was due, in no small part, to the intellectual and cultural climates in which both found themselves during their early development. For Böhme, it was the twin undercurrents of the works of the German mystics and the spirit of humanism which ran through his youth spent as a cobbler in Lusatian town of Görlitz. For Hegel, this reaction against prevailing theological attitudes can be seen as the product of his early academic career at the Tübingen seminary, from which an interest in the Pietist movement and an espousal of the critical methods of the German Enlightenment came as a result. This rejection would, for both, come to have a two-pronged effect: it would cause them, like Kant's first reading of Hume, to be awoken from their 'dogmatic slumber'; and would act as a negative pole against which they could orient

both themselves and their philosophical outlooks.

§ 1. 1. *The Development of Böhme's Theological Vision in the Face of Protestant Orthodoxy*

Böhme was both born into and educated by what has been called 'Protestant orthodoxy' or 'Protestant scholasticism'. Protestant orthodoxy describes the Reformation tradition of piety and biblical exegesis associated with Martin Luther and his disciple Philip Melancthon — the doctrinal works associated with this tradition being primarily the *Augsburg Confession* (1530) and the *Formula of Concord* (1577). Böhme's father, also Jakob Böhme, was *Kirchenvater* of their hometown, Alt Seidenburg, in addition to being vestryman of its church, and was alleged to have a penchant towards the evangelical or 'enthusiastic' mode of worship.¹ The content of Böhme's education, under Johann Leder von Schneidsburg at the Seidenberg school, was primarily of a religious nature, composed of instruction in both scripture and Luther's *Smaller Catechism*.² Böhme was sent for further catechises to the town church, which was recently reformed by the Prince Elector in order to purge remnants of pre-Reformation 'superstition', the preaching in which

¹ Hermann Adolf Fechner, 'Sketch of the Life of Jacob Boehme', in Jakob Böhme's *On the Election of Grace and Theosophic Questions*, trans. by John Rolleston Earle (London: Constable, 1930; repr. Kessinger Publishing, 1998), pp. xiv, and ff.

² Ibid. See also Richard Jecht, *Jakob Böhme, Gedenkgabe der Stadt Görlitz* (Görlitz: Selbstverlag des Magistrats der Stadt Görlitz, 1924), pp. 20–21.

was focused upon ‘the Prophets, Apostles, Symbolic documents, and the Augsburg Confession’.³ The church’s devotional aspect, too, was strictly Protestant — the hymnal used was composed by Luther, a document which was the stock and trade of the German churches, and ‘thesaurus of the Lutheran faith’ during the period.⁴ This religious education, writes his earliest biographer, Abraham von Franckenberg, instilled in the young Böhme a sense of pious duty, from which he ‘kept constantly to his church, together with reading the Holy Bible, a regular attendance upon the Word preached, and participation in the Holy Sacraments’.⁵

Finishing school at fourteen, and serving as an apprentice cobbler for a number of years, in 1595 Böhme moved to a town two miles distant from Alt Seidenberg, to Görlitz in Upper Lusatia, becoming a fully-fledged citizen of which in 1599.⁶ The town itself was to have a tremendous effect on Böhme’s intellectual development. During Böhme’s time there, Görlitz, an important trading post in eastern Germany, found itself at an age of great financial prosperity. Such prosperity brought Görlitz a measure of cultural independence, leading it to cast aside the bonds of Germanic medieval feudalism, leading it to become ‘a place where men and ideas met, a crossroads for the conflicting philosophies and religious impulses of the age’.⁷

³ John Joseph Stoudt, *Sunrise to Eternity: A Study in Jacob Boehme’s Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1957), p. 45.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

⁵ Abraham von Franckenberg, *De Vita et scriptis Jacob Boehmens, oder ausführlich erläuteter historischer Bericht von den Leben und Schrifften des...Jacob Boehme* (Amsterdam: [n.pub.] 1730), #10.

⁶ *Görlitzer Traubuch*, 10 May 1599. See Jecht, p. 10.

⁷ Johann Gottlieb Müller, *Versuch einer Oberlautzischen Reformazionsgeschichte* (Görlitz: Anton, 1801), p. 318; Stoudt, p. 48;

As such, Görlitz became home to many humanists, scholars, physicians, and travellers. On the whole, Böhme's religious notions were, until now, of an unreflective nature. It was upon the appointment of a new pastor in Görlitz in 1600, however, that Böhme, according to Franckenberg, found his religious spirit awakened. Böhme became 'enraptured with the astral spirit of the soul', and gained a new, conscious appreciation for Christianity.⁸

What caused this 'new awakening' in Böhme was what, a hundred years earlier, had spurred on Luther's Reformation. It was the humanist spirit which sought to dispense with the primitive theological dualisms of the medieval Church — of the division between man and God, the temporal and the eternal, the secular and the sacred, the natural and the spiritual, the world and the Church, reason and faith, and of flesh and spirit — and to remould the world according to a new, rational vision of totality. It was this same spirit which engendered Erasmus to wish that 'there could be an end of scholastic subtleties, or, if not an end, that they could be thrust into a second place and Christ be taught plainly and simply'.⁹ This humanist spirit, which was partially responsible for instigating the Reformation, was not a spirit, however, present in Luther himself. His reforming instincts were curtailed by his conservatism and by his determination not to 'go faster or farther than he could carry Germany'.¹⁰

⁸ Franckenberg, #11.

⁹ Erasmus, *Epistle CCVII*.

¹⁰ Rufus M. Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1914), p. 9.

He could not comprehend [...] the bold spirits who were dedicated to the task of reinterpreting Christianity in terms of the new age; he loved the old, in so far as it seemed to him unspoiled by apostasy and corruption, and he naturally kept reverting to ancient dogma and the accepted theology of the old Church instead of leading the way into a fresh, vital, spiritual form of Christianity [...] his normal tendency was toward a non-mystical type of Christianity, toward a Christianity thoroughly based on scripture, logically constructed out of the concepts of the nature of God and man, so ancient, sacred, and orthodox, that they seemed to him axioms of theology and capable of being formulated into a saving system of truth, as universal and as unalterable as the multiplication table [...] [Luther] wanders far afield from experience, draws curious conclusions from unverified concepts, piles text on text as though heaven could be scaled by another Pelion on Ossa, and once more turns religion back to the cooled lava-beds of theology. He never could succeed in getting the God of his heart's glowing faith into the theologies which he laboriously builded. As soon as he started constructing he invariably fell back upon the building-material which had already been quarried, and which lay at hand.¹¹

As such, many during Böhme's time felt that the Reformation had not gone far enough. One of such persons was the recently appointed *pastor primarius* of Görlitz, Martin Moller (1547–1606). Moller, who, like Böhme, had had some schooling but could not afford a university education. Christopher Knauth, a pastor of a neighbouring town, wrote many years later that after Moller's appointment a great religious rival in Görlitz followed, into which Böhme was swept.¹² Johann Otto Glusing, an eighteenth century editor of Böhme's work, shares Knauth's sentiment, stating that Moller was instrumental to Böhme's spiritual development.¹³ John Joseph Stoudt, a more recent commentator on Böhme's work, remarks that Moller 'was the first and perhaps the dominant influence' on Böhme, both of whom shared a

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 9–10.

¹² *Historia Cryptocalvinismi in Lausat., suc.*, in Görlitz Archives, Annales, 255ff; *Neues Lausitzischen Magazin*, 94 (1918), pp. 48ff.

¹³ S. G. Grosser, *Mehrere Merckwürdigkeiten* (Görlitz: [n. pub.], 1714), #8.

relationship similar to Thomas à Kempis and Johann Arndt.¹⁴ Along with his position as pastor, Moller organized a spiritual group of sympathizers of the German mystical tradition, the ‘Conventicle of God’s Real Servants’, of which Böhme was a member.¹⁵ Although Moller had no university education, he was, nevertheless, both a talented translator of religious literature (including ‘Ignatius’s letters, of Theodoretus’ dialogues, and of other patristic literature’),¹⁶ and a prolific writer, particularly of devotional tracts, such as the *Meditationes sanctorum patrum durch Martin Mollerum*, the *Manuale Mortis* and the *Schedia Regia*, works which were much influenced by Augustine, Tauler, Bernard of Clairvaux, the Victorines, Ruysbroeck, Suso, and Thomas à Kempis.¹⁷ Some sermonized material which he would have preached to Böhme from the pulpit was published as the *Praxis Evangeliorum*, passages from which, as one commentator notes, are of a very similar character to passages in Böhme’s *Aurora*.¹⁸ In this way, Moller held a strong influence over Böhme’s intellectual development. The criticism may be made, however, that direct reference to Moller is seldom mentioned in Böhme’s work; in fact, he is referred to

¹⁴ Stoudt, pp. 51–52. See Will-Erich Peuckert, *Die Rosenkreutzer: Zur Geschichte einer Reformation* (Jena: [n.pub.], 1928; new ed., Berlin: E. Schmidt, 1973), pp. 259–260.

¹⁵ Richard Jecht, *Jakob Böhme, Gedenkgabe der Stadt Görlitz* (Görlitz: Selbstverlag des Magistrats der Stadt Görlitz, 1924), p. 27. See Eduard Emjil Koch, *Geschichte des Deutschen Kirchenlieds*, 7 vols (Stuttgart: [n. pub.], 1852), I, pp. 178–180.

¹⁶ Stoudt, p. 51. Cf. *Mehrere Merckwürdigkeiten*, #8.

¹⁷ Albrecht Ritschl, *Geschichte des Pietismus in der lutherische Kirche des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts*, 3 vols (Bonn: Adolph Marcus, 1880–1886), II, p. 57. Cf. Stoudt, p. 51.

¹⁸ Will-Erich Peuckert, *Das Leben Jakob Böhmes* (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1924), p. 24. The most recent publication of Moller’s work is Elke Axmacher’s *Praxis Evangeliorum: Theologie und Frömmigkeit bei Martin Moller (1547–1606)* (Berlin: Kirchliche Hochschule, 1986; repr. Göttingen, 1989).

only once by name, in a letter to Moller's son.¹⁹ While this incongruity is surprising, the likely explanation is that the time of Böhme's greatest literary output was also, as shall be seen, a time of great personal persecution, and, as such, Böhme did not want Moller, to whom he was so much indebted, to be indicted on similar charges of heresy.²⁰

It was under Moller's influence that, from the spring of 1600, Böhme experienced a series of mystical visions which lead him to compose his first work, the *Aurora*, unabashedly subtitled as the 'root or mother of [all] philosophy' (*die Würztel oder Mutter der Philosophie*). Franckenberg claims that these visions which acted as a catalyst for the composition of the book were initiated 'by means of an instantaneous glance [...] cast upon a bright pewter dish, [which] introduced into the innermost ground or centre of the [...] hidden nature'.²¹ Böhme's own writings, however, contradict this fantastical account — the content of the *Aurora* was not the consequence of a sudden, Gnostic experience, but the product of many years of thought and reflection. The stifling religious climate of Protestant orthodoxy had dealt Böhme, to his own mind, 'many a hard blow', causing him to fall 'into deep

¹⁹ Jakob Böhme, *The Epistles of Jacob Böhme* [hereafter *Epistles*], trans. by John Sparrow (repr. Kessinger Publishing, 1997), 63. 12.

²⁰ The opinion of Stoudt, p. 52.

²¹ Frackenberg, *De Vita...*, #11. That is to say, Franckenberg argues that the composition of the *Aurora* was brought about through a meditative experience similar to the yogic phenomenon of *samadhi*, in which the consciousness of the subject is merged with that of the contemplated subject, thereby transcending the subject-object relation. See Roland Fischer, 'A Cartography of the Ecstatic and Meditative States', *Leonardo*, 6 (1973), 59–66; Michael Comans, 'The Question of the Importance of Samadhi in Modern and Classical Advaita Vedanta', *Philosophy East and West*, 43 (1993), 19–38. See also Roger Walsh, 'Phenomenological Mapping and Comparisons of Shamanic, Buddhist, Yogic, and Schizophrenic Experiences', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 61 (1993), 739–769 (p. 742).

melancholy and sadness when [he] contemplated the great deep of the world'.²² Böhme's intellectual spirit, 'in such sadness',²³ was provoked to try to reconcile his newly found spiritual values with those of the world around him. Böhme was 'wrestling in God's presence' with a world as now defined by Luther and Melancthon, a world in which the conflicting Renaissance values of mystical devotion and nature philosophy were crashing together.²⁴ His orthodox Protestant upbringing as a boy, together with his schooling in Lutheran catechises afforded him little comfort intellectually. As Böhme puts it, he discovered no answers from the 'high masters', finding only 'nothing but a half dead spirit';²⁵ the high-minded and dry scholastic disputes over petty theological points failed to provide him any comfort. The *Aurora*, therefore, may be viewed as literary exposition of Böhme's wrangling with these issues. As Böhme writes in a letter, the *Aurora* 'unfolded itself within me from time to time [...] I went around pregnant with it for twelve years, and a hefty impulse arose in me before I could bring it to external form'.²⁶

In this light my spirit directly saw through all things, and knew God in and by all creatures, even in herbs and grass [...] In this light my will grew in great desire to describe the being of God [...] Now from this light I have my knowledge, as well as my will and drive; and I will write this knowledge according to my gifts [...] and let God work his will; [...] I will attend and wait what the Lord intends.²⁷

²² Jakob Böhme, *The Aurora* [hereafter *Aurora*], trans. by John Sparrow (London: 1656; John M. Watkins, 1960), 19. 1–6.

²³ *Ibid.*, 19. 7–11.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, preface, 22–25.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 10. 27.

²⁶ *Epistles*, 12. 10.

²⁷ *Aurora*, 19. 13–17.

Böhme, nevertheless, cannot be considered completely hostile to the Reformation. An appeal to purely intuitional values, as per Luther's aim, is not Böhme's intention, and, as such, rational discourse for Böhme still has its place within the world of religion. This is clear from the *Aurora* itself, for, as Stoudt comments, here 'was no ecstasy, no nirvana, no bridal chamber mishmash of subject and object, or creator and creature, [...] no merging with the Godhead, no *unio mystica*', but the product of many years of spiritual guidance from Moller.²⁸ Such an evaluation of Böhme's book, nevertheless, is not readily apparent because, superficially, the *Aurora* reads as if it were some medieval grimoire, replete with the usually litany of angel, devil, and spirit talk. Böhme's way of expressing his thoughts is unclear and circuitous; the narrative of the text jumps from point to point, and the issues which are raised are seldom satisfactorily resolved. On closer inspection, however, the *Aurora* betrays of an in-depth knowledge of humanism, of Copernican theory, and of the dichotomies between values of the old world and new. Moller's influence is also apparent throughout, for the thought of Eckhart, Tauler, Suso, Mechthild, the Ebners, Nicholas of Strasburg, and the *Theologia Germanica* are each represented.²⁹ Böhme is only too aware of how the text appears to the superficial eye, accounting for the *Aurora*'s clumsy prose and sometimes confused narrative as being due to its being a work of his 'spiritual childhood'.³⁰ In a later text, Böhme elaborates further on the *Aurora*'s difficult style:

²⁸ Stoudt, p. 59.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 80.

³⁰ *Epistles*, 12. 56.

I wrote only my own mind as I understood it in the deep; and I made no commentary on it as I did not intend that it should be read; I wanted to keep it for myself; had I known that it would be read I would have written more clearly [...] Also my spirit's labour in it and with it was continuous [...] For the light's spirit moved my soul very much [...] repeating many things very often, ever deeper and clearer, from one step to another — it was the real Jacob's ladder.³¹

What most significantly distinguishes the *Aurora* from any other Christian mystical text or medieval grimoire is that it does not purport itself to be the product of classic mystical staple of union with the Godhead. As Stoudt comments, Böhme 'did not climb a ladder into the Bosom; he did not follow to Dante's Golden Rose there to be lost in temptation; he was not melted into an abyss of being'.³² Böhme himself admits, that he 'did not climb up into the Godhead', rather 'the Godhead climbed up in me, and revealed such to me out of his Love, which otherwise I would have had to leave it quite alone in my half-dead fleshly birth'.³³

It was through the composition of the *Aurora* that Böhme discovered a new found place for himself in the religious sphere, a locus in which he could define and represent his visionary content. Böhme thought of himself, not as a successor to Luther, but as 'a new Luther to a profounder reformation', chosen to reveal to mankind that which had previously been hidden, and which had been unable to be

³¹ Jakob Böhme, *The first apologie to Balthazar Tylcken [electronic resource] : being an answer of the authour concerning his book the Aurora, opposed by an enemicitious pasquil or opprobrious libel [hereafter I Apol. Tilke]*, trans. by John Sparrow (London: Printed by M. S[immons] for Giles Calvert, 1661) preface, 31–37.

³² Stoudt, p. 61.

³³ *Aurora*, 8. 7.

faithfully represented by rationally based creeds.³⁴ This ‘profounder reformation’, or *reformatio nova*, was already occurring, for, as Böhme writes, ‘the time already appears, and soon will come; he who wakes sees it [...] First there must come a great tribulation before it be fully manifest. The cause is the great contention of the learned [...] Let no honest man defile himself with such contention’.³⁵ While Böhme may have been prepared to instigate a new, second Reformation, the world, as will become apparent, was perhaps not.

§ 1. 2. *Hegel, Tübingen, and Protestant Orthodoxy*

Hegel began his studies in theology at the Tübingen theological seminary, or *Stift*, in 1788. H. S. Harris comments that Hegel entered the *Stift* purely because he was not under the obligation to pay for his education.³⁶ Wiedmann argues, however, that Hegel never had any other intention academically than studying theology.³⁷ Regardless, Hegel’s decision to study at the *Stift* is a significant one. As is commonly attested to, the language of German theology and philosophy began with Eckhart. As one commentator writes: ‘[T]he most important factor in the growth of philosophical German throughout the medieval period (when mainstream philosophy was, as

³⁴ Stoudt, p. 65.

³⁵ *Epistles*, 46.

³⁶ Henry Siltou Harris, *Hegel’s Development: Towards the Sunlight (1770–1801)* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 64.

³⁷ Franz Wiedmann, *Hegel: An Illustrated Biography*, trans. by Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Pegasus, 1983), p. 15.

elsewhere, normally written in Latin) was German mysticism, which owed as much to Neo-Platonism and to Gnosticism as to Christianity. Its first major representative was the Dominican, Meister (Johann) Eckhart'.³⁸ As such, the work of Eckhart, as of many of the Rhineland mystics, came to be appropriated by Luther and the Reformation. It then comes as no surprise that the history of German philosophy is inexorably linked with Protestantism. The reality of this is demonstrated in the curriculum of the Tübingen Stift, as per Nietzsche's famous indictment that,

Among Germans one will understand immediately when I say that philosophy has been corrupted by theologian blood. The Protestant pastor is the grandfather of German philosophy, Protestantism itself its *peccatum originale* [...] One has only to say the words 'Tübingen Stift' to grasp *what* German philosophy is at bottom — a *cunning* theology [...] The Swabians are the best liars in Germany, they lie innocently.³⁹

The intellectual atmosphere of the university which Hegel entered into at the time was an uneasy one — the theological faculty having been polarised by Kant's philosophy into two factions: the 'old', conservative, and orthodox Protestant; and the 'new', radical, Pietist faction. The curriculum of the 'Old Tübingen' *Stift*, at the time led by Professors Flatt and Storr, was focused upon preserving the orthodox view of biblical supernaturalism by the use of sceptical Kantianism.⁴⁰ The 'New Tübingen' radical faction, which promulgated the ideals of the German Enlightenment, had its inception

³⁸ Michael Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1992), p. 8f.

³⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ*, trans. by Reginald John Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), p. 131.

⁴⁰ Lawrence Dickey, *Hegel: Religion, Economics and the Politics of Spirit 1770–1807* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 6.

a generation before Hegel. Reuchlin, A. A. Hochstetter, and J. W. Jaeger had been professors there, and Bengel, Johann Valentin Andreae, Oetinger, Johann Ludwig Fricker, and Philipp Matthäus Hahn had been students.⁴¹

What was Böhme's period of instruction under Moller which led him to reject the strict orthodoxy of Lutheranism, were Hegel's years in the Tübingen *Stift*. Hegel found himself more sympathetic to the forward-thinking Enlightenment ideals of his Pietist tutors than to the antique and reactionary theology of the Old *Stift*. The accounts of his time spent there come from his own journal (kept from 1785), his early publications, and letters to and from friends.

The essays composed during this period of Hegel's intellectual development were originally published, along with an exposition, by Wilhelm Dilthey in 1906 as the *Jugendgeschichte Hegels*.⁴² The Hegel essays were later published and edited separately by Herman Nohl, with the unfortunate title of *Hegels theologische Jugendschriften*.⁴³ This error was further compounded T. M. Knox's 1949 English translation, Hegel's *Early Theological Writings*.⁴⁴ The title is unfortunate and erroneous for the content of this collection is not, by Hegel's own admission, theological. These include the critical essays *The Positivity of the Christian Religion*

⁴¹ Ibid. p. 86. See also Glenn Alexander Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition* (Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 70.

⁴² Wilhelm Dilthey and Herman Nohl, *Die Jugendgeschichte Hegels und andere Abhandlungen zur Geschichte des deutschen Idealismus* (Leipzig and Berlin: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990).

⁴³ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Hegels Theologische Jugendschriften* [hereafter Nohl], ed. by Herman Nohl (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1907).

⁴⁴ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Early Theological Writings* [hereafter *ETW*], trans. by Thomas Malcolm Knox and introduction by Richard Kroner (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971). This collection includes 'The Positivity of the Christian Religion [hereafter *Positivity*]' of 1795, and 'The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate [hereafter *Spirit*]' of circa 1798–1799.

(1795) and *The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate* (circa. 1798–1799). *The Positivity* contends that the supposed failure of Christianity is the result of a historical misinterpretation of the religion due to its Jewish heritage. Hegel examines biblical history, from the Genesis account through to the foundation of the Jewish state and Crucifixion of Jesus, in order to assess instances of irrationalism present in the foundation of the Christian religion. *The Spirit of Christianity* pursues a Kantian argument — that Christianity fails as a moral religion, as it does not base its moral code on the pursuit of acts which are good in themselves, but are founded on authority.

The Hegel of this period, then, is adequately described by the oft-repeated appellation of a ‘theologian *manqué*’. He is not Richard Kroner’s ‘Christian mystic’ who ‘discovered his own soul by discovering the soul of Jesus’,⁴⁵ rather, as Georg Lukács argues, Hegel is the essential anti-theologian.⁴⁶ Though, to be fair, Hegel at times encourages this conception, later stating in the *Lectures in the History of Philosophy* that ‘philosophers are closer to the Lord than those who live by the crumbs of the Spirit; they read, or write, the cabinet orders of God in the original; it is their duty to write them down. The philosophers are the *mystai* who have been present at the decision in the innermost sanctuary’.⁴⁷ Further, in the preface to the second

⁴⁵ Richard Kroner, ‘Introduction’, in *Early Theological Writings*, pp. 8f.

⁴⁶Of course, Lukács goes too far in his summation of this anti-theological period as ‘*eine Geschichteslegende reaktionärer Apologeten des Imperialismus*’. *Der junge Hegel: Über die Beziehungen von Dialektik und Oekonomie* (Zürich and Vienna: Europa, 1948), p. 45.

⁴⁷ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, ed. by Johannes Hoffmeister, 3 vols (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1940) III, p. 96. See also the following extract from a 16th of April, 1795, letter

edition of the *Encyclopedia*, Hegel declares ‘what was revealed as a mystery in earlier times should now be revealed for thinking itself’.⁴⁸

Hegel’s early rejection of Protestant orthodoxy does not, as Böhme’s does, come by way of the German mystical tradition. Rather, it is a product of the German Enlightenment, the movement seeking to dispense with the foundationalist approaches of Locke, Descartes, and Hume and embrace a unified theory of being, of man seen as a totality. As such, the young Hegel’s treatment of Christian religion is indicative of the majority of Enlightenment writers — based upon Mosheim, Gibbon, and Forster —⁴⁹ full of reactionary and revisionist declarations such as, for instance, ‘Pure reason, incapable of any limitation, is the deity itself’, and that Jesus’ ‘parents were Joseph and Mary’ coming as standard.⁵⁰ Where Hegel’s criticism differs, however, is that while other Enlightenment critics were hostile to both the central message of Christianity and its theological fabrication into a religion, Hegel was critical only of the latter. His primary objection is to the distinction made by the Enlightenment between positive and natural religion (religion legitimised by reason

sent to Schelling, in which Hegel further muses on modern role of the philosopher: ‘I think that there is no better sign of our time than the fact that mankind portrays itself as being so worthy of respect. It is a proof that the aura surrounding the oppressors and the gods of this earth is fading. *The philosopher will demonstrate this dignity and the peoples will learn to feel and not merely demand the rights that have been so trampled under foot*’. Cf. Karl Rosenkranz, *G. W. F. Hegels Leben* (Berlin: Dunker and Humblot, 1944), p. 70 (trans. in Lukács, *The Young Hegel*, p. 11)

⁴⁸ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Encyclopedia Logic* [hereafter *EL*], trans. by T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting, and H. S. Harris (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), p. 17; *G.W.F. Hegel: Werke* [hereafter *Werke*], 20 vols, ed. by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), VIII, p. 31.

⁴⁹ Johann Lorenz von Mosheim’s *Institutiones Historiae Ecclesiasticae* appeared in Latin in 1755 and in German translation from 1769 to 1778. Edward Gibbon’s *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* was published from 1776 to 1789, and Georg Forster wrote throughout the late eighteenth century.

⁵⁰ See Nohl, p. 75.

and ordinary apprehension, and not revelation), that they are two distinct constructs. One would think, given what will become his general concern with rendering religious truths philosophically, that Hegel would support the idea of a natural religion. Nevertheless, as Hegel writes:

A positive religion is contrasted with natural religion, and this presupposes that there is only one natural religion, since human nature is one and single, while there may be many positive religions. It is clear from this very contrast that a positive religion is contranatural [sic] or a supernatural one, containing concepts and information transcending understanding and reason and requiring feelings and actions which would not come naturally to men; the feelings are forcibly and mechanically stimulated, the actions are done to order or from obedience without any spontaneous interest.⁵¹

The Enlightenment notion of many positive religions springing from one natural religion is rejected here by Hegel. While it will become acceptable for Hegel to read religious truths as philosophical, to reformat theological imagery and allegory into a more rational context, it simply will not do to whitewash the entire content of religion, to rework or remove any and all of its transcendental or supernatural notions. Hegel's argument rests on an appeal to tradition, that 'the convictions of many centuries, regarded as sacrosanct, true and obligatory by the millions who lived and died by them in those centuries, were not, at least on their subjective side, downright folly or plain immorality'.⁵² Hegel pleads that one should at least presume that 'man has a natural sense or consciousness of a supersensible world and an obligation to the divine [...] that everything high, noble, and good in man is divine, that it comes from

⁵¹ *Positivity*, p. 167.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 172.

God and is his spirit, issuing from himself'.⁵³

Christianity, as conceived by theologians from Augustine to Luther, is considered by Hegel to be 'the religion of the "private individual"', the 'religion of the loss human liberty', and responsible for the 'millennia-long despotism and enslavement of mankind'.⁵⁴ The spread of the Christian religion is seen as something 'accomplished by anything rather than reason and understanding'.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, Hegel's critique never descends, for instance, into the materialist atheism of Hume — Hegel is interested only in outlining the problems inherent to Christianity, and offering solutions, all within a religious framework.⁵⁶ The core of Hegel's Christian critique lies in what he argues is the notion of 'positivity' in the religion (positivity being defined in this case as 'the suspension of the moral autonomy of the subject').⁵⁷ 'The Christian religion,' Hegel writes, 'proclaims the moral law as something external to us, as something 'given' and must therefore strive to win respect for it on other grounds. We may therefore regard it as a defining feature of a positive religion that it posits the moral law as something given to mankind'.⁵⁸ Historically, after Christ's death the positivity of the Christian religion was solidified through a movement from virtue religion to sect.⁵⁹ The primary cause of this positive construal was the interpretation of the religion by Jewish intellectuals not of the Alexandrian

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 175–176

⁵⁴ Georg Lukács, *The Young Hegel: Studies in the Relations between Dialectics and Economics* (London: Merlin Press, 1975), p. 9.

⁵⁵ Nohl, p. 221.

⁵⁶ Georg Lukács, *The Young Hegel*, p. 9.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 18.

⁵⁸ Nohl, p. 212 (Livingstone trans, p. 22).

⁵⁹ *Positivity*, p. 73.

school, who did not have the benefit of an education in philosophy. This caused the moral religion of Christ to be interpreted positively. Christ's teachings, Hegel argues, became drained of any goodness inherent within them as moral laws *qua* moral laws. They became validated, not through reason, but through the authority of Christ as the supposed sensible manifestation of God.⁶⁰ In this way, the faculty of reason was made 'a purely receptive faculty, instead of a legislative one'.⁶¹ The consequence of positivity, both in religion and politics, is the loss of moral freedom.

The capacity for this [positive faith] necessarily presupposes the loss of the freedom, the autonomy of one's reason which henceforth stands helpless before a superior power. This is the point at which all belief or disbelief in a positive religion begins. At the same time, it is the centre around which all disputes revolve and even if it never rises to the surface of consciousness it is nevertheless the deciding factor between submissiveness and rebellion. The orthodox must stand fast at this point and make no concessions.⁶²

Here, then, the young Hegel appears to subscribe to some Kantian ideals; the concept of man as the maker of his own morals being one of them. Hegel's representation of Jesus is as a mouth-piece for Kant's moral philosophy, and even, at one point, reinterprets the Golden Rule in Kantian language, as 'What you can will to be a universal law among men, valid also against yourselves, according to that maxim act'.⁶³ Further along this line, Hegel argues that Christ's teachings ought not to be founded on the moral authority of Mosaic law, which has its ultimate value by virtue

⁶⁰ Ibid. Further, moral doctrines have 'lost the inner criterion whereby their necessity is established'. p. 85.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 85.

⁶² Nohl, p. 234 (trans. in Lukács, *The Young Hegel*, p. 23).

⁶³ Ibid., p. 87.

of being revelatory, but it should be 'founded on reason and the heart'. What Hegel is propounding here is a union of both rational and romantic values:⁶⁴ what is considered to be moral ought to be 'authorised by the universal reason of man', and yet must be 'so human that they correspond to that stage of morality which a people has attained'.⁶⁵ The historical Christ, however, present in an age permeated by legalism and the rejection of reason, was obliged to express himself as a teacher of a purely *moral* and not at all positive religion, in a manner in keeping with the spirit of the age.⁶⁶ The manner in which Christ was obliged to represent himself publicly was identical to that of previous prophetic figures — being forced to rely on myth in order to point towards a higher, speculative truth. In the particular case of the historical Jesus, it was through the myth of the Messiah who, 'girdled with might as Jehovah's plenipotentiary, was to rebuild the Jewish state from its foundations'.⁶⁷ It thus follows, Hegel argues, that the foundation of Christianity became itself corrupt and degenerate, coming to rest on 'the *belief* in Christ, not a recovery of God's will in one's own heart.'⁶⁸ Its undertaking of the ascension of 'religion and virtue to morality and [the restoration] to morality the freedom which is its essence' failed entirely.⁶⁹

Hegel's ire is not restricted to the early Christian church, but extends also to the Reformation itself. It has strayed from its original mission as a return to primitive

⁶⁴ Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 56.

⁶⁵ Nohl, p. 21.

⁶⁶ Taylor, p. 57.

⁶⁷ *Positivity*, p.77.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

Christianity, as a church 'not bound [...] to certain unalterable standards of faith', purged of Roman corruption, and 'which protests against all authority in matters of belief'.⁷⁰ Protestantism has failed to live up to this 'negative determination',⁷¹ and has become a mere 'institution' just as Roman church has become, steeped in positivity. Psychologically, Protestantism espouses 'no real knowledge of the human heart', rather, due to the 'shame' of its 'theological compendia', it has only 'theological prejudices concerning an innate corruption of human nature'.⁷² Its incarnation of the Christian message is as doctrinaire as any other church that has gone before it, for

every church holds that nothing in the world is so easy to find as truth: the only thing necessary is to memorize one of its catechisms. For the churches it is false to say:

'Tis the earnestness that flinches from no toil
That alone can catch the gurgle of truth's deep-hid spring.⁷³

The church offers truth in the open market; the stream of ecclesiastical truth gurgles noisily in every street, and any wayfarer may drink his fill of it.⁷⁴

Hegel echoes Böhme's criticism of the Protestantism's theologians, reproaching them for their 'swaggering' and 'self-importance', and whom, he surmises, even with all their 'mysterious high-flown phrases' impress 'only the ignorant and the credulous'.⁷⁵

The successors of Luther have become 'intolerable [...] publicly employed guardians

⁷⁰ Nohl, p. 8.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 199. Trans in Walter A Kaufmann, 'Hegel's Early Antitheological Phase', *The Philosophical Review*, 63 (1954), 3–18 (p. 12).

⁷² Ibid., pp. 43f

⁷³ Schiller, *Das Ideal und das Leben*.

⁷⁴ *Positivity*, p. 134.

⁷⁵ Nohl, pp. 33f.

of morals', and those, Hegel writes, 'with a pure heart [are] the first to be misunderstood by the people with the moral and religious yardstick'.⁷⁶ Luther and Melancthon are considered to be the founders of

Christian police institutions [...] The establishment of church power as the champion of the freedom of conscience against the power of the princes never occurred to them; they subjected Christianity to worldly power [...] How far Luther, for example, was from any idea of the worship of God in spirit and truth, can be seen from his sorry quarrels with Zwingli, Oecolampadius, etc. He took from the clergy the power to rule by force and over men's purses, but he himself still wanted to rule over their opinions.⁷⁷

As has been seen, Hegel's intellectual development during this period is marked by two distinct trends. Firstly, a rejection of the Christian message as incarnated in Protestant orthodoxy, and secondly a rejection of the typical criticism of the Enlightenment towards Christianity. Hegel, therefore, wishes to preserve what he regards as the essential element of the transcendent in religious content. This does not mean, however, that Hegel wishes to dispense entirely with an attempt to understand Christianity historically. The *Positivity* declares the Christian religion as *the* force behind the culture of the western Mediterranean; from the fall of the Roman empire,

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 45.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 42. A prevalent theme throughout the early theological writings is the supposed financial responsibility of the clergy. The rule of the early church, that property was to be held in common, quickly ceased, Hegel argues, 'to be the condition for admission [...] all the greater is the emphasis on voluntary contributions to the communal treasury as a way of buying one's way into heaven [...] The clergy could only gain by this since it recommended generosity to the laymen while taking good care not to throw away its own possessions, and so in order to enrich the poor and needy, i. e. itself, it reduced the other half of mankind to beggary'. Nohl, p. 44 (trans in Lukács, *The Young Hegel*, p. 64). Communal living in the modern church Hegel also subjects to intense criticism: monasteries are compared to autocratic states in which 'gluttonous prelates [...] get fat on the sweat of the poor'. Nohl, p. 365 (Lukács, p. 66).

the rise of the Italian city-states and Swiss republics of the Renaissance, to the colonisation of the New World and India,⁷⁸ — ‘in all climates the tree of the Cross has grown, taken root, and fructified. Every joy in life has been linked with this faith, while the most miserable gloom has found in it its nourishment and its justification’.⁷⁹ Hegel’s objections to the Enlightenment, that it had failed in accomplishing the goals it set itself, ‘that happiness is the goal of both reason and life, [the *Aufklärung* had] failed because it interpreted happiness in secular terms only’,⁸⁰ and that it was shallow caused ‘the beautiful subjectivity of Protestantism’ to be ‘transformed by Enlightenment into an empirical subjectivity, and the poetry of its grief [...] into the prose of a satisfaction with this finite world’.⁸¹ Like Böhme’s frustration with orthodoxy, Hegel’s dissatisfaction with both of these currents will lead him to another vehicle for the expression of the perennial content, that of the heterodox.

SECTION TWO

HETERODOX LEANINGS

The second phase of Böhme and Hegel’s philosophical development comes as a consequence of the rejection of their shared Lutheran heritage. While both retained a genuine admiration for the content of the Christian religion, its mode of expression

⁷⁸ *Positivity*, p. 168.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 168–169.

⁸⁰ Richard Kroner, in *ETW*, p. 37.

⁸¹ *Werke*, I, p. 10.

was, they found, seriously deficient. The shortcomings found in the language of orthodoxy would lead them to a period of heterodox reflection, an interlude spent in an attempt to find a new grammar in which to render the eternal truths of Christianity. The variety of heterodoxy in particular which both would come to develop a passionate, if relatively short lived, curiosity was the broad spectrum of Hermeticism and the symbolic language of alchemy. Their acquaintance with this dissenting branch of learning can be seen as very much the product of their cultural climates. Böhme's acquaintance with heterodoxy would come as an extension of his interest in the German mystics and the methods of the humanists, coming to his attention through his Silesian friends and disciples. Hegel's familiarity with the heterodox lies in the cultural climate of Swabia, into which he was born and educated, and its seemingly eternal interest in the *philosophia perennis*. In this way it may be said that what was Böhme's Silesia was Hegel's Swabia.

§ 2. 1. Böhme's Period of Silence and the Failure of Hermeticism

The *Aurora* was not a work intended for wholesale dissemination; Böhme 'intended to keep [...] my writing by me all [...] my life'.⁸² Unfortunately for Böhme, however, 'it fell out [...] that I entrusted a certain person with [the *Aurora*]; by means whereof it was published without my knowledge or consent, and the first book was taken from

⁸² *Epistles*, 12. 12.

me'.⁸³ When the *Aurora* manuscript began to be circulated, a copy ended up in the hands of Moller's replacement as *pastor primarius* of Görlitz, Gregorius Richter (1560–1624). Unlike his predecessor, Richter was a staunchly orthodox Lutheran, and, as such, thought the circulation of the *Aurora* would be of a destructive influence upon the minds of his parishioners. The town council was petitioned to have the work, and any future philosophical output Böhme might put to paper, suppressed. Richter's wish was granted, and Böhme was forbidden from writing, and even briefly exiled from the town.⁸⁴ Böhme's acquiescence to this decree was, more than likely, a judicious move, taken in the light of his awareness of the age in which he found himself living. The early seventeenth century was the time of the burning of Bruno, the suppression of Kepler and Galileo, and the withdrawal from the public forum of Valentin Weigel and Johann Arndt. Even the reforming tendencies of the *Rosenkreutzer* necessitated that their work being published anonymously.

Naturally, this judgement and interdict by the Görlitzers had a deleterious effect on both Böhme's creative output and his state of mind, and earned his fellow burghers a high degree of personal condemnation:

I bring in no complaints against them [...], condemn them for anything, except for their wickedness and abominations, as pride, covetous, envy, and wrath, against which the spirit of nature complains [...] and not I [...] They walk up and down in their drunkenness, seeking the key, when they have it about them and they know it not, [...] like the country man looking for his horse who all the while he was looking for him

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Franz Hartmann, *Life and Doctrines of Jacob Boehme* (New York: Macoy, 1929; Kessinger, 1992), p. 11.

was riding on the back of that very horse [...] What could I [...] poor layman, write of their high art if it were not given me by the spirit of nature in whom I live and am?⁸⁵

A seven year 'period of silence' ensued, which, though Böhme continued to write privately, he informed only his close friends of his literary activities. Prior to 1619, Böhme had used the language of Moller and Luther to express his visionary content. These sources now faded into the background as Böhme's withdrawal led him to explore a burgeoning interest in other, heterodox modes of expression. It was during this period of creative seclusion that Böhme became obsessed by the language and symbolism of Hermeticism. It is important to mention here that, when discussing Böhme (and indeed later Hegel's) Hermetic leanings, Antoine Faivre's established convention of the use of the term 'Hermeticism', rather than 'Hermetism', shall be used. Where the latter designates the religion or philosophy proceeding from the *Corpus Hermeticum* and the like, the former signifies

the general attitude of mind underlying a variety of traditions and/or currents besides alchemy, such as Hermetism [the religion of the *Corpus Hermeticum*], Astrology, Kabbalah, Christian Theosophy, and *philosophia occulta* or *magia* (in the sense these two words acquired in the Renaissance, that is, of a magical vision of nature understood as a living being replete with signs and correspondences, which could be deciphered and interpreted).⁸⁶

In Böhme's time, a knowledge of these subjects that constitute the wide spectrum which is Hermeticism was not unusual: for those without the advantage of Hebrew,

⁸⁵ *Aurora*, 12. 16, and ff.

⁸⁶ Antoine Faivre, 'Renaissance Hermeticism and Western Esotericism', in *Gnosis and Hermeticism*, ed. by Roelof van den Broek and Wouter J. Hanegraaf (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), pp. 109–124 (p. 110).

Reuchlin's cabbalistic works were available in Latin (the word 'cabbala' is even used directly by Böhme twice in his *Theosophical Fragments*),⁸⁷ while the alchemical writings of Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa and Paracelsus were widely read in intellectual circles.⁸⁸ This new-found interest in Hermeticism came by way of Böhme's rather large circle of (predominantly Silesian) friends, the careers and interests of whom were nothing but diffuse, but who were united, nevertheless, by a shared interest in Paracelsian alchemy.⁸⁹ While interest in the Paracelsian was most common, in the sixteenth century, to Görlitz and Bohemia,⁹⁰ this group extended beyond the bounds of Böhme's Görlitz itself — of the group's leaders (if indeed they may be called so), Balthasar Flöter and Francis Kretschmeyer were from Sagan, Johann Huser and Paul Linck from Glogau, and Marcius Ambrosius from Neisse.⁹¹ The Görlitz group, to whom Böhme was the most intellectually indebted, was composed of three individuals, each physicians by training and close personal friends of Böhme. From Johann Rothe (or Rother; described as being a *sonderbare alchemist und adeptus*), he learned of the German mystical tradition (characterised by the thought of Johannes Tauler, Valentin Weigel, and Johann Arndt in particular).⁹² From

⁸⁷ Jakob Böhme, 'Questiones Theosophicae [hereafter *Theos. Frag.*]', in *De Electione Gratiae and Questiones Theosophicae*, trans. by John Rolleston Earle (London: Constable, 1930), 3. 34, 6. 11. For an in-depth study of the relationship of the Cabbala to Böhme's philosophical system, see Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1941), pp. 1–39, 190, 237.

⁸⁸ Stoudt, p. 89, n. 17.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

⁹⁰ Andrew Weeks, *Boehme: An Intellectual Biography of the Seventeenth-Century Philosopher and Mystic* (Albany, N. Y.: State University of New York Press, 1991), pp. 27–31.

⁹¹ Stoudt, p. 95; Will-Erich Peuckert, *Pansophie* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1956), pp. 524–525; Peuckert, *Böhme*, pp. 50ff.

⁹² Magee, p. 37. See Jecht, p. 58; Stoudt, p. 95.

his own physician, and later disciple and executor of his will, Tobias Kober (author of the *Observationes Castrenses*), he became familiar with alchemy in general. The most important influence in this alchemical period in Böhme's life came by way of Balthazar Walther, from whom Böhme learned of Christian Cabbalism, Paracelsian alchemy, and Orientalism. Stoudt describes him as Böhme's 'most learned friend, entirely typical of the times, dabbling in the [theosophic] arts and somewhat of a theologian'.⁹³ Walther claimed, and was accorded with by subsequent biographers, a colourful, if somewhat dubious peripatetic career.⁹⁴ Since 1587 Walther had used Görlitz as a base for his travels (to Poland, Wallachia, and Greece, and, allegedly, to Syria and Egypt), and long been associated with the Görlitz Paracelsians.⁹⁵ Böhme's relationship with him began in 1617, and Walther billeted with him for three months the following year.⁹⁶ In 1620, Walther became the director of the chemical laboratory in Dresden, and in 1622 he travelled to northern Germany to learn from their 'philosophers'. Throughout this time, he published extensively, and shared what he wrote with Böhme.

It would not be worthwhile to examine here each and every contributing element from the spectrum of Böhme's Hermetical leanings.⁹⁷ It is, however, worthwhile to explore Böhme's interest in alchemy, the symbolism of which, it has

⁹³ Stoudt, p. 96.

⁹⁴ John Sparrow, 'The Life of the Author', in *Aurora*, p. XXI.

⁹⁵ Jecht, p. 63. Jecht's account is based upon the monograph *Balthazari Walthari vera Descriptio Rerum ab Dno. Jon Michaelae Mold. Transalp. S. Walachiae Duce Et Platina Gestarum*.

⁹⁶ Alexander Koyré, *La Philosophie de Jacob Boehme* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1929), p. 48, n. 1.

⁹⁷ This task has already been more than adequately accomplished in Cyril O'Regan's, *Gnostic Apocalypse: Jacob Boehme's Haunted Narrative* (Albany, N. Y.: State University of New York Press, 2002)

been argued, is 'an indelible part of Böhme's discursive inheritance'.⁹⁸ It would be rather obtuse to merely state that Böhme had an interest in alchemy without being specific, for, historically, there were many schools of thought. Böhme's interest, as was the general attraction during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, was not in the work of Lull, Ficino, and Mirandola, but of Paracelsus. It was Balthazar Walther who had induced into Böhme an appreciation of Paracelsian alchemy, which is evidenced by the many alchemical references throughout the Böhme corpus, and, indeed, the existence of passages in his own work which are parallel to passages in Paracelsus.⁹⁹ Generally speaking, the entire Paracelsian corpus represents an attempt at a philosophical system or *scientia* wherein elements from the content of *Naturphilosophie* are expressed theologically, while elements from the content of theology are expressed naturally.¹⁰⁰ The vision reached through this interdisciplinary synthesis is one in which the static, material world is taken as a 'signature' of the dynamic, invisible one. Hence, it is argued that through the examination of the material signatures, that a description of the invisible should then be possible. One may read Böhme's new found interest in Paracelsian alchemy as an extension of his earlier humanist spirit. As was Luther's intention to reveal the mysteries of God through the cipher of scripture, Paracelsus attempted to find these signatures or

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 69.

⁹⁹ For example the similarity in passages from Huser's edition of Paracelsus's *De Secretis Creationis* and Böhme's *De Signatura Rerum: The Signature of All Things* [hereafter *Sig. Rer.*], in *The Works of Jacob Behmen, The Teutonic Philosopher*, trans. by John Sparrow, vol. 4 (London: Printed for G. Robinson, 1810). See also Peuckert, *Böhme*, p. 56.

¹⁰⁰ O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, p. 59.

universal laws of nature in a similar manner.

As such, the alchemy of Paracelsus which now fascinated Böhme was not that of the literal furnace, the bellows, and alchemist's retort; rather, it was of a speculative, reflective, and spiritual variety, defined by the creed of *aurum nostrum non est aurum vulgi* ('our gold is not the common gold'). The process of the transmutation of base metals into gold of earlier alchemical systems was taken as a cipher for a figurative, symbolic transformation of the imperfect soul into a godly one.¹⁰¹ To this end, Stoudt comments that Böhme's use of alchemical language was like Jung's, intended to describe merely the archetypes of the psyche.¹⁰² Having found that the dogmatic use of reason failed to reconcile the spiritual with the psychical, Böhme surmised that the language of alchemy could now bridge that gap. As Böhme himself pleads, 'Do not take me for an alchemist [...] I write only in [...] the spirit [...] Though I could here show [...] in many days and hours these things might be prepared, for gold cannot be made in one day, but a whole month is needed for it [...] I know not how to manage the fire.'¹⁰³ The 'proper art of the spiritual alchemist [...] was the production of the spiritual and only valid tincture or philosopher's stone, the mystic seed of transcendental life which should invade, tinge, and wholly transmute

¹⁰¹ See Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Spiritual Consciousness* (London: Methuen and Co., 1911; repr. 1930), p. 143. 'the proper art of the spiritual alchemist [...] was the production of the spiritual and only valid tincture or philosopher's stone, the mystic seed of transcendental life which should invade, tinge, and wholly transmute the imperfect self into spiritual gold'. See also Eduard Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen*, 3 parts in 6 vols (Leipzig: [n. pub.], 1903), III, ii, pp. 242–254; Richard Reitzenstein, *Poimandres: Studien zur griechisch-ägyptischen und frühchristlichen Literatur* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1904); John Martin Creed, 'The Hermetic Writings', *The Journal of Theological Studies*, 15 (1914), 513–538.

¹⁰² Stoudt, pp. 96–98. See Carl Gustav Jung, *Psychologie und Alchemie* (Zürich: Rascher, 1944).

¹⁰³ *Aurora*, 22. 104.

the imperfect self into spiritual gold'.¹⁰⁴ The goal was, through a knowledge of the signatures of nature, to unveil its first principle, closely identified with the Gnostic and Hermetic αἰμόρμενη or the Platonic ἀνάγκη.¹⁰⁵ The focus of Böhme's speculative alchemy can be read as a pantheistic concern of God in nature. Questions asked, such as 'if God is hidden within living substance then when matter burns does God burn?', and 'when a tree grows does the hidden God also grow?', highlight Böhme's preoccupation with this issue.¹⁰⁶ A unity with this God-in-nature was what Böhme sought, echoing the past spiritual endeavours of such legendary figures as Hermes Trismegistus, Paracelsus, and the Pseudo-Albertus Magnus. The means by which this unity, this 'regeneration' of the man as the image of God, could be expressed conceptually also became a central concern for Böhme during this period. It was Böhme's initial speculation that through the symbolism of alchemy this process of regeneration could be expressed. This attempt to reconcile Christian content with alchemical expression is present throughout Böhme's signature work of the period, *De Signatura Rerum* composed in 1621 (and described, by one commentator, as an 'unsurpassed recapitulation of what is articulated in Paracelsus's *De Rerum Naturae*).¹⁰⁷ The following passage illustrates this 'chemical marriage' of Christian and Paracelsian expression:

¹⁰⁴ Underhill, p. 143.

¹⁰⁵ For an excellent elucidation upon the αἰμόρμενη as the first cosmic principle, see Hans Leisegang, *Die Gnosis* (Leipzig: Kröner, 1924), pp. 363, 367.

¹⁰⁶ Stoudt, p. 99.

¹⁰⁷ O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, p. 59.

You must eat of God's bread if you will transmute your body out of the earthly property into the heavenly. Christ said, 'He that eateth not the flesh of the Son of Man hath no part in him'; and he says further, 'He that shall drink of the water that I shall give, it shall spring up in him to a fountain of eternal life'. Here lies the pearl of the new birth. It is not enough to play the sophist; the grain of wheat brings forth no fruit unless it falls into the earth; whatever will bring forth fruit must enter into its mother from whence it first came to be.¹⁰⁸

The end of this dalliance with the Paracelsian coincides with the final chapters of *De Signatura*. What Böhme found was that the concept of Christian-chemical expressive reconciliation and integration was impossible. He discovered that the symbolism of 'fire, transmutation, process, work, and all the quackery of Faust's laboratory' was incapable of fully expressing the heart of the Christian religion, of spiritual regeneration, exemplified by the question of 'how can one being old enter his mother's womb again?'¹⁰⁹ Alchemy, with its focus on spiritual development of an inward and highly personal species could not be successfully applied to a revealed, community-based religion such as Christianity. The fire of the alchemist's furnace could no longer be regarded as the ἀρχή, the first category of being, rather the first principle of everything was now realised to be 'the eternal will-spirit of God', wherein 'there is nothing prior'.¹¹⁰ Böhme, reflecting upon his period of alchemical speculation, realised that through alchemy he had become as a 'rebellious, stubborn, and disobedient child', his will having 'entered into self-hood', and he had made himself his own enemy, bringing upon himself a kind of intellectual 'self-destructive

¹⁰⁸ *Sig. Rer.*, 10, 49ff.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 10, 51.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 3. 3.

death'.¹¹¹ This movement away from the language of alchemy is clear through study of Böhme's subsequent works of the period, such as the 1623 works the *Mysterium Magnum* and *De Electione Gratiae* for, while traces of the Paracelsian persist, they are of a far more 'covert' nature.¹¹² Alchemy, and Hermeticism in general, Böhme now considered 'the idolatry of the heathen' which is constituted by 'worship of the planetary system and the four elements',¹¹³ and a 'departure from the one and only God and turning to the magic generation of nature, selecting false gods from the powers of nature'.¹¹⁴ The movement away from alchemy and natural philosophy was paralleled, for Böhme, by a return not only to the values of Moller, but also of the main current of the Reformation itself. This rejection of Hermeticism and return to Protestantism is demonstrated in concluding chapters of *De Signatura*, through the a play on the Christian metaphor from Matthew's Gospel. 'Christ said,'

'Seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you': You know that Christ signifies in a parable concerning the wounded traveller, that he fell among murderers, who beat him and wounded him, and pulled off his clothes, and went away, and left him half dead, till the Samaritan came, and took pity on him, and poured oil into his wounds, and brought him to an inn: This is a manifest and lively representation of the corruption of man in Paradise, and also of the corruption of the earth in the curse of God, when Paradise departed from it. Now, would you be a magus? Then you must become a Samaritan, otherwise you cannot heal the wounded and decayed; for the body you must heal is half dead, and sorely wounded; also its right garment is torn off, so that it is very hard for you to know the man whom you will heal, unless you have the eyes and will of the Samaritan.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Ibid., 15. 8ff.

¹¹² O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, p. 68.

¹¹³ Jakob Böhme, *Mysterium Magnum* [hereafter *Myst. Mag.*], trans. by John Sparrow (London: 1654; John M. Watkins, 1924), 37. 10.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 11. 6.

¹¹⁵ *Sig. Rer.*, 7. 39–40.

§ 2. 2. Hegel's Swabian Heritage

It ought to be stated from the outset that the tracing of heterodox and Hermetic elements of Hegel's thought is not, in fact, some singular or peculiar enterprise which belongs on the fringes of philosophy. In his own time, Hegel's work, particularly the *Logic*, was regarded by some of his contemporaries as an operation in 'occultism' (*Geheimwissenschaft*).¹¹⁶ Rosenkranz argues for a definite 'mystical-theosophical' period in Hegel's intellectual development.¹¹⁷ Magee's recent book, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition*, follows in the tradition of commentators, such as Eric Voegelin, Frances Yates, Antoine Favire, Richard Popkin, Allan Debus, Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs, Paul Oskar Kristeller, D. P. Walker, Stephen McKnight, and Alison Coudert, who assign Hermetic leanings to rationalist thinkers. Ernst Benz comments that, 'In a certain sense one can refer to the philosophy of German Idealism as a Böhme-Renaissance, when Böhme was discovered at the same time by Schelling, Hegel, Franz von Baader, Tieck, Novalis and many others'.¹¹⁸ Eric Voegelin remarks that 'by

¹¹⁶ The view of Berlin theologian Wilhelm Martin Leberecht de Wette (1780–1849), noted Wiedmann,, p. 53. Further, de Wette writes in an 1815 letter to Jakob Friedrich Fries (1773–1843) that, in the *Logic*, 'Mysticism reigns here mightily, and how deep we have sunk is shown in the thought of Hegel'. Noted in Günther Nicolin, ed., *Hegel in Berichten seiner Zeitgenossen* (Hambrug: Felix Meiner, 1970), p. 117.

¹¹⁷ Karl Rosenkranz, 'Hegels ursprüngliches System 1798–1806', *Literarhistorisches Taschenbuch*, 2 (1844), 157–164 (p. 157). Trans. in Henry Silton Harris, *Hegel's Development: Night Thoughts (Jena 1801–1806)* (London: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 184. Jaeschke, however, citing an article by Heinz Kimmerle, argues against this view of a definite theosophical period of Hegel's development. Cf. Walter Jaeschke, *Reason in Religion: The Formation of Hegel's Philosophy of Religion*, trans. by J. Michael Stewart and Peter Hodgson (Berkeley: University of California, 1990), p. 126.

¹¹⁸ Ernst Benz, *Adam der Mythos vom Urmenschen* (Munich: Barth, 1955), p. 23. Two of the most important tributaries for the flow of Böhme's theosophy to Hegel are by way of Schelling and Novalis. Schelling, in particular, makes much use of Böhme's terminology, often using the adjectives 'unoriginated' (*unanfängliche*) and 'groundless' (*ungründliche*) which are peculiar to Böhme's corpus

his contemporaries Hegel was considered a gnostic thinker', whose philosophy 'belongs to the continuous history of modern Hermeticism since the fifteenth century'.¹¹⁹ Voegelin further argues that the *Phenomenology of Spirit* ought to be read as a 'grimoire', which 'must be recognised as a work of magic — indeed, it is one of the great magic performances'.¹²⁰ A variety of Hermetic themes throughout Hegel's corpus have been traced by Magee:

These include, in broad strokes, a Masonic subtext of 'initiation mysticism' in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*; a Böhmean subtext to the *Phenomenology*'s famous preface; a Kabbalistic-Böhmean-Lullian influence on the Logic; alchemical-Paracelsian elements in the *Philosophy of Nature*; an influence of Kabbalistic and Joachimite millennialism on Hegel's doctrine of Objective Spirit and theory of world history; alchemical and Rosicrucian images in the *Philosophy of Right*; and influence of the Hermetic tradition of *pansophia* on the system as a whole; an endorsement of the Hermetic belief in *philosophia perennis*; and the use of perennial Hermetic symbolic

(see Chapter Two of this thesis). For a thorough investigation on the influence of Böhme on Schelling, see: Robert Brown, *The Later Philosophy of Schelling: The Influence of Boehme on the Works of 1809–1815* (Lewisburg, P. A.: Bucknell University Press, 1977); Kurt Leese, *Von Jakob Böhme zu Schelling: Eine Untersuchung zu Metaphysik des Gottesproblem* (Erfurt: Kurt Stenger, 1927); and Frederick Kile, *Die theologische Grundlagen von Schellings Philosophy der Freiheit* (Leiden: Brill, 1965). For the influence of Böhme on Novalis, see: Carl Pascheck, 'Der Einfluss Jakob Böhmes auf das Werk Friedrich von Hardenbergs (Novalis)' (Inaugural diss., University of Bonn, 1967); and Walt Feilchenfeld, *Der Einfluss Jakob Böhmes auf Novalis* (Berlin: Ebering, 1992).

¹¹⁹ Eric Voegelin, 'Response to Professor Altizer's "A New History and a New but Ancient God"', in *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin: Published Essays, 1966–1985*, ed. by Ellis Sandoz, 34 vols (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), XII, pp. 292–303 (p. 297).

¹²⁰ Eric Voegelin, 'On Hegel: A Study in Sorcery', in *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin: Published Essays, 1966–1985*, ed. by Ellis Sandoz, 34 vols, pp. 213–255 (p. 222). Cf. Voegelin's *Science, Politics, and Gnosticism: Two Essays*, trans. by William J. Fitzpatrick (Washington, D. C.: Regnery, 1968), pp. 68–69, and his 'In Search of Order', in *Order and History*, 5 vols (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), V, pp. 54–70. Although this view is an intriguing one, Hegel himself has little good to say about readings of this kind. Quasi-visionary views of the *Phenomenology* are dismissed by Hegel, who reads them as declaring that 'the absolute is not supposed to be comprehended, it is to be felt and intuited; not the concept of the absolute, but the feeling and the intuition of it, must govern what is said, and must be expressed by it'. *The Phenomenology of Spirit* [hereafter *PhS*], trans. by A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), p. 4. Further, in the 'Introduction' to the *Encyclopaedia*, Hegel wryly surmises that, to this end, '[The] comfortable view of what constitutes a philosopher has recently received a fresh corroboration from the theory of immediate or intuitive knowledge (*die Lehre vom unmittelbaren Wissen, durch Anschauen*)'.

forms (such as the triangle, the circle, and the square) as structural, architectonic devices.¹²¹

The instantiation of Hegel's Hermetic leanings can be attributed, in part, to his involvement in the German Enlightenment. As Magee comments, the Enlightenment quest 'for universal knowledge and power over nature led to a revival of mysticism and occultism, for these had always promised to deliver just those boons'.¹²² Walsh adds that this particular tendency of the Enlightenment was most keenly felt in Hegel's Württemberg, that 'the influence of the Enlightenment, to the extent it had made itself felt in Württemberg, was integrated with a theosophic philosophy of nature and a speculative Pietism which was concerned with the progressive revelation of the divine structure of history'.¹²³ Heinrich Schneider writes that the cells and lodges of 'secret societies' active in Württemberg at the time, such as the Masons, Weishaupt's Bavarian Illuminati, and the Rosicrucians, were 'teeming with magical, theosophical, mystical notions'.¹²⁴ As such, they had swept up many of Hegel's peers into their ranks. Gerald Hanratty notes that Hegel, early in his youth, 'assimilated Masonic ideas and aspirations which were propagated in German by the supporters of the French revolution. Throughout his life he interested himself in the Masonic movement so that its ideas and aspirations were important elements of the matrix

¹²¹ Magee, p. 2.

¹²² Ibid., p. 56.

¹²³ Walsh, *Boehme and Hegel*, p. 296.

¹²⁴ Heinrich Schneider, *Quest for Mysteries: The Mystical Background for Literature in Eighteenth Century German* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1947), p. 22.

from which Hegel's Gnostic system emerged'.¹²⁵ In sum,

Long before Kant's important answers to the great problems of human life, the mystics in the secret societies had transformed these societies into anti-Enlightenment organisations and, in thus keeping alive the mystical traditions, had made possible the later merging of German idealism and mysticism [...] This mystical movement was the conservative revolution of the eighteenth century, and if in its beginnings its character was not exactly Christian, it was undoubtedly religious.¹²⁶

An ancestor, Johannes Hegel, had come to Swabia from Carinthia to escape Catholic persecution.¹²⁷ It was in Swabia, in the Duchy of Württemberg, in 1770 that Hegel was born. Hegel's Old Württemberg was a breeding ground for radical and transgressive ideas, particularly those stemming from the Hermetic tradition (such as the work of Jakob Böhme), and those which went against the spirit of religious orthodoxy at the time, such as radical Pietism. The Swabians were considered to be 'the mystical people of Germany', known for their interest in the esoteric and the Hermetic,¹²⁸ and, in thought, a marked proclivity towards the holistic and systematising, towards the 'both-and' or ἔν και πᾶν, rather than the 'either-or'.¹²⁹ The comment that 'Swabia is accustomed to reconciling opposites',¹³⁰ is aptly illustrated by the fact that the great systematising philosophers, Reuchlin, Andreae, Oetinger, Hahn, Mesmer, Schiller, Schelling, Hegel, and Hölderlin, had all been

¹²⁵ Gerald Hanratty, 'Hegel and the Gnostic Tradition: II', *Philosophical Studies* (Ireland) 31 (1986–1987), 301–325 (pp. 312–313).

¹²⁶ Heinrich Schneider, pp. 76–77.

¹²⁷ Rudolf Haym, *Hegel und seine Zeit* (Leipzig and Berlin: Heims, 1857), p. 16.

¹²⁸ Magee, p. 62.

¹²⁹ Dickey, p. 11.

¹³⁰ Pierre Deghaye, 'Jacob Böhme and His Followers', in *Modern Esoteric Spirituality*, ed. by Antoine Faivre and Jacob Needleman (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1992), pp. 210–248 (p. 236).

Swabians. An affinity for the Hermetic, however, was seen as very much the preserve of the 'lower classes' or 'grass roots' movements. As such, they were subject to much mockery by the better educated, which led to the 'embarrassing situation' of, until recently in academia, an ignorance on the subject.¹³¹ One of Hegel's earliest biographers, Karl Rosenkranz comments that, 'In Berlin it was the case that much that was attributed to Hegel as a person was typical of all Swabians, and was not regarded as being in any way peculiar to him so long as he lived in southern Germany',¹³² while O. H. Gruppe pasquinises those same Swabian roots in his play *The Wind, or an Entirely Absolute Construction of World History Through Ober's Horn*.¹³³

Paracelsian and Böhmean manuscripts were widely available and read in Württemberg, and Hegel's intellectual world has been described as being obsessed with 'ancient categories of chemical (i.e. alchemical)-biological *Naturphilosophie*'.¹³⁴ Hegel's diaries from the period, however, betray little interest in the Hermetic or Böhmean. Why this was so, two possible answers have been suggested. Firstly, as has been stated, there was the social stigma which Hermeticism bore, being long considered the preserve of the lower classes and therefore not worthy of scholarly endeavour. Hence, Hegel's silence on his allegiance to these traditions was perhaps

¹³¹ Robert Schneider, *Schellings und Hegels swabische Geistesahnen* (Würzburg-Aumühle: Konrad Tritsch Verlag, 1938), p. 146. Translations provided by Magee.

¹³² Rosenkranz, *Hegels Leben*, p. 22.

¹³³ Cf. Magee, p. 62.

¹³⁴ 'Die uralten Kategorien der chemisch (alchimistisch)-biologischen Naturphilosophie'. Robert Schneider, p. 20.

judicious, for such an interest could potentially damage his academic career.¹³⁵ Secondly, as Robert Schneider argues, this notable absence may be accounted for simply, as that ‘about which one talks about constantly, one does not write in one’s diary’.¹³⁶ That is to say, the cultural climate of Swabia into which Hegel was born and educated was so brimming with Hermetic ideas, which had so permeated Hegel’s consciousness, that he did not feel the need to comment upon them.

As a student, Hegel was known as a *Collecteenmacher* (an ‘anthologist’) who gathered together concepts and ideas from other philosophers and theologians, rather than as a creative genius in his own right. His particular areas of interest are listed by Schneider as drawing from the works of ‘Oetinger, Böhme, von Helmont, Boyle, Fludd, Paracelsus, Agrippa von Nettesheim, Telesio, and others [...] This philosophy of nature was still alive in Württemberg during Hegel’s [...] youth’.¹³⁷ Hegel’s personal library included

Hermetic writings by Agrippa, Böhme, Bruno, and Paracelsus. He read widely on Mesmerism, psychic phenomenal dowsing, precognition, and sorcery. He publicly associated himself with known [theosophers], like Franz von Baader. He structured his philosophy in a manner identical to the Hermetic use of ‘Correspondences’. He relied on histories of thought that discussed Hermes Trismegitus, Pico della Mirandola, Robert Fludd, and Knorr von Rosenroth, alongside Plato, Galileo, Descartes, and Newton. He stated in more than one of his lectures that ‘speculative’ means the same thing as ‘mystical’. He believed in an ‘earth spirit’ and corresponded with colleagues about the nature of magic. He aligned himself, informally, with ‘Hermetic’ societies such as the Freemasons and the Rosicrucians. Even Hegel’s doodles were Hermetic.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ Magee, p. 71.

¹³⁶ ‘*Worüber man ständig spricht, schreibt man nichts in sein Tagebuch*’. Robert Schneider, p. 17.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹³⁸ Magee, p. 2.

This penchant for Hermetic anthology cannot be disregarded as a simple propaedeutical stage in Hegel's career; a developmental phase in which he grounds himself in the philosophy of his predecessors prior to forming his own system. Rather, as he would later go on to admit, an intact, fully justifiable philosophical *science* already exists in the world, and has existed since the dawn of history. To this end, Hegel declares that,

From the true knowledge of [the principle of all philosophy], there will arise the conviction that at all times there has been only one and the same philosophy. So not only am I promising nothing new here, but rather am I devoting my philosophical efforts precisely to the restoration of the oldest of things, and on liberating it from *the* misunderstanding in which the recent times of unphilosophy [*sic*] have buried it.¹³⁹

It would not be truthful to state that Hegel accepts everything propounded by the wide spectrum of ideas and concepts which compose Hermeticism. In fact, only three Hermetic strands are worthy of examination, for they constitute the bulk of Hegel's familiarity with the system. They are the cabbalistic, the Paracelsian, and the distinctly Böhmean.

O'Regan notes in an article that the 'historical fact that the linkage of the Cabbala with Böhme was available to Hegel [...] leads one to emphasise its value for characterising Hegelian ontotheological narrative'.¹⁴⁰ Though Hegel never read any of the seminal Hebrew texts, he did study their various Hermetic commentaries.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Rosenkranz, *Hegels Leben*, p. 192 (Magee trans., p. 86).

¹⁴⁰ See Cyril O'Regan, 'Hegel and Anti-Judaism: Narrative and the Inner Circulation of the Kabbalah', *The Owl of Minerva*, 28 (1997), 141–182.

¹⁴¹ Magee, p. 166.

Among them was Knorr von Rosenroth's *Kabbalah Denudata*, and the Latin volumes of John Jacob Brucker's *Historia Critica Philosophiae*, of which Hegel read carefully.¹⁴² According to one commentator, Brucker's *Historia* constituted 'the first really systematic description of the Western esoteric currents, [whose] importance should not be underestimated'.¹⁴³ It includes accounts of the work of cabbalists and hermeticists such as Bruno, Lull, Campanella, Fludd, van Helmont, and Böhme himself. Hegel, however, writes of Brucker's work that it constitutes 'so much useless ballast', and he found that there was little of what could be considered philosophical in it. Magee argues that this is because Brucker's accounts are 'inaccurate and deformed by his commitment to Wolffian metaphysics'.¹⁴⁴ Nevertheless, it can be said, in general, that Hegel finds the writings of the cabbalists and hermeticists as prone to 'sink into the fantastic', and as having little real contribution to philosophy.¹⁴⁵ Böhme's own work is regarded in the same way, as Hermetic, and is, as Magee adds, taken very seriously, however, by Hegel.

Hegel's opinion of alchemy, however, is constituted by more than a simple, outright rejection. Hegel's knowledge of alchemical symbolism was advanced enough, in keeping with the general interest in such of the period. In an 1808 letter decrying the spirit of the age, Hegel employs his own vivid, Hesiodic alchemical

¹⁴² Ibid., pp. 166–167.

¹⁴³ Antoine Faivre, *Theosophy, Imagination, Tradition: Studies in Western Esotericism*, trans. by Christine Rhone (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), p. xviii; 18–19. Cf. Jacob Brucker, *Historia critica Philosophiae*, 6 vols (Leipzig: [n. pub.], 1742–1744).

¹⁴⁴ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* [hereafter *LHP*], trans. by E. S. Haldane and F. M. Simson, 3 vols (London: G. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), I, p. 112; *Werke*, XIX, p. 134 (Magee, p. 166)

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., II, p. 395; *Werke*, XIX, p. 426 (See Magee, p. 167).

symbolism: ‘If this age is on the whole an age of iron, here it is still mixed with lead, nickel, and other base metals. Things are indeed always being reorganised to produce a nugget of gold as well. It is characteristic of gold, however, to grow all too slowly, and with all our sprinkling and greenhouse exertions no steady growth ensues’.¹⁴⁶ Hegel’s understanding of alchemy comes almost exclusively by way of Paracelsus and Böhme. The particulars of the Paracelsus’ elemental quaternity of mercury or fluidity, sulphur or oil, salt, and a vitalistic principle and Böhme’s similar vision of an elemental triad was not unknown to Hegel, writing that ‘according to an ancient and general opinion, each body consists of four elements. In more recent times, Paracelsus has regarded them as being composed of [the elements stated above] which Jakob Böhme called the great triad’.¹⁴⁷ When Hegel writes upon this subject, Paracelsus and Böhme are seldom mentioned by name, rather, as Harris comments, ‘Paracelsus and Böhme together are [called] “the elders”’.¹⁴⁸ Even when Hegel is commenting upon the alchemical symbolism of his contemporaries, he is insistent on ‘finding an earlier pedigree’ in these elders, ‘in Paracelsus and Böhme’.¹⁴⁹

It is a matter of history that Paracelsus said that all terrestrial bodies are composed of the four elements of mercury, sulphur, salt, and virgin earth (*jungfräulichen Erde*), and

¹⁴⁶ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Hegel: The Letters* [hereafter *Letters*], trans. by Clark Butler and Christianne Seiler (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984) p. 147; *Berliner Schriften* [hereafter Hoffmeister], ed. by Johannes Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Published for Felix Meiner, 1956), #131.

¹⁴⁷ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of Nature* [hereafter *PN*], ed. and trans. by M. J. Petry, 3 vols. (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1970), § 136. For an elaboration on Böhme’s triad, see Chapter Two of this thesis.

¹⁴⁸ Henry Siltou Harris, *Hegel’s Development: Night Thoughts (Jena 1801–1806)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 274, note.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

that these correspond to the four cardinal virtues. Mercury is metalline, and as metal is abstract matter; it is self-identical in its fluid corporeality, and corresponds to light. Sulphur is rigidity, the possibility of combustion; fire is not alien to it, but constitutes its self-consuming actuality. Salt corresponds to water, which is the cometary principle, and its dissolution constitutes indifferent reality, or the subsidence of fire into independence. Finally, virgin earth is the simple innoxiousness of this movement, the subject which constitutes the extinction of these movements; this was the accepted expression for the abstract earthiness of pure silica.¹⁵⁰

It is interesting to note here that Hegel's use of the term 'virgin earth', which, in the above paragraph, he attributes to Paracelsus. In point of fact, this term never appears in the Paracelsian corpus, but it appears continually (and in fact originates) in Böhme's work.¹⁵¹

Hegel finds a great deal of fault in the use of alchemical imagery in the work of his contemporaries. Why this is so is that, while the Paracelsian and Böhmean symbolism of the elemental and metalline is employed (which Hegel approves of), there is also the use of astrological symbolism, for which neither Hegel nor Böhme have much patience. As Hegel writes in the *Philosophy of Nature*,

Schelling and Steffens have drawn a parallel between the planetary series and that of metals. This is an ingenious and pregnant comparison, but it is not a new idea, for the representation of Venus by copper, Mercury by quicksilver, earth by iron, Jupiter by tin, and Saturn by lead, is commonplace, just as it is to call the sun golden and the moon silver. There is something completely natural about this, for metals are the most compact and independent bodies to be found on earth. The planets do not belong to the same field as the metals and the chemical process, however. Cross-references

¹⁵⁰ *PN*, introductory chapters. Paracelsus wrote: 'All things (man included) are composed of three substances [...] These three [...] are [...] sulphur, mercury, and salt, and they are acted upon by a fourth principle which is life. These [...] are not seen with the physical eye [...] [but] are held together in forms by the power of life. If you take these three invisible substances and add [...] the power of life, you will have invisible substances in visible form'. Quoted in Franz Hartmann, *The Life of Paracelsus* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1887), p. 165.

¹⁵¹ Harris, *Night Thoughts*, 274n.

[*Anspielungen*] of this kind are external comparisons and decide nothing. They merely sparkle before the imagination without furthering the scope of knowledge.¹⁵²

The more involved rationale for this rejection of planetary symbolism in favour of the elemental and the chemical is that the goal of alchemy, as Magee points out, is at the same time Hegel's 'philosophical object'.¹⁵³ Hegel's reading of the Paracelsian is identical to Böhme's, in that both considered alchemy to be a speculative, rather than practical, discipline. In Hegelian terms, the process of the transmutation of base metals into gold is representative of the journey of spirit from a finite to an absolute nature.¹⁵⁴ In the 'phenomenological crucible', spirit is to be 'separated from its impurities and, literally, perfected'.¹⁵⁵ In short, Hegel finds Böhme's use of alchemical imagery significant because, though it ought not to be taken literally, as Böhme himself admits, it 'should not be overlooked [...] that in essence it contains and expresses the determinations of the concept'.¹⁵⁶

To move now to Hegel's familiarity with Böhme directly, it becomes clear, not only through historical speculation but also through the content of his own writings, that Hegel was familiar with both the work and the theosophical ideas of Jakob Böhme directly. Hegel's affinity with the work of Böhme is demonstrated by his 'abortive courtship' of the philosopher known as the *Böhmius redivivus* of his day,

¹⁵² *PN*, § 280

¹⁵³ Magee, p. 211.

¹⁵⁴ See Chapter Two of this thesis.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *PN*, § 316.

Franz von Baader (1765–1841). Baader thought that much of his remit as a philosopher was to revive an interest in Böhme, and came to be considered Böhme's 'principal interpreter' of the period.¹⁵⁷ Hegel had read much of Baader's work,¹⁵⁸ and, 'despite their apparent differences, Hegel sought to persuade both the public and von Baader himself that their positions were reconcilable'.¹⁵⁹ In the preface to the *Encyclopedia*, Hegel makes particular reference to Baader's *Fermenta Cognitionis* (1824), declaring that

What is most sublime, most profound, and most inward has been called forth into the light of day in the religions, philosophies, and works of art, in more or less pure, in clearer or more obscure shapes, often in very repulsive ones. We can count it as a particular merit of Franz von Baader that he not only goes on bringing such forms to our recollection, but also with a profoundly speculative spirit he brings their basic import expressly into scientific honour because on that basis he expounds and confirms the philosophical idea.¹⁶⁰

I am certainly delighted to learn that Herr von Baader agrees with many of my propositions — as is evident both from the content of several of his more recent writings and from his references to me by name. About most of what he contests — and even quite easily about everything — it would not be difficult for me to come to an understanding with him, that is to say, to show that there is, in fact, no departure

¹⁵⁷ Magee, p. 47. See von Baader's comment to this effect, that: 'If I here call our "Philosophus Teutonicus" the former of religious philosophy I do it in anticipation of a not too distant future, and I wish to emphasise that the writings and principles of Jakob Böhme will be of excellent service in that purely philosophical reform. I would like to convince at least a few competent minds that, from what is becoming more precise in the contemporary idealist movement of German philosophy, it will no longer be possible for any but the ignorant to ignore his writings'. Franz von Baader, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by Franz Hoffman et al, 16 vols (Leipzig: Bethmann, 1851–1855), II, p. 199. Quoted in Ernst Benz, *Les sources mystiques du romantisme allemand* (Paris: Vrin, 1968), p. 29. See also Antoine Faivre, 'La critique Boehmienne de Franz von Baader', [paper present at] Colloque Boehme, Paris, 1978, in *Jacob Boehme: ou, L'obscur lumière de la connaissance mystique: hommage à Jacob Boehme dans le cadre du Centre d'études et de recherches interdisciplinaires de Chantilly* (Paris: Vrin, 1979), pp. 135–154.

¹⁵⁸ *Letters*, p. 572; Hoffmeister, #699.

¹⁵⁹ *Letters*, editorial comment, p. 570.

¹⁶⁰ *EL*, p. 15.

from his views in it [the *Encyclopedia*].¹⁶¹

Despite being on the margins of the philosophical scene, Baader, who could have made good use professionally of a friendship with Hegel, did not agree with this assessment of the similarities between their work. Writing in an 1824 letter, Baader, on the contrary, considered Hegel's ontological system to be a 'philosophy of dust'.¹⁶²

It would not be appropriate here to enter into too much detail regarding Hegel's response to Böhme's philosophy, for that will be explored in the succeeding chapters of this thesis. What will suffice here is to give a general outline of Hegel's attitude towards Böhme's speculative thought. It is largely in his later works that Hegel indicates his inspiration and full debt to Böhme directly, devoting an entire section to him (taking up twenty-eight pages) in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* — far more space than is devoted to Locke, Hobbes, Hume, Rousseau, and Jacobi.¹⁶³ For Hegel, Böhme was not a 'long-forgotten [...] pious visionary', deserving of the 'disdain accorded to him', but the *philosophus teutonicus* who possessed a 'deep, concrete heart' and a notable 'profundity of mind'.¹⁶⁴ In a letter addressed to a friend, Hegel writes,

Böhme's theosophy always seems to me one of the most notable attempts, on the part of a profound yet uncultivated man, to grasp the inmost nature of absolute existence. For Germany he possesses the peculiar interest of being the first really German philosopher. Considering the capabilities of his time and the small degree of training

¹⁶¹ Ibid.; *Werke*, VIII, p. 29.

¹⁶² Quoted in *Letters*, p. 571.

¹⁶³ Magee, p. 49.

¹⁶⁴ *LHP*, I, B.

he possessed in abstract thought, he makes the supremest effort to bring the deep speculative element which rested in his imagination into the form of the conception, and so to work upon the ordinary conception as to allow the speculative element to be therein expressed.¹⁶⁵

Hegel judges, nevertheless, some elements of Böhme's philosophy to be inadequate for his own uses, in particular the lack of order in his work, his odd cabbalistic system of biblical hermeneutics,¹⁶⁶ and his use of imagistic modes of expression. Hegel complains that Böhme never attains complete 'clearness or order' in his work, there being 'no systematic connection but the greatest confusions in his divisions'. Böhme's 'great mind is confined in the hard knotty oak of the senses — in the gnarled concretion of ordinary conception — and is not able to arrive at a free presentation of the idea'.¹⁶⁷ Where Böhme's revelatory visions are concerned, Hegel is also highly critical. In trademark fashion, Hegel condemns the seemingly arbitrary kind of knowledge provided by mystical experience, and questions why God should choose to manifest himself in one way to one person, and another way to another.¹⁶⁸ It is of importance, nevertheless, to note the division Hegel makes between two kinds of mysticism. The first, taking the premise that mysticism provides a form of knowledge beyond general human understanding, Hegel concludes as false, tantamount to superstition, and 'transient'.¹⁶⁹ The second division, that mysticism *points* towards

¹⁶⁵ The letter was to his friend Van Ghert of Amsterdam, thanking him for an edition of Böhme's works. Quoted in Elizabeth S. Haldane, 'Jakob Böhme and his Relation to Hegel', in *The Philosophical Review*, 6 (1897), 146–161 (p. 146).

¹⁶⁶ See Chapter Three of this thesis.

¹⁶⁷ *LHP*, III, p. 195; *Werke*, XX, p. 98.

¹⁶⁸ Haldane, p. 148.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

something beyond the understanding, indicating a higher, speculative truth beyond, Hegel is far more sympathetic. If Böhme is taken to be a mystic of the second variety, then perhaps the content of his visions are closer to Hegel's own speculative philosophy than to base 'superstition'. Where his 'rude method of presentation' is concerned, Hegel characterises Böhme as 'a complete barbarian'. Hegel's criticism of Böhme's use of alchemical *argot*, and his talk of 'qualities, spirits, and angels' which makes 'one's head swim',¹⁷⁰ might be considered somewhat rich as Hegel may be judged just as guilty of similar offences. It has been often commented that Böhme's theosophical writings appeal primarily to those who wish to escape the philosophical contradictions and *cul-de-sacs* they cannot appear to overcome. What is, perhaps, more true is that Böhme most appeals to those who 'possess a strong, firm grasp of life' and 'accord to reason the place of paramount importance'.¹⁷¹ As such, Hegel is able to move beyond the representative manner in which Böhme expresses himself, and notes that the content of his philosophy is quite insightful. Concepts such as 'the generating of light as the Son of God from qualities, through the most living dialectic' and 'God's diremption of Himself' are singled out by Hegel as the most profound.¹⁷² In short, this dissonance that Hegel finds between the way Böhme portrays his work's philosophical content and the content itself is best described in his parting words to Böhme's chapter in his philosophy of history lectures. Here, Hegel remarks,

¹⁷⁰ *LHP*, I, B.

¹⁷¹ Haldane, pp. 147–148.

¹⁷² *LHP*, I, B. See Chapter Two of this thesis.

Barbarianism in the working out of his [Böhme's] system can no more fail to be recognized than can the great depths into which he has plunged by the union of the most absolute opposites. Böhme grasps the opposites in the crudest, harshest way, but he does not allow himself through their unworkableness [sic] to be prevented from asserting the unity. This rude and barbarous depth which is devoid of notion, is always a present, something which speaks from itself, which has and knows everything in itself. [To mention] Böhme's piety, the element of edification, the way in which the soul is guided in his writings. This is in the highest degree deep and inward, and if one is familiar with his form these depths and this inwardness will be found. But it is a form with which we cannot reconcile ourselves, and which permits no definite conception of the details, although we cannot fail to see the profound craving for speculation which existed within this man.¹⁷³

SECTION THREE

THE RETURN TO THE REFORMATION

The third and final stage of Böhme and Hegel's shared philosophical development consists of a return, of sorts, to the Reformation. For both, the content of their period of dalliance with the language of heterodoxy was found to be critically lacking in any real substance. The eternal truths of Christianity which they sought to express still had not, they surmised, found their proper medium. In this way, both found themselves returning to the values first promoted by the Reformation. The return for both, nevertheless, is by no means wholesale. Böhme remains, and is perhaps even more, disparaging of the kind of renovation of the Christian religion as inaugurated by Luther. Therefore, the momentum of Böhme's final period of intellectual development finds itself aligning with another side of the Protestant Reformation; towards the 'spiritual reformers' of the so-called 'middle-way', the language of whom

¹⁷³ Ibid.

lay far beyond the pale of Luther's unpleasant mixture of dry scholasticism and bitter invective. In this way Hegel's mature period mirrors Böhme's, for he too wishes to return to the Reformation, but not, indeed, to Luther. Hegel's developmental homecoming is not, however, a perfect imitation of Böhme's: it does not constitute a return to the old, rather, rendered in Hegelian terms, a 'return to the more'. This new departure consists in a radical reassessment of the expression of the truths of the Christian religion, the result of which, Hegel will come to find, ends in the liberation of the content of religion from representation altogether.

§ 3. 1. *Böhme's Return to the Reformation*

In March of 1624, Böhme ran foul of Richter once again when Franckenberg had some of Böhme's works surreptitiously printed. The reaction provoked from Richter was of a stronger variety than before: Böhme was cursed and damned from the pulpit, and a mob was incited to break the windows of Böhme's home. A three-part pasquinade was published against him, the *Judicium Gregorii Richteri*, and, once again, Böhme was dragged before the Görlitz town council. This time, however, Böhme did not immediately cavil to council's wishes, but presented a detailed written defence against the criticisms he had received. Böhme's efforts were in vain, however, and he was asked to leave the town. Böhme did so, leaving for Dresden on the ninth of May of the year.

The text which led to Böhme's expulsion was *The Way to Christ*, a 1624

compilation of devotional tracts, and which represents the summit of Böhme's resurgence of the values of the Reformation.¹⁷⁴ This selection of tracts, written in the tradition of the German mystics, proclaimed a new kind of focus for the philosophy of religion. No longer should the annihilation of the self, as in the tradition of the Dionysians and the Neo-Platonists, be sought after; nor the atonement for sin and the focus on the hereafter, as in the tradition of the Medieval mystics; rather the end philosophical pursuit was to be the perfect harmony of the individual to the divine order, of the soul to God-in-nature.¹⁷⁵

Two impulses dominated this period: on the one hand, the rejection of the language of alchemy and its Gnostic approach to epistemology, and, on the other hand, a renewed interest in the language of the Reformation. This interest in Christian expression, which earlier, through Moller, had been merely an unconsciousness and almost passing acquaintance, was informed by a now serious and committed fluency with the work of the mainstays of German mysticism: the *Fourth Book of Ezra*;¹⁷⁶ Siebmacher's *Der Wasserstein der Weisen*;¹⁷⁷ (the pseudo) Weigel's *Gnothi Seauton*;¹⁷⁸ and the works of Caspar Schwenkfeld,¹⁷⁹ Johann Sebastian Franck, Hans

¹⁷⁴ *The Way to Christ* is composed of six tracts or monographs, viz.: 'Of Illumination'; 'Of True Repentance'; 'Of True Resignation'; 'Of Regeneration'; 'A Short Compendium of Repentance', and; 'The Supersensual Life'.

¹⁷⁵ Isaak August Dorner, *History of Protestant Theology*, trans. by George Robson and Sophia Taylor, 2 vols (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1871), II, p. 178; Stoudt, p. 150.

¹⁷⁶ Jakob Böhme, *Of the Last Times: Two Epistles to Paul Keym* [hereafter *Letzte Zeit*], trans. by John Sparrow (London: Printed for M. Simmons, 1649) I, 27.

¹⁷⁷ *Epistles*, 18. 14.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 9. 14.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Peuckert, Böhme, p. 69.

Weyrauch, Weigel,¹⁸⁰ and Tauler.¹⁸¹ It is, perhaps, interesting to note that Böhme's movement from the alchemical to the Protestant-mystical mimics the movement of the birth of Protestant mysticism itself, a delta into which the rivers of Hermeticism and Paracelsian alchemy, on the one hand, and the *Theologica Germanica*, Luther, and the Swabian Spiritual Reformers, on the other, flow.¹⁸² Böhme's writings of this period are so similar to those of the Protestant mystics that even some instances of outright plagiarism have been suggested.¹⁸³ What is most interesting about Böhme's creative output of this period, however, is that it demonstrates an unconscious, schizoid element in Böhme's psyche towards the Reformation. On the one hand, Böhme now has nothing but praise for Luther, regarding him as the hero, if not the saviour, of Germany. Böhme's writing during this period are stocked with borrowings from Luther. His childhood catechesis is recalled; Luther's '*wir sollen Gott lieben und fürchten*' from the *Smaller Catechism* is recurrent. In *Busse and Gebet*, the formula of '*Ich armer unwürdiger, sündiger Mensch*' is repeated; baptism is referred to as a *Bund*; and, in the *Apology to Gregor Richter*, Lutheran hymns are quoted.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰ *Epistles*, 12. 51ff.

¹⁸¹ Stoudt, p. 157, n. 1.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 147. See Jones, *passim*. See also Carl. G. Jung, *Paracelsica: Zwei Vorlesungen über den Arzt und Philosophen Theophrastus* (Zürich: Rascher, 1942).

¹⁸³ For instance, the parallel between Schwenkfeld's *Von dem dreyerley Leben des Menschen* and Böhme's *Von dem Dreyfachen Leben des Menschen*. There are also other striking parallels of Böhme's work during this period with Schwenkfeld's corpus, namely: *Caspar Schwenkfeld's Schriften, Der Erste Theil der Christlichen Orthodoxischen Bücher und Schriften* ([n.p.]: 1564); *Epistolar I* (1566); *Epistolar, Ander Theil* (1570); and *Das 2. Buch des andern Theils des Epistola* (1570).

¹⁸⁴ See Jakob Böhme, 'Of Holy Baptism [hereafter *Taufe*]', in *Of Christ's Testaments* (London: Printed by M. Simmons, 1652), 1. 4, 4. 15; *An Apology in Answer to Gregorius Richter* [hereafter *Apol. Richt.*], trans. by John Sparrow (London: Printed by M. Simmons, 1665), 57; *Aurora*, 14. 133. Cf. Stoudt, p. 148.

Luther's fundamental dialectical distinctions (love and wrath, law and Gospel) are recalled, as are the familiar Lutheran themes of man as the master of the natural world, freedom of the will, and voluntarism.¹⁸⁵ Luther is now thought of as a great hero; a bulwark against the corruption of the material world, typified by the Roman Church. Luther is 'the great prince Michael' who 'came and fought for the holy people, and overcame [...] But the Prince of darkness, perceiving that his merchant [the Pope] had a fall, and that his deceit was discovered, raised a tempest from the north [...] and the merchant of the south made assault upon him.'¹⁸⁶

On the other hand, beyond such servile fawning over the Wittenberg Reformer, there is a distinctly un-Lutheran current which pervades the work of Böhme throughout this period. Böhme's philosophy continued to differ strikingly from that of sixteenth century Protestant orthodoxy. Primarily, while Luther was 'a purer *homo religiosus* tied to the piety of the old church and the Middle ages', Böhme's work captured the spirit of the prevailing *Zeitgeist*, 'belonging to a new time in which the church had been pushed to the background'.¹⁸⁷ Böhme began to see Luther as part of a more and more antique crypto-mystical tradition, one in which a resounding 'no' is roared against any and all visionary content, except that if it comes by way of Tauler, the mystical content from whom much of Luther's own work was

¹⁸⁵ Stoudt, p. 149. See Erich Seeberg, *Christus Wirklichkeit und Urbild* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1937), passim.

¹⁸⁶ *Aurora*, preface.

¹⁸⁷ Arlene A. Miller, 'The Theologies of Luther and Boehme in the Light of their *Genesis Commentaries*', *The Harvard Theological Review*, 63 (1970), 261–303 (p. 261, n. 1). Cf. Felix Voight, 'Das Böhmebild des Gegenwart. Ein kritischer Überblick über die neueste Böhmeliteratur', *Neues Lausitzisches Magazin*, 102 (1926), 252–312.

based.¹⁸⁸ It is exactly over the question of mysticism where Luther and Böhme diverge. Where there was undoubtedly a place for spiritual experience within Protestant scholasticism, Luther's treatment of such is almost entirely a reaction against the mediaeval Catholic mystics. His criticism was not as much against the content of mystical experience, but its mode of expression, its *language*.¹⁸⁹ Although Luther might have employed certain mediaeval terms such as *exstasis* and *excessus*, finding them useful in of his own conception of the *unio mystica*, he was always careful to distinguish 'his meaning from that of his predecessors'.¹⁹⁰ Böhme too denounced classical mysticism's 'ascending gothic', wanting nothing to with a representation of gnosis, of 'ladders, pilgrimages, levels, stages, degrees, [and] hierarchies', which implied that knowledge of God was something to which had to be ascended.¹⁹¹ The Socratic, Platonic, and Pseudo-Dionysian idea of mystical experience as the transcending of temporal and evil, that ecstasy is obtained 'by denying or removing all things that are [...] impediments to the latent image',¹⁹² did not gel with the message Protestant Orthodoxy. For both Luther and Böhme, the *unio mystica* is conceived of as being brought about through the personal merit of the man, and not the imputation of grace from God.¹⁹³ Mystical union is insisted upon as a right, as a possibility occurring from the genesis of mankind, revealed both through

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. Cf. Walter Nigg's *Heimliche Weisheit* (Zürich and Stuttgart: [n. pub.], 1959), *passim*.

¹⁸⁹ Peter Erb, 'Introduction', in *The Way to Christ*, trans. and introduction by Peter Erb (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), p. 13.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Stoudt, p. 300.

¹⁹² Dionysius the Areopagite, *The Mystical Theology and the Divine Names*, trans. by C. E. Rolt (London: Dover Publications, 2004), pp. 194–195

¹⁹³ Erb, p. 14.

scripture and in the hearts of the created.¹⁹⁴

Another instance in which Böhme and Luther's views begin to diverge is on the matter of scriptural interpretation. Following the tradition of the Alexandrian Fathers, Böhme endorses an almost entirely allegorical reading of the mystical content of scripture. For Böhme, scripture is 'a secret to be revealed, a hieroglyph to be decoded, just as lying behind the visible surface of reality is an invisible depth'.¹⁹⁵ This comes in stark contrast to Luther's quasi-Augustinian view of the use of allegory, which promotes a complete rejection of its use in the exegesis of any biblical text.¹⁹⁶ Luther's rationale is that if one finds oneself obliged to interpret scripture in any way other than literally, the implication is that God's Word is unclear. The Alexandrian mode of exegesis Böhme came to promote is explicitly denounced by Luther, as 'the bare allegories, which stand in no relation to the account and do not illuminate it, should simply be disapproved of as empty dreams. This is the kind which Origen and those which follow him employ'.¹⁹⁷ After a fashion, Hegel will come to recollect Böhme's criticism of the accepted method of scriptural interpretation: where Böhme sees the literal meaning as something which should be

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁹⁵ O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, p. 87.

¹⁹⁶ It was Augustine's view that allegory should be used only when the content of scripture was itself obscure. *Augustine: De Doctrina Christiana*, ed. and trans. by R. P. H. Green (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), III, 1. 1. Luther goes one step further, castigating Augustine's view on this matter, and rejecting outright the use of allegorical as mode of interpretation. See Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, ed. by Jaroslav Pelikan and H. Lehman, 55 vols (St. Louis: Fortress and Concordia, 1957-1975) I, pp. 4, 7, 69. See also *Luther the Expositor: Introduction to the Reformer's Exegetical Writings* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), pp. 28, 89. For an account of Augustine's influence on Luther's treatment of scriptural allegory see James Samuel Preus, *From Shadow to Promise: Old Testament Interpretation from Augustine to the Young Luther* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969).

¹⁹⁷ *Luther's Works*, I, p. 233.

read as allegorical, pointing towards a higher meaning beyond the text, Hegel sees allegory as something to be transcended, indicative of a greater, speculative truth which could not be encapsulated by the biblical authors. Both philosophers follow Paul's injunction that he 'who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of letter, but of Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life'.¹⁹⁸ For Böhme, the most striking theological concept which runs pervasively throughout his work is that of 'eternal generation'. Whereas Protestant orthodoxy would characterise God as a transcendent being distinct from creation, Böhme states that he is a constant divine process manifestation, revealing and being revealed throughout history.¹⁹⁹ This characterisation of God proceeds from the divine desire for self-manifestation — God's will to 'reveal himself to himself' — which would be 'psychologically impossible unless an other stands opposite to him'.²⁰⁰ As Böhme himself writes, 'No thing can be revealed to itself without opposition [*Wiederwärtigkeit*]: For if there is nothing that opposes it, then it always goes out of itself and never returns into itself, as into that from which it originated, then it knows nothing of its origin'.²⁰¹

A third kind of divergence from the Lutheran current takes the form of a closeted appreciation of the work of another current, or the 'middle way', of the Reformation, with the work of Caspar Schwenkfeld. One cannot suggest, it has been argued, that this renewed interest in Schwenkfeld was purely a renewed appreciation

¹⁹⁸ II Corinthians 3. 6.

¹⁹⁹ Magee, p. 38. See Chapter Two of this thesis.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Jakob Böhme, 'Vom Götter Beschaulichkeit', in *Sämtliche Schriften* [hereafter *Schriften*], ed. by Will-Erich Peuckert, 11 vols (Stuttgart: Frommann, 1955–61), IV, 1. 8.

stemming from Böhme's period of spiritual of direction under Moller, for any mention of Schwenkfeld in the *Aurora* was only unconscious or implicit, rather it must be the result of some new, direct acquaintance with the theologian's work. It is of some importance to be able to trace where the Schwenkfeldian influence came from, as it was, for a large part, from the Schwenkfeldians that, after Böhme's death, his intellectual legacy was passed down, eventually reaching Hegel.²⁰² It has been suggested that Böhme came to Schwenkfeld by way of his patron, Carl von Ender,²⁰³ or perhaps through his own disciple and biographer von Frankenberg.²⁰⁴ Stoudt suggests that it was perhaps through men such as Abraham von Sommerfeld, Hans Sigmund von Schweinichen, David von Schweidnitz, and Hans Dietrich von Tschesch, all crypto-Schwenkfeldians with whom Böhme had had some contact.

Caspar (or Kaspar) Schwen(c)kfeld von Ossig (1489 or 1490–1561) represents an entirely different current of the Reformation, a 'gentle Reformer' after the fashion of the Catholic Francis of Assisi, opposed to vituperative and irascible Luther. A Silesian noble who heard the clarion call of the Wittenberg Reformer, Schwenkfeld was inspired to leave his life in the imperial court, and join in Luther's fight against the established Church. Schwenkfeld, however, soon fell out of Luther's good graces, as he felt that the kind of Christianity Luther espoused was becoming too dry and

²⁰² See Johann Gichtel, *Theosopia Practica* (Amsterdam: [n. pub.], 1722).

²⁰³ Peuckert, *Bohme*, p. 73. For the details of the relationship between Böhme and von Ender, see Erasmus Francisci, *Gegenstrahl der Morgenröthe, Christlicher und Schriftmässiger Wahrheit, wider dass sterngleissende Irrlicht der Absonderung von den Kirchen* (Nuremberg: [n. pub.], 1685).

²⁰⁴ Peuckert, *Rosenkreutzer*, pp. 244–255.

scholastic — ‘too dependent on externals’.²⁰⁵ The break was an acrimonious one: Luther, throughout his table-talk, refers to Schwenkfeld by the uninspired pun of ‘Stenkfeld’, and frequently has cause to make vitriolic comments about his character and work, such as, for instance, ‘The stupid fool, possessed by the devil understands nothing. He does not know what he is babbling. But if he won’t stop his drivel, let him at least not bother me with the booklets which the devil spews out of him’.²⁰⁶ Luther’s tirades against Schwenkfeld even reached ears beyond the Continent — in a 1551 tract, described as a ‘preservative or treacle against the poison of Pelagius’, by the English writer William Turner, the ‘Swengfeldianes’ are referred to as one of the heads of ‘this monster in many points like unto the water-snake with seven heads’.²⁰⁷ The causes of the split between Luther and Schwenkfeld are, on the whole, of a too manifold and theological nature to treat here, but one point arises in the doctrinal split which Böhme developed a high degree of sympathy with, that of ecumenism. For Schwenkfeld, the ‘inward grasp’ of Christ must be recovered in the hearts of the believers, the ‘inward, living kernel of Christ’s Gospel’.²⁰⁸ Christianity, as a religion, must move beyond ‘the alphabetical promises of salvation’, and towards a ‘radical transformation of personal and social life’, so that the church ‘may be reformed in

²⁰⁵ Jones, p. 77. Detailed accounts of Schwenkfeld’s theology can be found in Paul L. Maier, *Caspar Schwenkfeld on the Person and Work of Christ* (Assen, the Netherlands: Royal van Gorcum, 1959); and Richard H. Grützmaier, *Wort und Geist: eine historische und dogmatische Untersuchung zum Gnadenmittel des Wortes* (Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1902), pp. 158–173.

²⁰⁶ Gottfried Arnold, *Unpartheiische Kirchen-und-Ketzer-Historien, vom Anfang des Neuen Testaments biss auf das Jahr Christi 1688* (Frankfurt: [n. pub.], 1699–1700; repr. Schafhausen, 1740–1742), II, p. 251.

²⁰⁷ William Turner, *A Preservative or Treacle against the Poyson of Pelagius, etc.* ([n.p]: [n. pub.], 1551), A, III.

²⁰⁸ Jones, pp. 66–67.

Christ, edified in the Holy Ghost, and unified into one'.²⁰⁹ For Schwenkfeld,

the true Church community [should] be identified with no temporal, empirical organisation — whether established or separatist. It is a spiritual invisible community as wide as the world, including all persons in all regions of the earth and in all religious communions who are joined in life and spirit to the divine head. It expands and is enlarged by a process of organic growth under the organising direction of the Holy Spirit.²¹⁰

This universalising spirit of ecumenism found fertile ground in Böhme's psyche. A subject of persecution by the established Church throughout his career, Böhme betrayed the little love he had for it in many of his later texts. 'The mere belief in the historical Christ', Böhme writes, no longer sufficiently 'constitutes a Christian'.²¹¹ In his opinion, the modern Church is but 'a building of stone', a 'bazaar' wherein the 'goddess of vanity' is served and 'the Israelites dance about the golden calf', one of the many 'constructed fetishes whom they call God'.²¹² Christianity has 'turned into mere sects and orders, where one sect despises and brands another as unrighteous'. Its theologians 'wrangle and contend about the church, yet none will take care of the poor, forsaken mother of Christ' — they are 'mad wolves and lions [...] foxes and hares,' who continually 'contend, wrangle, grin, and bite one another for the letter'.²¹³ In short, the Christian religion has become 'a mere murdering den': self-seeking,

²⁰⁹ Caspar Schwenkfeld, *Schriften von Kaspar Schwenckfeld*, 4 vols ([n. p.]: [n. pub.], 1564–1570), II., p. 785.

²¹⁰ Jones, pp. 78–79.

²¹¹ Quoted in Hartmann, *Boehme*, p. 5.

²¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 7–9.

²¹³ *Sig. Rer.*, 11. 61ff.

corrupt, and 'full of blasphemies about Christ's person'.²¹⁴

In the stone-houses of the churches, cathedrals, and cloisters [...] they do counterfeit somewhat of Christ, seeing that they there read the writings which the Apostles left behind in them; but afterwards in their preaching [...] they foist in the kingdom of nature, with brawling and disputing; and spend their time with disputing, confuting, and contending about sects (and different mental idols and opinions), is so much that one party is brought wholly to condemn the other, and the ears (and hearts) of the hearers are so infected with gall and bitterness that one sect wilfully opposes another, and cries it down for devilish; whence nothing but wars and disdainful provocations do arise, to the desolation of countries and cities.²¹⁵

Böhme acknowledges the Reformation's own attempts at revivifying the spirit of Christianity, but likens the attempt to trying to 'transform a whore into a virgin'. The only thing Luther and the Reformation accomplished was a 'whoredom [which] has only been ornamented and increased'.²¹⁶ 'If this whore is to perish,' Böhme writes, the Schwenkfeldian 'inward grasp' or 'inner spirit' has to be recovered. Then, and only then, will 'the sects [...] perish, together with the animal whereupon she rides, for they are all only images of the whore'.²¹⁷ For the Christian religion to end this 'fetish-worship' and 're-enter the promised land', it must embrace the spirit of universality and non-sectarianism. It must no longer be the external 'church of Abel', but embrace the spirit of the invisible 'church of Cain'.²¹⁸ This spirit of universality is, for Böhme, the enduring presence of God, post fall, for as 'the true Christian does

²¹⁴ *Myst. Mag.*, 40. 94.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 40. 98.

²¹⁶ For some of Luther's own thoughts on Reformation ecumenism, cf. *Martin Luthers sämtliche Werke*, Erlangen edn, ed. by Johann Georg Plochmann, 67 vols (Erlangen: Heyder, 1826–1886), xxii, p. 20.

²¹⁷ *Myst. Mag.*, 36. 69.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 26. 25. See also chapters 27 and 28.

not belong to any particular sect', it is through this universal spirit that human beings should recognise that they have 'a single order to which they belong'.²¹⁹

It is very deplorable to see the world revile and storm, blaspheme and denounce, whenever the gifts of God manifest themselves in mankind in different ways, and if they have not all the same quality of knowledge, what can a man take if it is not generated within him? This [the quality of his understanding] is not a matter of his choice, but as his heaven [his mental constitution] is, so will God become revealed to him.²²⁰

We have all only one single order to which we belong, and the only rule of that order is to do the will of God, that is to say, to keep still and serve as instruments through which God may do his will. Whatever God sows and makes manifest in us, we give it back to him and his own fruit. The kingdom of heaven is not based upon our opinions and authorised beliefs, but roots in its own divine power. Our main object ought to be to have the divine power within ourselves. If we possess that, all scientific pursuit will be a mere play of the intellectual faculties with which to amuse ourselves; for the true science is the revelation of wisdom of God within our own mind. God manifests his wisdom through his children as the earth manifests her powers through the production of various flowers and fruits. Therefore let each one be glad of his own gifts and enjoy those of the others. Why should all be alike? Who condemns the birds of the forest because they do not all sing the same tune; but each praises its creator in its own way? Nevertheless, the power which enables them to sing originates in all from only one source.²²¹

A belief, therefore, 'merely in the *historical* Christ', does not, for Böhme, sufficiently 'constitute a *Christian*'.²²² The teachings of Christ are intended to

have no other object than to show us the way how we may re-ascend from a state of variety and differentiation to our original unity; and he who teaches otherwise teaches an error. All the doctrines which have been hung around this fundamental doctrine, and which do not conform with the latter, are merely the products of worldly foolishness, thinking itself wise; they are merely useless ornaments which will create

²¹⁹ Quoted in Hartmann, *Boehme*, p. 9.

²²⁰ *Epistles*, 1. 14.

²²¹ Quoted in Hartmann, *Boehme*, p. 9.

²²² *Ibid.*, p. 5. Emphasis mine.

errors, and are calculated to throw dust in the eyes of the ignorant.²²³

This final period in Böhme's intellectual development came to a close in November of 1624, when, due to the final stages of malarial infection, Böhme died under the ecclesiastical administrations of Richter's successor. His parting words of '*manibus complicatis, oculis elevatis*' reveal the heart of his philosophy, for, although he was led upon an expressive journey through the languages of the German mystics, the Hermeticists and Paracelsians, and return to the language of the Reformation, the kernel of his thought remained perennial. Although there was found to be a dialectical disharmony between the language and symbolism of mysticism, Hermeticism, and Protestant orthodoxy, the content which each sought to express was not so discordant at all. A final irony, however, here becomes apparent, for although Böhme had attempted to whittle away the husks of the seed of this perennial philosophy, and render it as clear and apparent, he had succeeded only in still shrouding it in the figurative, the symbolic, and, in Hegelian terms, the representational. What was once the mystical, the Hermetical, and the Reformational was now the Böhmean. In other words, as David Walsh succinctly notes, 'the transmitter of the new symbolism to the modern world was [now] Jakob Böhme'.²²⁴

This new symbolism would find its way to Hegel through a lengthy and circuitous course, through a long line of the 'Teutonic Philosopher's' students,

²²³ Ibid., pp. 7–8.

²²⁴ David Walsh, 'A Mythology of Reason: The Persistence of Pseudo-Science in the Modern World', in *Science, Pseudo-Science and Utopianism in Early Modern Thought*, ed. by Stephen A. McKnight (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), pp. 141–166 (p. 151).

sympathisers, and critics. Böhme's philosophy never gained much appreciation in Germany before the Enlightenment, but his writings were preserved. Firstly, by his own disciples von Franckenberg (1593–1652) and Johann Theodor von Tschsch (1595–1649), eventually becoming a contributing influence on the Silesian poets of the seventeenth century, such as Quirinus Kuhlmann (1651–1689). Böhmeanism (or 'Behmenism' as it came to be known) found more fertile ground in England, after his works were translated and published by John Sparrow (1615–1665). Böhme's English disciples during the period were composed firstly of the Philadelphian Society of John Pordage (1607–1681) and Jane Leade (1623–1704), and secondly seventeenth century visionaries such as John Milton (1608–1674), Isaac Newton (1642–1727),²²⁵ and William Blake (1757–1827).²²⁶ Hegel's introduction to Böhme's writings was through, on the one hand, and as stated, Württemberg Hermeticism and, on the other, the Pietist movement. Böhme's thought began to have an impact on German

²²⁵ Erb, p. 1. O'Regan comments (*Gnostic Apocalypse*, p. 227, n. 4) that there is some debate as to the extent of Böhme's influence on Newton. Karl R. Popp, in *Jakob Böhme und Isaac Newton* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1935) and Kurt Poppe, in 'Über den Ursprung der Gravitationslehre J. Bohmes, H. More, I. Newton', *Die Drei*, 23 (1964), 313–340, argue the case for a strong Böhmean influence on Newton. Stephen Hobhouse, however, argues against this interpretation, in *Selected Mystical Writings of William Law: Edited with Notes and Twenty Four Studies in the Mystical Theology of William Law and Jacob Boehme and an Inquiry into the Influence of Jacob Boehme on Isaac Newton*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper, 1948).

²²⁶ For Böhme's influence both on Blake and on eighteenth-century mystical and romantic circles, see: Nils Thune, *The Behmenists and the Philadelphians: A Contribution to the Study of English Mysticism in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells, 1948); Desiree Hirst, *Hidden Riches: Traditional Symbolism from the Renaissance to Blake* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1964); Jacques Roos, *Les aspects littéraires du mysticisme philosophique et l'influence de Böhme et de Swedenborg au début du romantisme: William Blake, Novalis, Ballanche* (Strasbourg: Heitz, 1951); Bryan Aubrey, *Watchmen from Eternity: Blake's Debt to Jacob Boehme* (Lanham: M. D.: University Press of America, 1986); and Phillip Clayton Richards, 'Visionary Mysticism: A Study of Visionary Mystical Experience as it Informs the Work of Jacob Boehme and William Blake and its Importance for the Philosophy of Religion' (Ph.D. diss., Claremont Graduate School, 1987).

Hermeticism after being translated into French by Louis Claude de St. Martin (1743–1803), and gaining ground amongst German lodges, after which ‘in the German secret societies [Böhme’s ideas] had never been forgotten’.²²⁷ It was through such societies that Böhme’s thought exerted an influence on Hegel’s contemporaries, most notably Franz von Baader (1765–1841), Hölderlin (1770–1843), and Schelling (1775–1854). The Pietists, who felt Luther’s Reformation did not go far enough in terms of revivifying Christianity, looked to Böhme’s writings for inspiration. Among these were Phillip Jakob Spener (1635–1705), his student Johann Georg Gichtel (1638–1710), the Württemberg biblical scholar Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687–1752), and the radical Pietists Gottfried Arnold (1666–1714) and Friedrich Christoph Oetinger (1702–1782). The Pietist strain, as will be shown in the following section, constitutes one of the main currents of transmission of Böhme’s thought to Hegel’s philosophy.

§ 3. 2. *Hegel the Reformer?*

In his book on Protestant thought, Karl Barth asks the question: ‘Why did Hegel not become for the Protestant world something similar to what Thomas Aquinas was for Roman Catholicism?’²²⁸ Given what has been argued thus far, perhaps a better question would be to ask ‘Was Hegel even Protestant?’ The answer to this question is

²²⁷ Heinrich Schneider, p. 81. See also Arthur Waite, *The Unknown Philosopher: The Life of Louis Claude de Saint Martin and the Substance of his Transcendental Doctrine* (New York: Rudolph Steiner Publications, 1970).

²²⁸ Karl Barth, *Protestant Thought: From Rousseau to Ritschl*, trans. by Brian Cozens and Herbert Hartwell (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), p. 268.

at best ambiguous. If ever Hegel were to be considered as such, it would be during his period in Heidelberg and Berlin, and not Tübingen. At the closing of his Jena period, Hegel finally affirms the Christian religion as the absolute manifest revealed religion,²²⁹ and the Hegel as the ultimate philosopher of religion is found in the *Encyclopedia*. But the question still remains, was Hegel a Lutheran? Charles Taylor answers, 'when Hegel claims to be a Lutheran Christian, one can certainly question whether his position really deserves this description, but not that he truly thought so himself'.²³⁰ Hegel writes in a July 3rd, 1826, letter to Friedrich August Gottreu Tholuck (1799–1877) that 'I am a Lutheran, and through philosophy have been at once completely confirmed in Lutheranism'.²³¹ In an 1829 review of K. F. Göschel's, *Aphorismen über Nichtwissen und absolutes Wissen im Verhältnisse zur christlichen Glaubenserkenntnis*, Hegel is clearly pleased to have his work regarded as a 'Christian philosophy'.²³² In the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, Hegel refers to both himself and the Wittenberg Reformer as 'We Lutherans — I am a Lutheran and will remain the same — have only this original faith'.²³³ In another of the Berlin writings, Hegel praises Luther and Melanchthon for the 'immortal deed' of the Reformation, and, through such 'memorable work', 'they have obtained this priceless

²²⁹ Merold Westphal, 'Hegel and the Reformation', in *History and System: Hegel's Philosophy of History*, ed. by Robert Perkins, pp. 73–92 (p. 74).

²³⁰ Taylor, p. 486. Some commentators, however, such as Walter Kaufmann, do question Hegel's description of himself as a Lutheran. Cf. Walter Kaufmann, *Hegel* (New York: Double-day & Co., 1965), section 65 and passim.

²³¹ *Letters*, p. 520; *Briefe*, #514a.

²³² Cf. *Berliner Schriften, 1818–1831*, ed. by Eva Moldehauer and Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986).

²³³ *LHP*, I, p. 73.

freedom for us all'.²³⁴ In the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, Hegel supposes that, historically, it was 'in the Protestant church the reconciliation of religion with legal right has taken place' — there is no longer 'no sacred, no religious conscience in a state of separation from, or perhaps even hostility to secular right'.²³⁵ While Hegel may praise the instigators of the Protestant churches (referred to as the 'teachers' in the *Positivity*), however, he has little positive to say regarding their present day stewards (the 'officials').²³⁶ In the *Positivity*, Hegel laments that,

Apart from the usual annual readings of the Augsburg Confession in some Protestant churches (readings usually wearisome to every hearer) and apart from the dull sermon which follows these, what is the festival which celebrates the memory of this event [the Reformation]? [...] It looks as if the authorities in church and state were content that the memory of how our forefathers had a sense of this right [to make reforms to religion], how thousands could stake their lives to vindicate it, should slumber in our hearts and not be retained in any living fashion.²³⁷

Hegel argues that as long as the Protestant church remained faithful to the spirit of Christianity, its 'pure ecclesiastical right' then it would be legitimised.²³⁸ However, this is no longer the case, for, as Hegel writes in an argument strongly reminiscent of Böhme's vituperative tirades against the 'wrangling theologians of his own day', Protestantism's

appointed officials [...] have tried to look on themselves and to act as more than mere

²³⁴ Hoffmeister, pp. 31, 33.

²³⁵ *LPH*, p. 476.

²³⁶ *Positivity*, p. 121.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 146–147.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

representatives of their congregation [...] They have tried to regard their authority as more extensive and to hold that the congregations have left it to their judgment to decide among themselves what the church's faith is [...] The Symbolic Books of the Protestant church are so framed and so packed with subtleties that they cannot be regarded as opinions validated through the consent of the whole people but are solely the work of hair-splitting theologians.²³⁹

A further fault Hegel finds with Protestantism is its perpetuation of the idea of class.²⁴⁰ Whether it be temporal or spiritual, secular or religious, Hegel, in this stage of his development, finds the notion of a stratified social hierarchy as the result of positivity.

But when a class — either the ruling class or the priests, or both together — loses that spirit of simplicity which had brought into being and hitherto inspired their laws and ordinances, then not only is it irreparably lost but also the oppression and dishonouring of the people is certain (for this reason, the mere division into classes is already dangerous to freedom since it can foster an *esprit de corps* which can become a threat to the spirit of the whole).²⁴¹

Religious and political class division, then, is something which is inimical to the notion of freedom. Equality was a principle, a 'first law', with the early Christians - 'the slave was the brother of his owner [...]'.²⁴² However, this principle later became something which was not to be realised on earth, but in heaven. Religious rites meant to remind the congregation of equality and humility, such as the washing of the feet and hands on Holy Thursday, is now reduced to a 'comedy', a liturgical act drained of

²³⁹ Ibid., pp. 121–122.

²⁴⁰ Lukács, *The Young Hegel*, p. 47.

²⁴¹ Ibid. p. 48.

²⁴² *Positivity*, p. 88.

the essential oil of sincerity.²⁴³

Pietism has been defined as ‘the public re-emergence of a more or less continuous effort in Germany to achieve a simpler, less dogmatic, and more moralistic Christianity than that to be found in any of the established churches’,²⁴⁴ a resurgence of the spirit of Schwenkfeld which influenced Böhme’s ecumenism. The sources of inspiration and religious concerns of the Pietists came from two quarters: from German mystical tradition of Eckhart, Hildegard, Susso, Tauler, and Joachim which influenced Schwenkfeld;²⁴⁵ and from Jakob Böhme.²⁴⁶ The remit of the movement has been described, in part, as attempting to create a ‘Böhmean “vitalistic philosophy of nature”’.²⁴⁷ The kind of language employed the texts of Pietism were said to be of a Paracelsian-Böhmean variety.²⁴⁸ Pietism, as a movement, was not well regarded by orthodox Protestantism: pastors Johann Jakob Zimmerman of Bietigheim and Ludwig Brunnwuell of Grossbotwar were dismissed from their positions for

²⁴³ Ibid., p. 89.

²⁴⁴ Lewis White Beck, *Early German Philosophy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 157.

²⁴⁵ Magee, p. 63, n. 70.

²⁴⁶ For Böhme’s influence on Pietism in general, see: Emanuel Hirsch, ‘Jacob Böhme und seine Einwirkung auf die Seitenbewegung der pietischen Ziet’, in *Geschichte der neuern evangelischen Theologie*, 5 vols (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1951), II, pp. 208–255; Arlene R. Miller, ‘Jacob Boehme: From Orthodoxy to Enlightenment’ (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1971). For Böhme’s influence on the *primus inter pares* of the Pietism movement, Oetinger, see: Sigrid Grossman, *Friedrich Christoph Oetingers Gottesvorstellung: Versuch einer Analyse seiner Theologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1979), pp. 59–66; Wilhelm Albert Hauck, ‘Oetinger und Jakob Böhme’, in *Das Geheimnis des Lebens: Naturanschauung und Gottesauffassung Friedrich Christoph Oetingers* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1947), pp. 159–179.

²⁴⁷ Beck, p. 159; Magee, p. 63.

²⁴⁸ August Langen, *Der Worschatz des Deutschen Pietismus* (Tubigen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1968), p. 71.

alleged 'Böhmeanism'.²⁴⁹ This dislike of Pietism was no doubt due to the Böhmean strain present in the movement, and, as such, perceived to be a threat to traditional orthodoxy. Both Protestant orthodoxy and its incarnation in the Tübingen *Stift* were intolerant of Pietism, especially the writings of Oetinger, and 'for pastors hoping for a successful career within the Württemberg church, it was politically expedient to espouse conservatism rather than speculative views'.²⁵⁰ Despite this, Pietism spread like a 'patina [...] over almost all of German culture',²⁵¹ even infiltrating the *Stift*. As Schneider argues, 'there can no longer be any doubt, that in the *Stift*, spurred on and enriched by the Enlightenment, the original spirit of the [Swabian] *Heimat* was at work, seeking the Truth only in the Whole'.²⁵² The influence of Pietism on Hegel has been stated, by many commentators, to be one which endured throughout his life. As one commentator has it, 'Hegel's upbringing can only have been "Pietist"'.²⁵³ During his time at gymnasium in Stuttgart, Hegel became familiar with the thought of Johann Albrecht Bengel, one of the fathers of Pietism, though his study of J. W. Jaeger's *Catechism*. Johannes Cocceius, whose thought was also represented in the *Catechism*, was a proponent of the Böhmean (a traditionally Irenean) theodical account, that the Fall initiated a process of gradual movement towards perfection in fulfilment of

²⁴⁹ Magee, p. 63.

²⁵⁰ Priscilla A. Hayden-Roy, 'A Foretaste of Heaven': Friedrich Hölderlin in the Context of Württemberg Pietism (*Amsterdamer Publikationen zur Sprache und Literatur*) ([n. p.]: Rodopi, 1994), p. 69.

²⁵¹ Beck, p. 10.

²⁵² Robert Schneider, p. 56.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

the divine plan.²⁵⁴ The educators at the Tübingen *Stift* with whom Hegel was most sympathetic were markedly Pietistic in their outlook. His own instructor, Gottlob Christian Storr (1746–1805) was a Pietist and champion of Kantian metaphysics (which was popular with the movement).²⁵⁵

In addition to Bengel, J. W. Jaeger was another father of the Pietist movement. Jaeger had been a professor of theology at the *Stift*, and later its chancellor. Jaeger's theology, however, did not fit easily into Protestant orthodoxy, and was considered to be the professor of *Kontroversstheologie* during Tübingen professorship.²⁵⁶ Jaeger's primary theological concerns were with 'practical piety', or *praxis pietatis*, an attempt to reconcile Christian eschatology with ethical activism. Jaeger's notion of practical piety greatly echoes the kind of Christological exemplarism that Böhme espoused in his final period, particularly in the *Way to Christ*. Practical piety became a focus point of Hegel's moral philosophy throughout his career: indeed, in 1786, Hegel trawled through and excerpted much from Christian Wunsch's book on the subject;²⁵⁷ in 1787 he also wrote an essay on the subject;²⁵⁸ and, in his later work, the notions of *Sittlichkeit and Volksreligion* were essentially re-statements of Jaeger's original notion.

The ecumenical spirit of Schwenkfeld and the 'middle-way' of the

²⁵⁴ Magee, p. 70. See Chapter Three

²⁵⁵ See J. P. Mackey, 'Making Room for Belief: The Gospel According to Kant', *The Maynooth Review*, 3 (1977), 20–37.

²⁵⁶ Karl Hermann, *Johann Albrecht Bengel: Der Klosterprätor von Denkendorf* (Stuttgart: Calwer Vereinsbuchhandlung, 1938), pp. 123ff.

²⁵⁷ Harris, *Towards the Sunlight*, pp. 23–26.

²⁵⁸ Johannes Hoffmeister, ed., *Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung* (Stuttgart: Fromann, 1936), pp. 43–48

Reformation lived on through Hegel in statements such as, 'A man counts as a man in virtue of his manhood alone, not because he is a Jew, Catholic, Protestant, German, Italian, etc.',²⁵⁹ and that 'many [...] who worshipped Zeus, or Brahma, or Wotan, will find grace before the judge of the world'.²⁶⁰ This kind of ecumenical, non-sectarian sentiment, reminiscent of Böhme's mature period, is a common element throughout Hegel's later work, and, as such, there is little value in going too much into it here. It is sufficient to summarise, as Peter Hodgson does, that Hegel makes very little of the 'supposed superiority of Lutheranism', and, as such, his own 'philosophical theology' is 'transconfessional'.²⁶¹ What is significant is that an important issue here arises. Thus far it has been seen that Hegel's intellectual development conforms, by and large, to Böhme's. The transition through periods of rejection of orthodoxy, to the symbolism and imagery of Hermeticism, and return to a kind of heterodox Protestantism is a course of intellectual development which Böhme appear to share. Nevertheless, it becomes apparent that Hegel does also stop at Böhme's final juncture, a return to a kind of orthodoxy, rather he moves beyond it. Böhme's heterodox Protestantism still retains the element of the theological, the imagistic, the symbolic, or, in Hegelian terms, the representational. The question should here be raised, then, is it the case that Böhme and Hegel's intellectual concerns seem to be primarily of a religious nature, and, therefore, their proper medium for exposition

²⁵⁹ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans. by Thomas Malcolm Knox (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), remark to par. 209.

²⁶⁰ Nohl, p. 107.

²⁶¹ Peter C. Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology: A Reading on the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 192–193.

should be through the discipline of theology, and not philosophy?

§ 3. 3. 1. *Liberating Religion from Theology*

In response to the question above, one might, as Lukács does, quote Lenin's aphorism that 'Idealism is clerical obscurantism' — that to remain true to the premises of philosophical idealism, one cannot 'evade the claims of religion'.²⁶² It is, in fact, the view of a considerable number of Hegel's commentators that 'religion and theology are the central axis around which the whole Hegelian system revolves'.²⁶³ Georg Lasson, Hegel's modern editor, for instance, 'attacks every critic, however reactionary, who omits to put religion in the very centre of his interpretation of Hegel'.²⁶⁴

To best provide an answer to this concern, one ought to turn to Hegel's own thoughts on the matter. Hegel laments that 'there was a time when all knowledge was knowledge of God',²⁶⁵ and 'our age [...] knows nothing of God [...] the belief that this knowledge is not even possible passes for the highest degree of insight'.²⁶⁶

²⁶² Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, *V. I. Lenin: Collected Works*, trans. approved by CPSU, 45 vols (London and Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1963), xxxviii, p. 363.

²⁶³ Noted in Georg Lukács, *The Young Hegel*, p. 8.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁵ *Es hat eine Zeit gegeben, wo alles Wissen Wissenschaft von Gott gewesen ist.* Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Werke* [hereafter Glockner], Jubiläumsausgabe, ed. by Herman Glockner, 26 vols (Stuttgart: 1927–39), xv, 53. The first 20 vols, containing Hegel's writings, are a reprint of the 1832–1887 edition (19 vols). Vols 21–22 contain Glockner's *Hegel* and vols 23–26 his *Hegel-Lexikon*.

²⁶⁶ *Es macht unserm Zeitalter keinen Kummer mehr, von Gott nichts zu erkennen, vielmehr gilt es für*

Proceeding from these laments, it was thought, in his own time and particularly during the deliverance of the lectures on the philosophy of religion, that Hegel's motive was either to transpose the content of theology to 'a purely immanent human phenomenon', or to annul the classical theism of the Reformation by reinterpreting Christian doctrine according to his own philosophical system.²⁶⁷ It was not Hegel's intention, however, to do either of these things, rather, as one commentator argues, his agenda was 'to recover the conceptual foundations of religion by creating a postcritical speculative theology of his own'.²⁶⁸ Hegel proposes a solution to these supposed inadequacies. He argues that art, religion, and philosophy share an identical subject-matter or common object, namely 'God and nothing but God and the self-unfolding of God'.²⁶⁹ That is to say, these three disciplines seek to provide answers concerning certain metaphysical concepts which, Hegel argues, are ultimately founded on concept of a divine being.

God is the beginning of all things and the end of all things; [everything] starts from God and returns to God. God is the one and only object of philosophy. [Its concern is] to occupy itself with God, to apprehend everything in God, to lead everything back to God, as well as to derive everything particular from God and to justify everything only

die höchste Einsicht, dass diese Erkenntnis sogar nicht möglich sei. Glockner, xv, 53.

²⁶⁷ Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, p. 12.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

²⁶⁹ *Der Gegenstand der Religion wie der Philosophie ist die ewige Wahrheit in ihre Objectivität selbst.* Glockner, xv, 37. Hegel's thoughts on the relationship between religion and philosophy are discussed explicitly in *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion* [hereafter *VPR*], ed. by Walter Jaeschke, 3 vols (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1984–1987), I, pp. 28–35, 284–302 and *Geschichte der Philosophie* (critical edition of the Introduction, ed. by Hoffmeister; Leipzig, 1940), pp. 166–221. See translation from the *Geschichte* in *LHP* I, 61–91. See also *Enzyklopädie*, secs. 284, pp. 571–573, and *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. by Hans-Friedrich Wessels and Heinrich Clairmont (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1988), pp. 547–556. Translation from the *Phänomenologie* in *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. by James Black Baillie, 2nd edn rev (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1949), 783–797

in so far as it stems from God, and is sustained through its relationship with God. It lives by God's radiance and has [within itself] the mind of God. Thus philosophy is theology, and [one's] occupation with philosophy — or rather *in* philosophy — is of itself the service of God.²⁷⁰

Though each of these disciplines have the same goal in mind, the ways in which they seek to achieve it, nevertheless, are radically distinct for Hegel. The distinction lies between the interpretative modes particular to each discipline: for art, 'presentation' (*Darscheinung*); for religion, 'representation' (*Vorstellung*); and for philosophy, rational (*vernünftig*) 'thought' (*Denken*). Each interpretative mode represents a stage in the methodology of describing the divine, according to varying degrees of absoluteness. Presentation need not concern us in the present discussion, so let us turn immediately to representation and rational thought. The struggle for primacy between these two interpretative modes can be seen, under various guises, throughout the history of Western civilisation: in ancient Greece (between *λόγος* and *μῦθος*); in the medieval era (between *ratio* and *fides*); and in Hegel's own time, the German Enlightenment, a certain aspect of the problem is also exposed (the tension between superstition and fanaticism).²⁷¹ In his article in *Philosophical Studies*, William Desmond gives an invaluable summary of these two perennial modes of expression:

Religious representation invites man to participate in a sacred universe with its rituals of worship and reverent invocations of divinity. Rational reflection, by contrast, seems

²⁷⁰ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* [hereafter *LPR*], ed. by Peter C. Hodgson, trans. by R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson and others, 3 vols (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984, 1985, 1987; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), I, p. 84.

²⁷¹ William Desmond, 'Hegel and the Problem of Religious Representation', in *Philosophical Studies* (Ireland), 30 (1984), 9–22 (pp. 9–10).

to introduce a critical pause in this participation, demanding a certain detachment from naïve commitments, asking the thinker to consider crucial ambiguities that may mark religious representation.²⁷²

Representation is the mode of expression particular to religion, by which metaphysical truths are sought to be expressed imagistically, by ‘picture-thinking’. As Luther writes, ‘External things in religion must precede internal experiences which come through [i.e. are mediated by] external things, for God has resolved to give nobody the internal gifts except through the external things. He will give nobody the Spirit and Faith without the use of external word and sign’.²⁷³ Hegel claims, however, that ‘[in] picture-thinking, reality does not receive its perfect due [...] it does not attain to what it ought to show forth, viz. spirit’.²⁷⁴ Although ‘knowledge is an essential element of the Christian religion itself’,²⁷⁵ and representation is concerned with presenting this religious knowledge, it is unable to do so explicitly.²⁷⁶ It is thus confined to parables, analogies, and mythologies, and does not attempt to answer questions rationally. On account of this, representation tends to express its content somewhat ambiguously. In Hegelian terms, it does not bear within it its own ‘immediate interpretation’: it is ‘meaningful in-itself (*an-sich*), but not always for-itself (*für-sich*)’.²⁷⁷ Representation serves as a mediator between finite and particular human beings and the infinite and universal God, and as such always retains within it

²⁷² Ibid., p. 9.

²⁷³ Martin Luther, *Wider die himlichen Propheten vom Sacrament*, II. (1525).

²⁷⁴ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit* [hereafter *PS*], trans. by A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), p. 412.

²⁷⁵ ‘*Das Erkennen liegt daher in der christlichen Religion selbst*’. *Werke*, xv, 35.

²⁷⁶ Conor Cunningham, *Genealogy of Nihilism* (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 101.

²⁷⁷ Desmond, p. 15.

an element of the finite, sensuous, and particular.²⁷⁸ Representation, and theology in general, treats the concept of God as an external object, something which is not only outside the discipline itself, but also as something set ‘*over and against* creation’.²⁷⁹ This treatment can cause the dignity of the concept of God to suffer, as he becomes something superfluous or ‘tacked on’ to creation. However, this ‘object’ representation of God is treated by Hegel as a natural stage in man’s historical development, according to Hegel’s system of periodization. This system belongs to his Tübingen period, where, along with his studies in theology, Hegel expressed an interest in the discipline of anthropology.²⁸⁰ Anthropologically, Hegel declares the concepts of ‘intuition’ (*Anschauung*), ‘idea’ (*Vorstellung*), and ‘concept’ or ‘notion’ (*Begriff*) as ‘systematic principles’.²⁸¹ Intuition is concerned with aesthetics, idea with religion, and concept with philosophy. Historicizing anthropology, Hegel places aesthetics as belonging to the ancient world, religion to the medieval world, and philosophy to the modern world.²⁸² Theology, as the study of the object of religion, belongs to the Middle Ages within Hegel’s anthropological framework. Just as in the ancient and medieval world, where knowledge of the universal was preceded logically by objectifying it as a transcendent reality beyond the world of particulars, so to was the concept of God treated in these stages of development. The nature of God could not be known without first externalising him as personal, yet transcendent, being,

²⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 12.

²⁷⁹ Cunningham, p. 101.

²⁸⁰ Lukács, *The Young Hegel*, p. 27.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid.

separated from man and creation.²⁸³ For Hegel it is now possible, and necessary, at this point in history to provide an account of religious truths expressed through a more modern mode of expression, that is in the language of philosophy. This transition, as Fackenheim notes, provides Hegel with a means to move beyond ‘object’ theology and towards ‘relational’ theology.²⁸⁴ The concept of God may now be expressed as the living process by which ‘the implicit unity of divine and human nature becomes actual and attains concrete existence’.²⁸⁵ As a caveat, however, it must be said that while the ‘theological content of faith’ has, for Hegel, a real significance only because of philosophy, this religious content (for example, the Passion and Resurrection of Christ) must first be an experience *felt*, and only then subsequently interpreted by reason.²⁸⁶

For Hegel, the ‘philosophic idea is the idea of God’,²⁸⁷ and philosophy is the ‘true *Theodicaea*, the justification of God’.²⁸⁸ Philosophy, Hegel argues, escapes the difficulties of religious representation by its use of rational thought to render the content of philosophy, or the philosophical concept (*Begriff*).²⁸⁹ Where representation

²⁸³ Frederick Charles Copleston, ‘Hegel and the Rationalization of Mysticism’, in *New Studies in Hegel's Philosophy*, ed. by Warren E. Steinkrus (Oswego, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), pp. 187–200 (p. 195).

²⁸⁴ Emil Fackenheim, *The Religious Dimensions in Hegel's Thought* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967), p. 178 note.

²⁸⁵ ‘Der Geist ist daher der lebendige Process, dass die an sich seyende Einheit der göttlichen und menschlichen Natur für sich und hervorgebracht werde’. *Werke*, XVI, p. 210.

²⁸⁶ Harris, *Night Thoughts*, p. 89. Cf. *Encyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, ed. by Karl Rosenkranz (Berlin: L. Heimann, 1870), pp. 137–141.

²⁸⁷ *LHP*, III, p. 11.

²⁸⁸ *LPH*, p. 477.

²⁸⁹ Some ‘leftist’ Protestant Hegelians, however, argue against Hegel’s philosophical ‘mending’ of theology, such as Eberhard Jüngel. Cf. Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World: On the Foundation of the Theology of the Crucified One in the Dispute between Theism and Atheism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.:

occludes religious truths by draping them in the trappings of mysticism, thought seeks to express them rationally and philosophically. What Hegel seems to be attempting here is no less than an attempt to universalise the content of religion.²⁹⁰ In order to do this, Hegel must first liberate religion from its usual dependence on revelation (religious texts or other forms of gnosis) by integrating it into a philosophical framework. By removing this crutch, Hegel is also allowing Christianity to escape the typical criticisms of the Enlightenment, which took the form of either attacks upon historical validity of its revelatory dogmas, or general complaints about its supposed mystical obscurantism. In this way, the concept of God can now move, in Heidegger's parlance, beyond ontotheology — beyond the dualism of the creator and the created.²⁹¹

The question then arises as to whether, or not, Hegel is arguing for an end of religion, as philosophy, or so it seems, has usurped its position as the ultimate source of religious truth.²⁹² As Conor Cunningham enquires, 'is religion no longer essential

Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983), pp. 63–100. This argument is typical of left Hegelians who, as Paul Lakeland comments, perform a 'radical surgery on the Hegelian corpus' in amputating Hegel's argued relation of theology from philosophy. Paul Lakeland, 'A New Pietism: Hegel and Recent Christology', *The Journal of Religion*, 68 (1988), 57–71 (p. 70).

²⁹⁰ Stephen D. Crites, 'The Gospel According to Hegel', *The Journal of Religion*, 2, 46 (1966), 246–263 (p. 247). In this way Hegel was declared by Errol Harris to be the 'Christian philosopher par excellence'. Cf. Errol Harris, 'Hegel and Christianity', *Owl of Minerva*, 13 (1982), 1–5 (p. 1).

²⁹¹ Cunningham, p. 101. It may be suggested that Hegel is recollecting the position of Aquinas in his own movement away from Augustinian illumination theory. However, where Aquinas does seek to establish his own rational framework independent of revelation, it will come to rely on certain foundational first principles, which Hegel will come to view as defective.

²⁹² As, first among all others, is argued by Feuerbach. For a more modern argument, cf. Walter Jaeschke, 'Speculative and Anthropological Criticism of Hegel: A Theological Orientation to Hegel and Feuerbach', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 3, 48 (1980), 345–364.

once its content has been appropriated and sublated by philosophy?’²⁹³ Firstly, it ought to be made clear that what Hegel is not doing is attempting to amputate the truth from religion and reattach it to philosophy. In fact, Hegel concedes that there are some theological doctrines (such as the Christian doctrine of the Trinity) which philosophy does not necessarily need to render in rational language, although in fact Hegel later will.²⁹⁴ In general, the truth of religious dogmas may remain where it is, as these dogmas already recognise God as infinite spirit, and, when philosophy expresses them in a different form, it is merely repeating the same truth, albeit presented in a more universalising format.²⁹⁵ This raises a further question, however: if the theological picture-thinking of representation is being used simply as content for philosophy, does this imply the relationship between religion and philosophy is a symbiotic or parasitical one? In the hierarchy of the arts, does philosophy, according to Hegel’s understanding, rank higher than theology? An exploration of this argument comes by way of Paul Ricoeur and Louis Dupré, both of whom argue for a dialectical relationship between the content of theology and the form of philosophy. Theology perpetually provides inexhaustible content to philosophy in a ‘continual dialectic’, and so philosophy ‘does not abolish but legitimates all the shapes that lead to the ultimate stage; furthermore, *Denken* is but the ability to recapitulate the inner

²⁹³ Cunningham, p. 102.

²⁹⁴ *LPR*, I, p. 157. Hegel defended the doctrine of the Trinity against Tholuck. Cf. Friedrich Tholuck, *Die speculative Trinitätslehre des späteren Orients: Eine religionsphilosophische Monographie aus handschriftlichen Quellen der Leydener, Oxforder und Berliner Bibliothek* (Berlin: [n. pub], 1826). See also Chapter Two of this thesis.

²⁹⁵ Copleston, p. 198, n. 28.

dynamism of representation'.²⁹⁶ Further, when this concerns the content of Judeo-Christian religious belief, then, as Dupré argues, 'the development of the mind never leads beyond Christian faith: [...] faith continues to provide the content of philosophical thought'.²⁹⁷ Such arguments mirror Hegel's own sentiments, that 'religion can exist without philosophy, but philosophy cannot exist without religion'.²⁹⁸ Philosophy 'only unfolds itself when it unfolds religion, and when it unfolds itself it unfolds religion'.²⁹⁹ To reiterate, Hegel's identification of the subject-matter of religion with that of philosophy serves as no less than an attempt to universalise the content of religion. Where his own religion is concerned, Lutheran Christianity, to which he had a committed allegiance, Hegel is attempting to introduce an element of reflective self-awareness and self-understanding.³⁰⁰ As Copleston comments in his article 'Hegel and the Rationalization of Mysticism', Hegel is following 'the programme of St. Anselm and other mediaeval theologians, the programme of "faith seeking understanding"'.³⁰¹ However, while scholastics of both Catholic, and indeed later Protestant, orthodoxy applied philosophy to religion in order to bring the message of Christianity closer to the perceived original intention in design of its authors, Hegel is attempting to transform the content of Christianity from

²⁹⁶ Paul Ricoeur, 'The Status of *Vorstellung* in Hegel's Philosophy of Religion', in *Meaning, Truth and God* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982), pp. 70–88 (pp. 86–87).

²⁹⁷ Louis Dupré, 'Hegel's Absolute Spirit: A Religious Justification of Secular Culture', in *Hegel: The Absolute Spirit* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1984), pp. 127–138 (p. 128).

²⁹⁸ *LPR*, III, p. 148.

²⁹⁹ '[*Die Philosophie*] explicirt daher nur sich, indem sie die Religion explicirt und indem sie sich explicirt, explicirt sie de Religion'. *Werke*, xv, p. 37.

³⁰⁰ Copleston, p. 188.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

mere bible-based religion into idealist metaphysics. This struggle, writes G. R. G. Mure, comprises a 'strenuous and uncompromising effort, which has no serious parallel, to rationalize and to bring to light the mystic union of God and man proclaimed by men such as Meister Eckhart and Jakob Böhme, to reveal it as a union through distinction for which the whole world is evidence'.³⁰²

To say in conclusion of this comparative examination of Böhme and Hegel's thought, it becomes apparent that, while Hegel finds the content of Böhme's work to be both worthy of mention and a source of inspiration in his own work, the representational mode of expression in which that content is rendered (whether it comes from his early period as a rejecter of Protestant orthodoxy, his Hermetic period of silence, or his return to the Reformation) is utterly inferior to the language of philosophy. Fortunately, as, according to Hegel, because both philosophy and theology share an identical common subject-matter that content can be rescued by stripping away religious analogy, metaphor, and parable, so that the kernel of truth that remains can be expressed in the clear and rational language of thought. In this way, commentators such as David Walsh are led to conclude that 'such qualifications aside, when Hegel comes to the content of Böhme's speculation he is clearly a believer'.³⁰³

³⁰² Geoffrey Reginald Gilchrist Mure, *The Philosophy of Hegel* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 103.

³⁰³ Walsh, 'The Historical Dialectic of Spirit', p. 18.

CHAPTER II

THE CONCEPT OF GOD

The doctrine of the Trinity, as both promulgated and affirmed down through the ages by Christian orthodoxy, may be summarised as simply the existence of the one God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three persons sharing one nature. The concept of the triune nature of God within Christian orthodoxy has become inseparable from the concept of God, owing to both its scriptural and historical doctrinal affirmation.¹ As the Athanasian Creed (more commonly known as the *Quicumque Vult*; the fourth or fifth century formative statement of faith on the concept of God) declares, according to the universal Christian faith:

We worship one God in Trinity and the Trinity in unity, neither confusing the persons nor dividing the substance. For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Spirit. But the godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is all one: the glory equal and the majesty co-eternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit. Uncreated is the Father; uncreated is the Son; uncreated is the Spirit. The Father uncreate [sic], the Son uncreate: and the Holy Spirit uncreate. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible: and the Holy Spirit incomprehensible [...] The Father is made of none: neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone: not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son: neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. So there is one Father [...] one Son [...] one Holy Spirit [...] In this Trinity none is afore, or after other: none is greater, or less than another; but the whole three persons are co-eternal together: and co-equal. So that in all things, as is aforesaid: the unity in Trinity and the Trinity in unity is to be worshipped.²

¹ The scriptural argument for the Trinity and its oneness is based upon certain interpretations of passages such as Deuteronomy 6. 4. ('the Lord is our God, the Lord alone') and James 2. 9 ('if you show partiality, you commit sin'), and the baptismal formula found in Matthew 28. 19 ('in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit').

² The authorship of the Latin original of this creed is attributed to Athanasius. The extract here reproduced in English is from *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662; repr. Cambridge: Cambridge

As is clear in the extract above, the doctrine of the triune God, and the how each person of the Trinity relates to the other, is treated by Christian orthodoxy as an ‘incomprehensible’ truth or unrevealed ‘mystery’,³ something beyond the limits of human understanding. This treatment of the Trinity as a mystery is common to the Christian tradition — as Luther declared ‘how this intertrinitarian relation is carried on is something that we must believe, for even to the angels, who unceasingly behold it in delight, it is unfathomable. And all who have wanted to comprehend it have broken their neck in the effort’.⁴

But, as will become apparent, neither Hegel nor Böhme’s conception of the Trinity (for both, *die Dreieinigkeit*) perfectly mirrors the traditional understanding as declared above, and it is precisely upon the consideration of the Trinity as entirely an mysterious concept that the most resonant tenors of their criticisms will come to be heard. Hegel argues that the Trinity ought not to, in fact, be dispensed with as a mere mystery, rather, according to a new formulation, the doctrine of the Trinity must become something of which it is possible to speak affirmatively. The Christian religion is, by its very nature, a ‘revealed’ (*offenbare*) religion, and, as such, any notion of the mysterious should not be a part of its constitution.

University Press, 1968), pp. 27–29.

³ The term ‘mystery’ is here meant in its theological sense, referring to the ‘particular elements [that is to say, the established doctrines] of the divine plan [...] which transcend the ordinary meanings of the word associated with the intellectual problems needing resolution or [...] requiring explanation’. *Our Sunday Visitor’s Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. by Peter M. J. Stravinskias, rev. edn (Huntington, I. N.: Our Sunday Visitor, 1998), p. 694.

⁴ Martin Luther, *The Complete Sermons of Martin Luther*, ed. by Eugene Klug, 11 vols (Grand Rapids, M. I.: Baker Book House Company, 200), x, p. 1009.

In the Christian religion God has revealed himself, i.e. he has given men to understand what he is, so that he is no longer a concealment, a secret, This possibility to know God lays upon us the duty to do so; and the development of the thinking spirit which has proceeded from this basis, from the revelation of the divine being, must finally proceed to grasp in thought that which has at first been exhibited to spirit in feeling and representation.⁵

Mystery, for Hegel, is naturally considered to be mysterious, but only to the faculty of the understanding. Speculative reason, on the other hand, 'transcends mystery' and provides the 'rational tools to make sense of it'.⁶ In fact, the perichoretic, or mutually relating, discourse of the Trinity is, for Hegel, the discourse of reason itself. At its heart, the Trinity is, for Hegel,

The mystery of God [*das Mysterium Gottes*]; its content is mystical [*der Inhalt ist mystisch*], i.e., speculative. But what is for reason is not a secret [*ist kein Geheimnis*]. In the Christian religion one knows, and this is a secret only for the finite understanding, and for the thought that is based on sense experience.⁷

As such, Hegel claims that his formula for the divine process of self-consciousness and self-manifestation which is the Trinity can be rendered in the language of the concept itself (that is as in the language of *Denken*, in philosophical terms), and not

⁵ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Philosophy of History: Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Welgeschichte* [hereafter *VPH*], ed. by Georg Lasson, 4 vols (Hamburg: Meiner, 1934), I, p. 45. Translation in *LPH*, p. 15. Further on this point, Hegel writes it is 'the nature of the Christian religion to [...] know God cognitively, God's nature and essence, and should esteem this cognition above all else' (*LPR*, I, p. 88; *VPR*, I, 4), and 'Religion is the mode, the type of consciousness, in which the truth is present for all men'. See *The Encyclopedia Logic* [hereafter *Geraets*], trans. by T. F. Geraets et al. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), II; *Werke*, VIII, p. 23. Further, Hegel concludes that 'God is only in and for thought' (*LPR*, I, p. 209; *VPR*, I, 118).

⁶ William Desmond, *Hegel's God: a Counterfeit Double?* (Hants: Ashgate, 2003), p. 103.

⁷ *LPR*, III, p. 192

solely through the medium of the imagistic language of the *Vorstellung* (as are traditionally orthodox trinitarian notions).⁸ In order for the concept of the Trinity to be understood therefore, and not simply dispensed with as a mystery, it must, according to Hegel, be appreciated in spirit (appreciated as both a part and the whole of Hegel's entire rational framework).⁹ In this way commentators have declared that, for Hegel, 'the rational exposition of trinitarian theology is the highest task of philosophy'.¹⁰ Further, within the current of the Christian tradition, Hegel's reformulation of traditional trinitarian doctrine serves to be understood by the foundational, so called 'anti-negative' approach of traditional Christian theology, and articulates the manifestation of the universal subject of all experience, namely God.¹¹

This kind of analysis of Hegel's articulation of the Trinity may also be successfully applied to Böhme, for he, too, is concerned with defining how exactly the concept of God ought to be constituted. Böhme acknowledges that, while Christians say that 'God is threefold, but one in essence', such a doctrine is usually 'misunderstood by the ignorant as well as by the half learned'.¹² Like Hegel, Böhme does not suppose that the Trinity ought to be dispensed with as a mere mystery, rather it should be treated as something which is entirely capable of apprehension 'to the spirit resting in the love of God'.¹³ One would expect, however, Hegel's criticism of

⁸ O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*, p. 71.

⁹ *Spirit*, p. 257, n. 78.

¹⁰ Harris, *Night Thoughts*, p. 155.

¹¹ O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*, p. 64.

¹² *Myst. Mag.*, 7. 5.

¹³ *Aurora*, 10. 26.

representative formulations of trinitarian doctrine to naturally extend to Böhme. While they, in fact, do, such criticisms will be seen to be unjustified, for it is on this particular subject that Böhme admits his own failures due to his perennial use of imagistic language. Böhme is quite clear that, if he is to make the Trinity understandable to reason, he cannot ‘speak [...] in a devilish [erroneous] manner’, the mysteries of God cannot be ‘understood in a terrestrial sense, but [must be regarded] from a higher point of view, in a supernatural aspect’.¹⁴ So-called ‘devilish’ or ‘earthly language’ is insufficient to describe ‘what there is of joy, happiness, and loveliness contained in the inner wonders of God’.¹⁵ Böhme acknowledges that, although he is often ‘forced to give terrestrial names to that which is celestial’ — to render representationally that which is rational — he hopes that the reader ‘may form a conception [of what he truly means to say], and by meditating about it penetrate within the inner foundation’.¹⁶

This chapter examining Hegel and Böhme’s analysis of the Trinity shall be approached according to the tripartite Christian narrative of the eternal generation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Hegel and Böhme’s conceptions of the Father will concentrate upon their thoughts on the supposed dual nature of the Trinity, as immanent and economic, represented by the twin historical representations of the

¹⁴ Ibid., 23. 17–33. See also Böhme’s ‘De Electione Gratiae’ [hereafter *Grace*], in *De Electione Gratiae and Questiones Theosophicae*, trans. by John Rolleston Earle (London: Constable, 1930), 3. 19.

¹⁵ Jakob Böhme, *Concerning the Three Principles of the Divine Essence* [hereafter *Princ.*], trans. by John Sparrow (London: 1648; John M. Watkins, 1909), 14. 90.

¹⁶ *Grace*, 3. 19.

Father as *deus absconditus* and *deus revelatus*. The treatment of the Son will focus upon their shared rejection of the orthodox interpretation of the Trinity as one composed of 'persons', and the importance of God's historical incarnation, the divine movement from abstraction to subjectivity. Finally, an assessment of the Holy Spirit in the light of the notion of 'eternal generation' will be considered, along with the question of whether or not the Holy Spirit is considered by Böhme and Hegel to be the conclusion of the 'grand circuit' which is the Trinity.

SECTION ONE

THE FATHER

Both Hegel and Böhme's trinitarian schemes are formulated in strong opposition to those of religious orthodoxy's, in particular to the declared separation, according to orthodox Christian spheres, between the immanent and economic trinities. On the most superficial level, it may be said that the immanent trinity is 'who God is' and the economic trinity is 'what God does'. This immanent (or ontological or essential) trinity can be said to be a description of the interior, *ad intra* life of the divine, understood as a mutually relating 'conversation' such as that which is spoken of in the first chapter of John's Gospel. The economic trinity is said to refer to the *ad extra* life of the triune God, as involved in creation and salvation history, reflecting and

revealing the more obscure nature of the preceding immanent trinity.¹⁷ The economic trinity is, according to commentators such as Hodgson, ‘the outward re-enactment (not simply repetition) of the inward trinitarian dialectic — a re-enactment that is necessary to the self-realisation of God and that is already implicit in the trinitarian “play of love with itself”’.¹⁸ Orthodoxy’s distinction between immanent and economic trinities is claimed to be a necessary one, for God is generally conceived as a being apart from the world; his existence and identity are not considered to be contingent upon creation. Nevertheless, for Christian orthodoxy, God must also be somehow involved with the world, for he is conceived of as a personal being, the object of faith, prayer, and devotion. The Trinity, in other words, cannot ‘merely [be] a play of love with itself but an engaged and serious love for others’.¹⁹ Emil Fackenheim writes of this relationship in *The Religious Dimension in Hegel’s Thought* that,

We have long rejected a right-wing dissipation of the actual world into the logical realm: this would be specified by the dissipation of the worldly trinitarian incursion into a timeless trinitarian play, and we have also rejected a left-wing reduction of idea and spirit to worldly finitude: this would be specified by the reduction of the worldly trinitarian incursion to a divine self-realization which, bereft of a pre-worldly trinity to sustain it, could never be complete [...] the pre-worldly trinitarian play is complete, apart from its worldly manifestation; yet this latter — no mere repetition of the play — is as real for philosophic comprehension as it is for Christian faith. The trinitarian God is wholly real apart from the world and wholly real in it, and only because of his pre-worldly reality can his worldly manifestation be complete.²⁰

¹⁷ ‘Economy’ (οἰκονομία) is also a term favoured by the Alexandrian Fathers for the Incarnation, a doctrine through which the economic trinity is generally understood. Cf. John Ignatius Döllinger, *The First Age of Christianity and the Church*, trans. by Henry Nutcombe Oxenham (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1867), p. 168, n. 2.

¹⁸ Hodgson, *Christian Theology*, p. 130. Cf. also *LPR*, III, p. 195, 292.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Emil Fackenheim, *The Religious Dimension in Hegel’s Thought* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1967), p. 205.

Does orthodoxy then, according to Fackenheim's account, support a hierarchical prioritisation of the immanent over the economic trinity, or vice-versa? Historically speaking, the immanent trinity took precedence over the economic according to classical theology, while in later years, as a result of the Reformation, the economic came to head the hierarchy.

For Luther, the logical gulf that exists between immanent and economic trinities is represented by two distinct characterisations of the first person of each trinity, the Father. The first characterisation of the Father is that of *deus absconditus*: God as absent from and beyond creation, theologically equivalent to Eckhart's *Überwesentliche Gottheit* or the Pseudo-Dionysius's *ὑπέροψία θεαρχία*,²¹ and representative of the immanent trinity. The second is that of *deus revelatus*: God as revealed to creation, representative of the economic trinity. Further along this line, Luther envisions powers or *potentia* (inspired from mention in scripture of God's *δύναμις* and *ἀρετή*) as expressive of the nature of these two characterisations of the Father: that of *potentia absoluta* (God's absolute power as present in the immanent trinity) and *potentia ordinata* (God's ordained power, as manifested to creation through the economic trinity).²² Luther's division between God's *potentia absoluta* and his *potentia ordinata* is made in the following way. God's absolute power remains transcendent, that is to say above creation, and so, beyond the reach of man.

²¹ O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, p. 70.

²² Miller, 'Luther and Boehme', p. 282.

In Luther's parlance, it constitutes the 'will of his good pleasure': in short, it is his divine purpose 'as seen from eternity'.²³ God's ordained power, 'his will of the sign', is revealed to the world, accessible to all through the divine personage of Jesus Christ.²⁴ It is this ordained power that is the proper object of theological speculation, for it is manifested in the world through visible representations of God, such as revelation, baptism, and the Eucharist. As Luther writes, 'the ordained power, that is on [sic] the incarnate Son [...] Let us gather around the child lying in the lap of his mother Mary and at the victim hanging on the cross; truly there we shall contemplate God; there we shall look into the very heart of God itself'.²⁵ The explanation for Luther's championing of the pre-eminence of the economic over the immanent trinity can be reduced to his understanding of the primacy of man's salvation over any and all other religious concerns. For Luther, the will of the unrevealed God cannot offer any information as to how man's salvation can be achieved, while the revealed God, manifested in historical figure of Jesus of Nazareth, can. As Luther's spiritual director, Johann von Staupitz, advised him: 'Why torment yourself with these speculations [on the unrevealed God]? Look at the wounds of Christ and at the blood shed for you. From these predestination will shine'.²⁶ For Luther, to go beyond God's ordained power and speculate upon the *deus absconditus* is to go beyond the foundation stone of revelation, where there is 'no faith, knowledge, or understanding,

²³ Ibid., p. 282.

²⁴ For further treatment of Luther's technical terms, see *Luthers Werke*, XLII, pp. 294–295, XLIII, pp. 458–459.

²⁵ Ibid., XLIII, p. 73.

²⁶ Ibid. p. 46.

an investigation which leads many only to damnation'.²⁷

It becomes clear that the twin representations of God as *deus absconditus* and *deus revelatus* are opposed to each other on a fundamental level, for it is declared by Christian orthodoxy that it is but the *deus revelatus* which can be known and spoken of affirmatively. Luther, drawing upon his scholastic heritage, argues that the unrevealed God, present in the immanent trinity, and as represented by the concept of the *deus absconditus*, cannot be talked about affirmatively by either philosophy or theology because he is a being conceived of as having no connection to creation. Owing to his *via negativa* approach, Luther writes that, where the 'divine labyrinth' of the immanent trinity is concerned, 'it is insane to argue so much about God outside and before time because this is an attempt to understand the uncovered divinity or the bare divine essence'.²⁸ Nothing can be known about the immanent trinity, simply because it does not manifest itself in creation — if man were to posit anything about it, he would, Luther writes, 'degenerate into an erratic and vagabond spirit'.²⁹ For Luther in particular, and Christian orthodoxy in general, then, God, taken as the object of both theological speculation and religious worship, is present only in the economic trinity as the *deus revelatus*.

²⁷ Miller, 'Luther and Boehme', p. 282. In criticising the theological focus upon the nature of the hidden God, Luther has Pseudo-Dionysius intentionally in his crosshairs. See Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), p. 706. Luther's stance here is, historically, no new departure. Gerschom Scholem comments, in *Kabbalah* (New York: New American Library, 1974), p. 89, that the author of one of the first cabbalistic works, the *Ma'arekhet ha-Elohut*, 'was led to the daring conclusion that only the revealed God can in reality be called 'God', and not the hidden *deus absconditus*, who cannot be an object of religious thought'.

²⁸ *Luthers Werke*, XLII, p. 293; 10.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, XLII, p. 293.

This treatment by religious orthodoxy of the revealed and unrevealed God is in sharp distinction to both Hegel and Böhme's thought. Firstly, for both philosophers, the concept of the unrevealed God is treated as something about which it ought to be possible to speak. For Hegel, the immanent trinity is something entirely accessible to reason, while, for Böhme, the same can be, at the very least, descriptively branded by various cataphatic monikers. Secondly, the distinction between the revealed and unrevealed God, between immanent and economic trinities, is treated by both Hegel and Böhme as but a conceptual distinction. In reality, and as will be shown, the representations of God as *deus absconditus* and *deus revelatus* are merged into one concept.

§ 1. 1. *Böhme's Conception of the Deus Absconditus*

Böhme's trinitarian scheme serves to be understood as a general precursor to Hegel's. For both, the Trinity is thought of primarily as the narrative of the dialectical self-manifestation of the divine, from abstraction and objectivity to subjectivity and personhood. In the *Six Theosophic Points*, Böhme states that 'without contradiction [i.e. 'opposition'] nothing can become manifest to itself; for if it has nothing to resist it, it goes continually outward and does not return again into itself. But if it does not return into itself as into that form which it originally came, it knows nothing of the

primal being'.³⁰ As it will be for Hegel, this dialectical movement is essential for Böhme. Like the Eckhartian conception of the Trinity as 'one grand circuit', the Böhmean formulation will come to describe the Trinity in a similar pattern, as the 'eternal unbeginning birth' (*die ewige unanfängliche Geburt*) of God. God, in this instance, is not to be understood as having a beginning, but 'is the eternal beginning of the manifestation of God' (*ist der ewige Anfang des geoffenbarten Gottes*).³¹ In short, God, for Böhme, is manifested in what he does.

The key to understanding Böhme's treatment of the Father is through his oft used maxim that 'in yes and no all things consist',³² meaning that there is a dualistic or thetical-antithetical struggle inherent in the understanding of every concept. Böhme's attachment to this maxim is evident in the following passage, which would, years later, find itself quoted approvingly in Hegel's lectures on the history of philosophy:

The reader should know that in 'yes' and 'no' stand all things, whether divine, devilish, earthly or whatever it may be called. The One, as the yes is an empty (*eitel*) power and life, and is the truth of God or God himself. He would be unknown in himself and there would be neither joy nor exaltation (*Erheblichkeit*) nor sensibility — [life] — within him without the no. The no is a projection of the yes or truth, so that the truth might be revealed and be something, wherein there is a *contrarium* in which

³⁰ Jakob Böhme, *Six Theosophic Points and Other Writings* [hereafter *Theos. Punkt.*], trans. by John Rolleston Earle (University of Michigan Press, 1958), p. 167.

³¹ *Myst. Mag.*, 4. 7. Emphasis mine.

³² *Theos. Frag.*, 3. 2. See Michel Henry's comment that 'The thought of Böhme was thoroughly influenced by the idea of an opposition and a differentiation interior to the life of the absolute and constitutive of this life precisely in so far as it is no more than a bringing to light of manifestation. The concept of consciousness is thought of by Böhme in its solidarity with the concept of otherness, mirror, splitting, namely in its unity with the ontological process of the internal division of being'. Michel Henry, *The Essence of Manifestation*, trans. by Girard Etzkorn (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), p. 108.

the eternal love might become active, sensible, willing and something to be loved.³³

Böhme's treatment of the Trinity is no less than an attempt to reconcile all dialectical distinctions present in the world of creation, between yes and no, lightness and darkness, and, most importantly, good and evil.³⁴ On the celestial level, it is Böhme's aim to maintain God's primacy as the creator of all things, and yet keep him free, in true theistic fashion, from the invidious position of being the cause of evil. On the terrestrial level, Böhme is attempting to show a clear path how man can be saved from his evil nature.³⁵ As one commentator succinctly puts it, 'the impulse [behind Böhme's theogonic account] is the desire to solve the problem of evil: "it is not easy to avoid the appearance of making God susceptible of evil"'.³⁶

Seeing we are not to speak of God, what he is, and where he is, we must say, that God himself is the essence of all essences; for all is generated, or born, created, and proceeded from him, and all things take their beginning out of God [...] But there is yet this difference: that evil neither is, nor is called God; this is understood in the first principle, where it is the earnest fountain of the wrathfulness, according to which God calls himself an angry, wrathful, jealous God. For the original of life, and of all mobility, consists in the wrathfulness; yet if the same [...] be kindled with the light in God, it is then no more tartness, but the severe wrathfulness is changed into great joy.³⁷

The key symbol of Böhme's conception of the immanent, pre-worldly, or primordial

³³ 'Betrachtung Göttlicher Offenbarung', in *Sämtliche Schriften*, IX, 3. 2. The 'contrarium' is the term employed by Böhme to refer to the dialectical opposition which, he argues, exists between all things. Compare with 'Geschichte der Philosophie', *Sämtliche Werke*, XIX, pp. 319–320.

³⁴ The particulars of this dialectical relationship between good and evil is more fully treated in Chapter Three of this thesis.

³⁵ Miller, 'Luther and Boehme', p. 283.

³⁶ Stoudt, p. 196. Stoudt is quoting Schleiermacher here. See *Speeches on Religion to Its Cultured Despisers*, trans. by John Oman (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Truebnpr & Co., 1893), p. 49.

³⁷ *Princ.* 1, 1–2.

trinity is the 'abyss', the '*mysterium magnum*', or the 'Groundless' (*Ungrund* — the term's similarity to Eckhart's *Abgrund* or *Urgrund* here is clear)', roughly attributable to the Gnostic πλήρωμα or the *deus absconditus* of traditional orthodox Christianity.³⁸

God is the eternal unity, the unmeasurable one good, having nothing before or after it that could possibly endow it with something or move it. It is without any inclinations or qualities [i.e. it is unpredicated], without any beginning in time, within itself only one. It is purity itself, without any contact; requiring neither place nor locality for its dwelling, being at once outside of and within the world. Into its depth no thought can penetrate, neither can its greatness be expressed in numbers, for it is infinity itself. All that can be counted or measured is natural or figurative, but the unity of God cannot be defined. It is everything, and has been recognised as good, and is called 'good', because it is eternal mildness and beneficence within the sensitivity of nature and creature, the sweetest love. For the unity in its aspect as good issues out of itself, introducing itself into willing and moving. There the unity lives and penetrates the willing or moving, and the willing and moving experiences the mildness of the unity. This is the foundation of love in the unity, of which Moses says, 'The Lord our God is a holy God, and there is no other besides him'.³⁹

Astrologically, the Groundless corresponds to the planet Saturn, the inward-looking 'Greater Malefic', the Father of the gods,⁴⁰ while alchemically, it is represented by the 'element' salt and the metal lead, the *prima materia* for alchemical transmutation.

³⁸ Whether, in fact, Böhme's primordial trinity is properly spoken of as an immanent trinity is the subject of some debate. O'Regan lists (*Gnostic Apocalypse*, p. 236, n. 1) the commentators who disagree with the identification of the Groundless with the immanent trinity as Franz von Baader, 'Fermente Cognitionis in *Sämtliche Werke*, 16 vols, II, pp. 257, 319, 356; Koyré, *La philosophie de Jacob Boehme*, pp. 340–343, and a difficult to find work by Dionysius Andreas Freher, subject to private viewing in the National Library, Dublin, Ireland. See Christopher Walton, *Notes for an Adequate Biography of William Law, 1854–1861* (London: [n. pub.], 1854), pp. 259–265. The perceived differences between both notions are, nevertheless, of a discrete and, quite arguably, insignificant variety. This thesis will, therefore, continue with O'Regan's established convention and persist in referring to Böhme's primordial trinity as an immanent one.

³⁹ *Theos. Frag.*, 1. 1.

⁴⁰ Each planet has a particular role in Böhme's system: Saturn is the institutor of corporeality and the source of the wrath of God. *Aurora* 26. 2, 12.

Cabalistically, it can be likened to the supernal realm beyond the Tree of Life paradigm, the ‘infinite’ (*Ain-soph*, אֵין סוֹפ), or the ‘nothing’ (*Ayin*, אַיִן); the eternal unity which is said to exist beyond subject-object relations.⁴¹ The Groundless is at once the first person of the immanent trinity, and yet is extra-trinitarian — it is a realm of non-being before the creation of the Trinity. In virtue of this conception of being ‘everything’ yet ‘nothing’, the Groundless is described using various cataphatic and apophatic monikers throughout Böhme’s work, such as: ‘the being of beings’ (*Wesens des Wesens*) (*Myst. Mag.*, 1. 2, 1. 6); ‘the one and the simple’ (*Myst. Mag.*, 1. 2, 1. 6, 29. 1; *Grace*, 1. 3); ‘the eternal good’ (*Myst. Mag.*, 3. 2; *Clavis*, #2; *De Incarnatione Verbi*, II, 5. 34); ‘root’ (*Wurzel*) (*Myst. Mag.*, 1. 8, 60. 38), ‘light’ (*IV*, II, 3. 4); ‘nameless’ (*ohne Namen*) (*Myst. Mag.*, 1. 8, 60. 38); ‘ungraspable’ (*unbegreiflich*); ‘inexpressible’ (*unaussprechlich*); ‘beyond nature’ (*ausser der Natur*) (*Myst. Mag.*, 60. 38_); ‘not an essence’ (*Myst. Mag.*, 1. 6); ‘hiddenness’ (*Verborgenheit*); and ‘beyond beginning’ (*unanfängliche*).⁴² In short, the Groundless constitutes a locus where the divine ‘nothing’ (*nichts*), God’s existence, meets the divine ‘something’ (*Etwas*), his revealed nature. The dual nature of God indicated by Böhme here by the use of such apophatic and cataphatic monikers is, perhaps, attributable to his Lutheran

⁴¹ Gershom G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken, 1946), p. 221.

⁴² For a more extensive list, see O’Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, p. 32. Böhme’s apophatic god-names recall various mystical traditions. They evoke Gnosticism, for the Father is often described as ‘the incomprehensible, the unthinkable, who surpasses all thought’, Pseudo-Dionysius, who refers to the godhead as ‘ineffable’ (ἀρρητος), ‘inconceivable’ (ἀδιαννυτος), and ‘incomprehensible’ (ἀπερίλεπτος), and Eckhart, who refers to God, among other apophatic titles, as ‘nothing’ (*Nichts*). See *Evangelium Veritatis*, ed. by M. Malinine, H. Ch. Puech, G. Quispel, and others (Zürich: Rascher, 1956), 17. 5; Pseudo-Dionysius, *Divine Names* 1, 1–5; Meister Eckhart, *Die deutschen und lateinischen Werke*, ed. by Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1936–), sermons 2, 3, 9, 17, 26, 29, 53, 57–59, 77.

heritage — Luther's distinction between the divine as both the 'God of wrath' (*Zorngott*) and the 'God of mercy' (*Barmhertziggott*).⁴³ Böhme's use of these monikers seem to imply a God who is without form or order, without limit and unbounded, and yet seeking to be reconciled in to systematic thought. In short, the Groundless is portrayed as something beyond the dialectic, beyond Luther's distinctions of wrath and love, and beyond conventional morality of good and evil.⁴⁴

For it cannot be said of God that he is this or that, evil or good, or that he has distinctions in himself. For he is in himself natureless, passionless, and creatureless. He has no tendency to anything, for there is nothing before him to which he could tend, neither evil nor good [...] There is no quality or pain in him [...] [He] is a single will in which the world and the whole creation lies [...] He is neither light nor darkness, neither love nor wrath, but the Eternal One.⁴⁵

God is the eternal unity [...] which has nothing after nor before him that can give him or become him anything, or that can move him; and he is devoid of all tendencies and properties. He is without origin in time and in himself one only, as a mere purity without attigence. He has nowhere a place or position, nor quires such for his dwelling; but he is at the same time out of the world and in the world, and deeper than any thought can plunge. If the numbers of his greatness and depth should be for a hundred thousand years together, his depth would not have begun to be expressed; for he is infinitude [...]; but the unity of God cannot be expressed, for it is through everything at the same time.⁴⁶

The first person of this primordial trinity is equated with the 'eternal will' (*die ewige Wille* or, simply, *Urwille*), a divine desire which lies 'in the recesses of this abyss'.⁴⁷

⁴³ Miller, 'Luther and Boehme', p. 283.

⁴⁴ See Schelling's comment that 'there must be a being before all basis and before all existence, that is, before any duality at all; how can we designate it except as "primal ground," or rather, as the "groundless"'. *Of Human Freedom*, trans. by James Gutmann (Chicago: Open Court, 1936), p. 87.

⁴⁵ *Grace*, 1. 3.

⁴⁶ *Theos. Frag.*, 1. 1.

⁴⁷ Hans Lassen Martensen, *Jacob Boehme: His Life and Teaching*, trans. by T. Rhys Evans (London:

The eternal will is described as the ‘essence of essences’,⁴⁸ and the ‘beginning and is called God the Father’.⁴⁹ In short, it is the Groundless seeking a ground, the ‘cause of all being’,⁵⁰ the first cause which brings the second person of the Trinity into manifestation. The Groundless cannot endure in the state of contradiction, between being and yet not-being, of all and yet none. Happily, it possesses the Eckartian divine ‘spark’ (*Fünklein* or *Spinter*) which is the eternal will, the indwelling desire to come to know itself. This will is the possibility, the potentiality, the seed for self-consciousness; the desire to move from chaos to order, from contraction to expansion, and from boundlessness to limit.⁵¹ It is unclear, however, in Böhme’s writings, how exactly the eternal will functions as the cause or catalyst for this movement towards self-consciousness; whether it is something that happens to the Groundless, or is something the Groundless wills itself.⁵² Nevertheless, God in himself, writes Böhme, ‘has no more than one desire, which is to give and bring forth himself’.⁵³ For this to be possible, for the Groundless to know itself, it is necessary, Böhme argues, for it to distinguish itself from itself. The Groundless, to put it simply, requires a ‘ground’ (*Grund*); the *nichts* requires an *Ichts*; the no-thing requires something. ‘The nothing,’

Hodder and Stoughton, 1885), p. 57.

⁴⁸ *Princ.*, 4. 56.

⁴⁹ Jakob Böhme, *Of the Incarnation of the Christ* [hereafter *Incarnation*], trans. by John Rolleston Earle (London: Constable, 1934), II, 2. 4.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ This divine will to move from boundlessness to limitation is found throughout Gnosticism — the unlimited Father desires to become ‘limited’ (ὄρος) in order to be ‘comprehended’ (καταλαβείν). Cf. ‘The 4th Treatise’, in *The Nag Hammadi Codex I (Codex Jung)*, ed. by Harold W. Attridge (London: Brill, 1985), 75. 13–21.

⁵² O’Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, p. 33. Whether the Groundless ‘wills its own will’ has obvious problematical implications.

⁵³ *Grace*, 1. 18.

Böhme writes, 'hungers after the something, and this hunger is the desire [...] For the desire has nothing that it is able to conceive. It conceives only itself, and draws itself to itself [...] and brings itself from abyss to byss [*Vom Ungrunde in Grund*] [...] and yet remains a nothing'.⁵⁴

Had the hidden God, who is merely one essence and will, not led himself by his will out of himself, had he not brought himself out of eternal comprehension in the *temperamenta* into a differentiation of wills, and had he not led the same differentiation into a subjectivation of natural and creaturely life, and did this same differentiation not stand in strife in life, how then would the hidden will of God, which in itself is single, become manifest to itself?⁵⁵

Böhme comes to the realisation, as Hegel will come to do, that the Father of the immanent trinity is an insufficient representation of the criteria needed for divine self-revelation.⁵⁶ Both philosophers conceptualise divine self-revelation as bi-partite: as coming to self-consciousness and self-subjectivation on the one hand, and as coming to self-manifestation on the other. The eternal will of the Groundless is the push towards self-consciousness, but not self-manifestation. Therefore, a second trinity is posited, an economic divine will to appear in the world of creation, for the *deus absconditus* to appear as *deus revelatus*. As Böhme writes,

For if there were only one will then all beings would constitute only one thing, but in opposition each raises itself in itself for its victory and exaltation. And in this conflict

⁵⁴ *Myst. Mag.*, 3. 5.

⁵⁵ Jakob Böhme *On Divine Contemplation* [hereafter *Contemplation*], trans. by John Sparrow (London: Printed for M. Simmons, 1661), 1. 10. The '*Tempermentum*' is Böhme's term for the proper 'balance' of a being; how it orients itself towards the dialectic of being and non-being.

⁵⁶ Walsh, 'The Historical Dialectic of Spirit', p. 25.

stands all life and growth, and thereby the divine Wisdom is revealed and comes in a formation to contemplation and to joyousness since in overcoming there is joy but a single will is not revealed to itself, for there is neither evil nor good in it, neither joy nor sorrow.⁵⁷

As such, the process of God's emanation is treated by Böhme in a seven stage narrative which attempts to avoid identifying God as the ultimate source of evil. As he writes in the *Aurora*,

The whole or total God stands in seven species or kinds, or in a sevenfold form of generating; and if these births or genitures were not, then there would be neither God, nor life, nor angel, nor any creature. And these births or genitures have no beginning, but have so generated themselves from eternity [...] These seven generatings in all are none of them the first, the second, or the third, or last, but they are all seven, every one of them [...] I must set them down one after another, according to the creaturely way and manner, otherwise you could not understand it.⁵⁸

These seven 'species', 'kinds', 'forms' (*Gestalten*), 'source spirits' (*Quellgeister*), 'properties' (*Eigenschaften*), or 'qualities' (*Qualitäten*) are, in Böhme's words, 'the mobility, surge, or drive of a thing' (*die Beweglichkeit, Quellen, und der Trieben eines Dinges*).⁵⁹ Each quality (*Qualitat* originating etymologically from *Quellen* or *Quell*, a

⁵⁷ *Schriften*, VII; *Myst. Mag.*, 11. 8.

⁵⁸ *Aurora*, 23. 15–19.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 1. 3. Walsh draws a comparison between Böhme's seven qualities and Goethe's seven stages of the *Urpflanze*. *The Esoteric Origins of Modern Ideological Thought: Boehme and Hegel* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1978), p. 94. See Ronald D. Gray, *Goethe the Alchemist: A Study of Alchemical Symbolism in Goethe's Literary and Scientific Works* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), p.74. For the significance of Böhme's settling the number of the qualities at seven, see Julius Evola's comment in *The Hermetic Tradition*, trans. by E. E. Rehmus (Rochester, V. T.: Inner Traditions, 1995), p. 52 that, 'Metaphysically, seven expresses the three added to the four [...] seven is the manifestation of the creative principles (triad) in relation to the world made up of the four elements; the full expression of nature creating nature (*natura naturans*) in action'. See also Wilhelm Heinrich Roscher, 'Die Sieben- und Neunzahl in Kultus und Mythos der Griechen', *Abhandlungen der philologisch-historischen Klasse der Kgl. Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften*, 24 (1904), 19–34.

surging force, or *Quall* or *Quahl*, meaning pain)⁶⁰ is a 'surging vitality' (*ein quellende Kraft*), and 'a power of life'.⁶¹ One commentator imagines Böhme's conception of the qualities as 'an egressive energy, an inherent libido',⁶² likening it to an urge much like Henri Bergson's *élan vital*.⁶³ Specific to the divine, however, the qualities constitute the 'powers of expression in God, manifested in the temporal-material world'.⁶⁴ They inform, as Magee comments, all reality and 'are the *Grundbegriffe* for all the sciences'.⁶⁵ These qualities are highly reminiscent of the sephirah of the cabbalistic 'Tree of Life' paradigm, as both attempt a narrative description of God's descent from the purely spiritual or supernal realm to the material world. As the Cabbala was, from the medieval era to the Renaissance, appropriated by many Christian mystics and natural philosophers, a certain degree of Hermeticism was introduced to the Tree of Life paradigm. This element of Hermeticism took the form primarily of astrological and alchemical correspondences to the various stages in the manifestation of God. Böhme's own seven qualities share these Hermetic correspondences almost exactly, which are illustrated diagrammatically at the end of this chapter.⁶⁶

The seven qualities, independent of their Hermetic attributions, are listed by Böhme in many of his works, and are as follows: (1) 'sourness' (*Herb*); (2) 'sweetness' (*Süss*); (3) 'bitterness' (*Bitter*); (4) 'heat' (*Hitze*); (5) 'love' (*Liebe*); (6)

⁶⁰ O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, p. 41. Cf. Koyré, p. 247; Stoudt, p. 83ff.

⁶¹ *Aurora*, 1. 6.

⁶² Stoudt, p. 83.

⁶³ Cf. Jacques Chevalier, *Bergson* (Paris: Plon, 1926), pp. 192, 193, 221.

⁶⁴ O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, p. 41.

⁶⁵ Magee, p. 160.

⁶⁶ See pp. 170–171.

‘tone’ (*Ton* or *Schall*); and (7) ‘body’ (*Corpus*). These seven qualities are organised by Böhme into two triads. The first three qualities, identical in name and in concept to Galen’s humours, constitute Böhme’s immanent, pre-worldly trinity — or ‘Wheel of Anguish’ in his own terminology — with the first quality of sour as representative of the Groundless, the first principle, the point of departure, being both no-thing and yet everything in seed.⁶⁷ The final three qualities (five, six, and seven) make up Böhme’s economic trinity, as revealed to the world of creation. The fourth quality, lying between the immanent and economic triads, being alternately named ‘heat’ or (lightning) ‘flash’ (*Schrack*), serves as a point of transition between these two trinities, between the unrevealed and revealed God. The fourth quality represents a creative flash as the result of the first three qualities having fulfilled their original τέλος, that of coming to self-consciousness. Heat is the alchemical fire of calcination, the burning down of the inflexible base metals, the ‘ardent source’ of life’s begetting, the ‘burning, self-consuming life-heart’, the ‘source of regeneration’ and the ‘new life’s centre in God’.⁶⁸

These qualities represent different ways of talking about the Father’s manifestation. Further, they have logical connotations which seek to ‘reveal the God-consciousness within man’.⁶⁹ How this is revealed is through Böhme’s use of alchemical symbolism, through the triad of salt, mercury, and sulphur.

⁶⁷ *Epistles*, 47. 37.

⁶⁸ Jakob Böhme, *The Threefold Life of Man* [hereafter *Threefold*], trans. by John Sparrow (London: [n. pub.], 1650; repr. by Watkins, 1909), 8. 18, 9. 71–72. Stoudt, p. 113.

⁶⁹ Stoudt, p. 197.

The ancients said that in sulphur, mercury, and salt are contained all things. This refers not so much to the material as to the spiritual aspect of things, namely, to the spirit of the qualities wherefrom material things grow. By the term 'salt' they understood the sharp metallic desire in nature; 'mercury' symbolised to them the motion and differentiation of the former, by means of which each thing becomes objective and enters into formation. 'Sulphur', the third quality, signified the anguish of nature.⁷⁰

In terms of the Trinity, be it immanent or economic, Böhme attributes salt as descriptive of the nature of the Father (represented in the first and fifth qualities), mercury of the Son (represented in the second and six qualities), and sulphur to the Holy Spirit (represented in the third and seventh qualities). Böhme is keen to note, however, that this narrative and its accompanying symbolism does not constitute, as it were, the whole story of God. Böhme exhorts the reader 'not to understand in an earthly manner the high supernatural meaning', rather, in the process of his manifestation, God 'does not go through all the spirits equally', but 'touches [upon them] or stirs them'.⁷¹

§ 1. 2. *Hegel's Treatment of Böhme's Trinitarian Dynamic*

To turn now to Hegel's thoughts on the Böhmean scheme, it is true that, while Hegel acknowledges that Böhme's trinitarian speculation as 'one of the most remarkable

⁷⁰ Jakob Böhme, *The Clavis* [hereafter *Clavis*], trans. by John Sparrow (London: Printed by M. Simmons, 1647), 46.

⁷¹ *Grace*, 3. 10; *Aurora*, 10. 35.

attempts [...] to comprehend the innermost nature of the absolute essence', naturally he does not accept any of Böhme's representative thinking about God. Böhme's list of the sensual categories of God's manifestation (the qualities of sourness, sweetness, bitterness, etc.) are regarded by Hegel as, on first glance, confused and lacking in rational thought. As Hegel writes, there appears to be nothing 'stable and constant within it, since he [Böhme] always experiences the inappropriateness of the representation to what he wants [to say]'.⁷² A more recent commentator also puts it that Böhme's mode of expression has 'no constancy of mind. The ideas all run together without a principle of order to guide them; expressions are forever changing and any attempt to give a coherent account of them would only delude itself'.⁷³ It is due to the crutch picture-thinking that Böhme can comprehend only certain moments or events in God's manifestation, such as the *contrarium* between good and evil, but cannot reconcile such into a totality. God may be declared as an absolute essence, but Böhme cannot give a clear and rational account why this is in fact so. As Hegel writes in the *History of Philosophy*:

The basic idea for [Böhme] is the striving to hold all in an absolute unity — the absolute divine unity, and the unification of all absolutes in God. His chief, one may even say his only thought, which goes through all, is in general the Holy Trinity — to encompass the divine trinity in all, all things as its revelation and exposition. So that it is the universal principle in which and through which everything is: and indeed, such that all things have only this trinity in themselves, not as a trinity of the imagination [*Phantasie*], but really —the absolute idea.⁷⁴

⁷² *Briefe von und an Hegel*, ed. by Johannes Hoffmeister and Rolf Flechsig, 4 vols (Hamburg: Meiner, 1952–1961), I, pp. 381–382. Trans. in Walsh, 'The Historical Dialectic of Spirit', p. 18.

⁷³ Walsh, p. 18. Based upon Hegel's similar comment in *Geschichte der Philosophie*, p. 304.

⁷⁴ 'Geschichte der Philosophie', in *Sämtliche Werke*, XIX, 301. Trans. in Walsh, p. 18.

Hegel rejects Böhme's use of apophatic soubriquets for the unmanifest Godhead as wild and fantastical;⁷⁵ however, Böhme's seven part qualitative analysis of God's manifestation is recognised as having a particular kind of merit. As Hegel approvingly writes in the *Philosophy of Nature*:

Qualification or 'inqualification', an expression of Jakob Böhme's [thought], a philosophy which goes deep but into a murky depth, signifies the movement of a quality (astringency, bitterness, fieriness, etc.) in itself, insofar as it posits and establishes itself in its negative nature (in its torment or *Qual*) from out of an other and in general its unrest in itself, by means of which it brings forth and maintains itself only through a struggle.⁷⁶

Hegel fails, however, to give Böhme his proper due, for, as has been stated, Böhme does admit that the language and symbolism he uses to describe God's manifestation should be understood only speculatively. Similarly, Böhme's use of the apophatic monikers of negative theology, describing God as 'nothing', are not, he writes, to be taken in a literal sense.

Hegel also eschews Böhme's *via negativa* approach to describe the *deus absconditus*, and, as such, his descriptions are almost entirely cataphatic. His approach is not Dionysian, however — Hegel does not seek out 'God-names' as if to

⁷⁵ O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*, p. 130.

⁷⁶ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, 'Wissenschaft der Logik', in *Sämtliche Werke*, IV, p. 129. Trans. in Walsh, p. 29. See also *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature: Part two of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830)*, trans. by A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 114: 'Qualierung or Inqualierung, an expression of Jakob Böhme's, whose philosophy goes deep, but into a turbid depth, signifies the movement of a quality (of sourness, bitterness, fieriness, etc.) within itself in so far as it situates and fastens itself in its negative nature (in its *Quahl*) from out of an other — signifies in general the quality's own internal unrest by which it produces and maintains itself only in conflict'.

define God as a particularity, for he admits that ‘predicates as particular characteristics are not appropriate to the nature of God’.⁷⁷ At his most abstract, Hegel describes the Father as the ‘universal spirit that particularises itself’.⁷⁸ He is ‘the whole’ (*das Ganze*), ‘wholeness’ (*Ganzheit*), and ‘totality’ (*Totalität*). He is ‘the One’ (both *der Eine*, the personal one, and *das Eine*, the non-personal one), ‘the ov’, ‘the abyss’, and ‘the depths’.⁷⁹ What Christian orthodoxy calls God is, according to Hegel, purely the *deus revelatus*. It is God as seen through the eyes of finite spirits, as the object of faith (*Glaube*) and devotion (*Andacht*), expressed through the medium of representation. The *deus revelatus* exists only in religion, and, as such, is in a purely objective relationship to man.⁸⁰ Therefore, the *deus revelatus* is as a finite spirit himself, contingent upon mankind, and not absolute. Hegel’s God, however, expressed through the ontological narratives of the *Encyclopedia* and in the 1831 lectures, is the ‘absolute idea’, identical with the traditional conception of the orthodox *deus absconditus*. Nevertheless, it is Hegel’s maxim that ‘God is God only so far as he knows himself’ —⁸¹ for the divine to be spoken of according to his

⁷⁷ LPR, III, pp. 76, 277–278. Cf. Dionysius the Areopagite, *The Mystical Theology and the Divine Names*, trans. by C. E. Rolt (London: Dover Publications, 2004).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 97. It might be argued that, although the God-names of ‘abyss’ and ‘depths’ are opposed to each other in an etymological sense, Hegel’s pairing of the two may be indicative of the dialectical *agon* which lies at the heart of the *deus absconditus*. On an historical note, the god-name ‘depths’ has its origin in the Gnostic creation myth, where it is stated that, of the Father and his angels, ‘the depths knew them, yet they could not know the depths, in which they were, neither could they know themselves’ (4th Treatise, 60. 19).

⁸⁰ J. A. Leighton, ‘Hegel’s Conception of God’, *The Philosophical Review*, 5 (1896), 601–618, (p. 610).

⁸¹ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Hegel’s Philosophy of Mind*, trans. by William Wallace (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 298.

definition, he must distinguish himself from himself, and come to self-consciousness. He must move away from his aspect as *deus absconditus*, 'other' himself, and present himself as the *deus revelatus*. Hegel's treatment of the Father is, therefore, as both *deus absconditus* and *deus revelatus*: he is both God in his aspect as distinct and unknown to creation, and God in his aspect as present in creation, in salvation history. Where the Christian religion is concerned, there cannot be a God who is only 'in-itself', for the Christian God is a 'living God'.⁸² Hegel realises, as did Böhme, that self-consciousness does not equal self-manifestation. The immanent trinity is only 'one side of the absolutely eternal Trinity, it is only the Godhead by itself in reciprocal contemplation and recognition [*Anerkenntnis*]'.⁸³ Therefore, an economic trinity is posited, wherein the Father enters into the world of creation.

[God] has entered into a relationship with evil [creation] and the medium is the abomination of the mixture of the two [...] but it must be converted into its opposite, the Son must go through the earth, to overcome the evil, and when he appears as victor on one side he awakens in the other the self-recognition of God, as the recognition of its new unity with God, or as the Spirit of God. Thereby the medium becomes a beautiful divine medium, the universe of God.⁸⁴

⁸² Thomas J. J. Altizer, 'Hegel and the Christian God', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 59 (1991), 71–91 (p. 76).

⁸³ Hoffmeister, *Dokumente*, p. 304. Trans. in Walsh, p. 24.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 305. Trans. in Walsh, p. 25.

§ 1. 3. *Hegel's God and its Historical Traces*

Many Hegel scholars have had great difficulty in characterising the nature of Hegel's God. While the greatest corollary to Hegel's conception of 'spirit' is with the God of Judaism and orthodox Christianity, the relation between the two is not entirely analogous.⁸⁵ It might be suggested, however, that Hegel's conception of the divine bears some resemblance to that of other, heterodox systems. Hegel himself argues that this is not unusual, as the notion of three persons in one god is itself not unique to Christianity. Hegel writes that 'traces' (*Spuren*) of the triadic structure are found in both religions and philosophies preceding Christianity: Hinduism possesses a divine triadic structure (the Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva *Trimurti*);⁸⁶ Pythagoras speaks of a divine triad; Plato, the Neopythagorians, and the Neoplatonists address and redress the three forms of the World Soul; and even Kant employs a triadic structure in his a priori division of concepts.⁸⁷ The strongest resemblance to Hegel's conception of the

⁸⁵ This is argued in many commentaries of Hegel's philosophy of religion, in particular by Quentin Lauer in *Hegel's Concept of God* (Albany, N. Y.: State University of New York Press, 1982). See also Peter Hodgson, 'Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel', in *Nineteenth Century Religious Thought in the West*, ed. by Ninian Smart, John Clayton, Patrick Sherry, and others (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 81–121 (n. 6 and passim).

⁸⁶ Or, indeed, the divine union of Brahman and Atman. Of the experience of this union Hegel writes in the *Phenomenology*: 'With this wholly abstract purity of continuity, that is, indeterminateness and vacuity of conception, it is indifferent whether this abstraction is called space, pure intuiting, or pure thinking; it is altogether the same as what the Indian calls Brahma, when for years on end, physically motionless and equally unmoved in sensation, conception, fantasy, desire and so on, looking only at the tip of his nose, he says inwardly only *Om, Om, Om*, or else nothing at all. This dull, empty consciousness, understood as consciousness is — *being*'. Cf. *PhS*, p. 97; *WL* I, 89.

⁸⁷ Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, p. 70. Some of these 'traces' might be considered somewhat spurious, as Hegel's knowledge of the medieval world has been described as 'largely ignorant', and his familiarity with the oriental is limited to the naïve pro-Hellenic view that the East constitutes a direct antitype to the occidental. Cf. Altizer, p. 76.

Trinity may be said to be with Gnosticism and Neo-Platonism.⁸⁸ The resemblance to Gnosticism, particularly Manichaeism, is apparent for both systems are defined by the narrative of a quasi-divine being descending into the material world, and the recovery of its fully divine identity through the process of salvation history. Such a resemblance is, however, partial: Manichaeism, as with most, if not all, Gnostic systems, treats the material world as an other which cannot ultimately be reconciled to the being of God,⁸⁹ whereas, in Hegel's own ontological system, this is not argued to be the case.⁹⁰ Similarly, a Platonic or Neo-Platonic resemblance to Hegel's God lies in that both systems promote the concept of the life of a divine being whose generation is emanationist: the divine projects itself or 'exits' (*exitus*) into matter, and later 'returns' (*reditus*) to itself.⁹¹ Despite this similarity, Hegel's system diverges from the Platonic in that spirit exits, returns, and is enriched by the experience, coming to embrace all of reality within itself.⁹² These divergent conceptions of God serve as antecedents to Hegel's own idea; they are forms in which this truth, this idea, has fermented.⁹³ The main point, for Hegel, nevertheless, is to know that these

⁸⁸ As is argued by Gerald Hanratty's in his articles on the subject. Cf.: Gerald Hanratty, 'Hegel and the Gnostic Tradition: I', *Philosophical Studies* (Ireland), 30 (1984), 23–48; 'Hegel and the Gnostic Tradition: II', *Philosophical Studies* (Ireland), 31 (1986–1987), 301–325.

⁸⁹ J. Zandee, 'Gnostic Ideas on the Fall', *Numen*, 11 (1964), 13–74 (p. 21).

⁹⁰ Nor is it Böhme's position, for he advances that a resolution or unity between God and the material world is indeed possible. Cf. Nicolaus Berdyaev, 'Unground and Freedom', in *Six Theosophic Points and Other Writings*, XXXIV.

⁹¹ John Macquarrie, *In Search of Deity: An Essay in Dialectical Theism* (London: SCM Press, 1984), p. 130. See Chapter Three of this thesis.

⁹² Walsh, 'The Historical Dialectic of Spirit', p. 16.

⁹³ This idea is most fully realised in the following passage from lectures on the philosophy of religion: 'The concept of the preceding religions has purified itself into this opposition, and because this opposition has manifested and exhibited itself as an existing need, it has been expressed in this way: 'but when the time was fulfilled, God sent his Son' [Galatians 4. 4.]. That means: when the need for

appearances, 'wild as they are, are rational — to know that they have their ground in reason, and to know what sort of reason is in them. But at the same time one must know how to distinguish the form of rationality that is present and not yet adequate to the concept'.⁹⁴

This vast conglomeration of volition, interests and activities is the sum total of instruments and means which the world spirit employs to accomplish its end, to make this end conscious and to give it reality [*Realität*]; and its end is simply that of finding itself, of coming to terms with itself, and of contemplating its own actuality.⁹⁵

Within the idea, even that which appears to be past is never lost. The idea is of the present, and the spirit is immortal; there is no past or future time at which it did not or would not exist; it is not over and done with, nor does it not yet exist — on the contrary, it exists absolutely now. This in fact means that the present world and the present form of self-consciousness of the spirit contains within them all the stages which appear earlier in history.⁹⁶

A more modern philosophical resemblance to Hegel's conception of God has been suggested, to that of Spinoza's notion. The accusation has been made that Hegel

spirit came into existence, spirit manifested the reconciliation' (*VPR*, I, p. 121). Translation in Stephen D. Crites, 'The Gospel according to Hegel', *The Journal of Religion*, 46 (1966), 246–263 (p. 252). Otto Kühler notes that the above quotation from Galatians is one of the four scriptural citations which are most common to Hegel's corpus. The others are: 'The letter kills, the Spirit makes alive'; 'God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in Spirit and truth'; and 'Spirit will lead you into all truth'. As Crites comments (p. 262, n. 13), Hegel's preference for each quotation is evident in each case. Cf. Otto Kühler, *Sinn, Bedeutung und Auslegung der heiligen Schrift in Hegels Philosophie* (Leipzig: Published for S. Hirzel, 1939), p. 89.

⁹⁴ *LPR*, III, pp. 288–289.

⁹⁵ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction, Reason in History*, trans. by H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 74; *Die Vernunft in der Geschichte*, ed. by Johannes Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Meiner, 1955), p. 87.

⁹⁶ *Reason in History*, p. 150; *Vernunft in der Geschichte*, p. 182.

considered himself, and was considered by others, to be a Spinozist or pantheist,⁹⁷ that his conception of the divine was one in which ‘everything, the whole, the universe, this complex of everything existing, this infinity of many things, individual things, that all this is God’.⁹⁸ While it is true that, for Hegel, the infinite is inclusive of the finite, and that God is the unity of all that is, God cannot be reduced to the essence or identity of all finite things, as a simple universal or substance.⁹⁹ There is a great distinction between Spinoza’s idea of God as ‘absolute substance’ and Hegel’s concept of the same as an ‘absolute person’. Hegel does not simply reframe Spinoza’s God as a personable being, rather he contends that the concept of God simply as absolute substance is not well enough defined by philosophical standards.¹⁰⁰ If God is a substance, Hegel argues, even an absolute one, he becomes limited. Thus philosophy itself becomes limited, as its content is God, and, as such, cannot provide the answers that Hegel claims it does. Nevertheless, it is difficult to be entirely sure if this interpretation of Hegel’s response to the charge of pantheism is indeed correct. As Cunningham notes, Hegel’s definition of God as an absolute person is somewhat nebulous as Hegel fails to satisfactorily define what a ‘person’, in this sense, actually is. It is clear that Hegel identifies substance with subject (*Subjekt*), and that God can

⁹⁷ It has long been argued, subsequent to the ‘pantheism controversy’ of the nineteenth century, that Spinoza’s philosophy cannot be rightly be called pantheism, as it does not describe the process of God as absorbed into the world, but the world as absorbed into God. Spinoza’s conception of God may thereby be properly defined as ‘panentheism’, or, in Hegel’s words, as ‘acosmism’ (*LPR*, I, pp. 376–377). Cf. Hodgson, p. 68.

⁹⁸ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on Philosophy of Religion: One-Volume Editions — The Lectures of 1827*, ed. Peter C. Hodgson (Berkeley: University of California Press; One-Volume edition, 1988), p. 123.

⁹⁹ Leighton, p. 607. Cf. *Werke*, XI, 53, 56.

¹⁰⁰ Cunningham, p. 103.

be easily conceived within Hegel's system as an absolute subject or absolute subjectivity (*Subjektivität*), but the notion of absolute personhood itself is vague.¹⁰¹ Spinoza's conception of God, however, remains significant for Hegel's treatment of the Trinity, but not for the most obvious of reasons. Rather, it appears that when Hegel thinks of the work of Spinoza, he is really thinking of Böhme's thought. Hegel refers to Spinoza's God as 'the abyss of substance' (*der Abgrund der Substanz*). The term *Abgrund*, as has been mentioned, owes its origin to Eckhart, and is, as Magee comments, the 'conceptual ancestor' to Böhme's *Ungrund* (in point of fact, Böhme, at times, misprints *Abgrund* for *Ungrund* in some of his texts).¹⁰² For Hegel, the sense of the term *Abgrund* is clearly synonymous with the 'unmanifest, undeveloped, *potentia* of Böhme's *Ungrund*'.¹⁰³ Hegel's sense of the synonymy of this term is illustrated in the following passage:

[Spinoza's] philosophy has only a rigid and unyielding substance and not yet spirit; in it we are not at home with ourselves [*man ist nicht bei sich*]. God is not spirit here, because he is not the triune [*der Dreieinige*]. Substance remains rigid and petrified, without Böhme's sources [*Quellen*]; for the individual determinations in the form of determinations of the understanding are not Böhme's source-spirits [*Quellgeister*], which energise and expand in one another.¹⁰⁴

In the discussion of Hegel's formulation of the Trinity so far, some distinct Augustinian overtones may have been recognised. Like Augustine, Hegel conceives

¹⁰¹ Ibid. Cunningham may be referring to the passage in the 1827 manuscript, which cryptically defines 'person' as 'the infinite subjectivity of self-certainty; it is reflection into self through distinction' (*LPR*, III, pp. 82–83).

¹⁰² Magee, p. 163.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ *LHP* III, p. 288; *Werke*, XX, 166.

of the Trinity as a 'trialectical model of subject and object mediated by a third'.¹⁰⁵ While it is unlikely that Hegel would have been directly acquainted with Augustine's work, he would have shared his Neoplatonic foundation,¹⁰⁶ and have been familiar with the trialectical form from his reading of Kant.¹⁰⁷ Hegel's return to the Neoplatonic is especially evident in his discussion of the *perichoresis* present among the moments of the Trinity.¹⁰⁸ We have spoken briefly of this perichoretic dialogue before; for Hegel, this *perichoresis* is not motivated by love in the traditionally Christian sense, rather Hegel returns to more Platonic ideal. Whereas in orthodox belief the love expressed by God towards his Son is of an overflowing, and of an altruistic kind (i.e. it is agapaic), Hegel posits a love motivated by an erotic desire proceeding from a lack (of self-understanding), equivalent to Böhme's conception.

¹⁰⁵ Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, p. 134.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. See also Peter C. Hodgson, *God in History: Shapes of Freedom* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), pp. 55–70. Augustine's trialectical model of the Trinity can be successfully applied to the Hegelian formulation, but only representationally. As Hegel writes in the *Science of Logic*: 'To take numbers and geometrical figures (as the circle, triangle, etc. have often been taken), simply as symbols (the circle, for example, as a symbol for eternity, the triangle, of the Trinity), is so far harmless enough; but, on the other hand, it is foolish to fancy that in this way more is expressed than can be grasped and expressed by thought. Whatever profound wisdom may be supposed to lie in such meagre symbols or in those richer products of fantasy in the mythology of peoples and in poetry generally, it is properly for thought alone to make explicit for consciousness the wisdom that lies on *in* them; and not in symbols, but in nature and in mind. In symbols the truth is dimmed and veiled by the sensuous element; only in the form of thought is it fully revealed to consciousness: the meaning is only the thought itself' (*PhS*, p. 215; *WL*, I, 228–229).

¹⁰⁷ This familiarity is mentioned explicitly in the *Logic*, where Hegel writes that where 'the sphere of the spirit trichotomy predominates [...] it is one of Kant's merits to have drawn attention to this' (*EL*, § 230, Z; Geraets, p. 298).

¹⁰⁸ This περιχώρησις or 'circuminsession' (alternately termed by the Greek Fathers as μίξις, κρᾶσις, or συγκράσις) is traditionally defined as '*intima existentia Unius Personae in Alterâ, sine confusione Personae seu Personalitatis*' (Döllinger, p. 167, n. 3). Cf. Fulgentius of Ruspe's comment in *De Fide ad Petrum* (1. 4.) that '*Totus Pater in Filio et Spiritu Sancto est, et totus Filius in Patre et Spiritu Sancto est, totusque Spiritus Sanctus in Patre et Filio est*'. Noted in Johannes Perrone, *Prælectiones Theologicae*, 2 volumes (Paris: [n. pub.], 1842), I, p. 4. Cf. also John Henry Newman, *Arians of the Fourth Century* (London: Rivington & Co., 1833), pp. 189, 190.

The first moment, God 'in his eternal essence', is motivated to create the second moment by the need to reveal himself to himself. The transition from first to second moments constitutes a 'dynamic movement (of desire) seeking fulfilment', an 'ecstatic movement of movement of the self towards the other'.¹⁰⁹ Desmond notes that Hegel's conception of God as an 'erotic absolute' raises the question regarding whether God should not be, by definition, beyond need?¹¹⁰ The answer lies with a previously discussed theme: that of the distinction between God before and after creation. For Hegel, God before creation is a finite being, and creates out of a need to render himself absolute. Creation allows God to reveal himself to himself, as man is made in the image of God. As man proceeds chronologically to a more perfect state, so does God through this self-reflection. Ultimately, at the end of history, where the biblical paradise lost will be regained, man will become perfect, and God absolute. God's erotic love thrusts towards the future, towards the ultimate goal of spirit — the institution of God as God.¹¹¹

Here, Hegel's ontological scheme departs from Böhme, but only in part. Böhme's *deus absconditus* is never declared explicitly to be, in any way, 'finite', rather as fundamentally lacking in something, i.e. 'definition'. This does betray, however, a definite notion of contingency in Böhme's conception of God, and, in this

¹⁰⁹ Desmond, *Hegel's God*, p. 113. See Schleiermacher's comment in *The Christian Faith*, trans. by Hugh Ross Mackintosh and James Stuart Stewart (London: Continuum International, 1999), p. 8 that 'Life [...] is to be conceived as an alternation between an abiding-in-self (*Insichbleiben*) and a passing-beyond-self (*aussichheraustreten*) on the part of the subject'.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

way, this notion does seem to then reconcile itself to Hegel's ontology. While Hegel criticises Böhme's eccentric qualitative narrative of the process of divine self-consciousness and self-manifestation, the Böhmean account is, nevertheless, if not identical to the Hegelian conception in letter, it certainly is in spirit. Thus far, the first part of Böhme and Hegel's tripartite trinitarian narrative with reference to the Father has been examined. The following section deals with the next person of the Trinity, the Son.

SECTION TWO

THE SON

The bulk of Böhme and Hegel's reflections on the Son can be schematised in two ways. Firstly, the reflections of both are primarily of an Augustinian nature, in that they are chiefly concerned with the Son taken as the vehicle for the self-consciousness of the Father. What distinguishes both from the mainstream Augustine-influenced Protestant orthodox tradition, however, lies in the fact that their thoughts on the subject cannot fully be thought of as entirely Augustinian. For Böhme and Hegel, self-consciousness is an historical consciousness, and, as such, the concept of the Son is fully bound up in the doctrine of the Incarnation. Further, neither Böhme nor Hegel view the Son, nor any part of either the immanent or economic trinities, as 'persons'. This is not to say that either is guilty of the heresy of Sabellianism or modalism, that

God as Father, Son, and Spirit, simply represent aspects of the one divine nature.¹¹² Rather each so-called 'person' of the Trinity is, for both Böhme and Hegel, treated as entirely real and concrete stage or 'moment' in the divine process of coming to self-consciousness and self-manifestation.

§ 2. 1. *The Personhood of the Trinity*

The application of the idea of personhood to the concept of God is seen as a necessary one, not only for Christian orthodoxy, but also for theologians and philosophers of the pantheistic type. Even Schleiermacher concedes that if God is taken as a being who answers the prayers of his faithful, a personality is indeed required.¹¹³ A more recent commentator argues that,

[The fundamental premise for Christian orthodoxy] is the distinction between person (πρόσωπον) or hypostasis (ὑπόστασις) and being (οὐσία) or essence (φύσις) in the concept of God, with primacy given to person over against being. A fundamental principle of [theology] remains the established formulation: 'The Christian God is a personal God'. Person is to be strongly distinguished from the individual and implies relation, communion, community and society. Apophatic theology favours a personal and participatory knowledge of God and rejects every 'natural' and 'possessive' epistemology.¹¹⁴

¹¹² As was the view of Marcellus (ca. 330), among others, in the early Christian church. This view has been condemned by Christian orthodoxy in many councils, beginning with the Arian council at Antioch in 344.

¹¹³ Noted in Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 8 vols (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), III, p. 676, n. 2.

¹¹⁴ Marios Begzos, 'Der Apophatismus in der ostkirchlichen Theologie', ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΟΝΙΚΗ

The 'personality' of the Trinity is claimed through the relational titles of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These titles serve to be understood as describing the necessary relations of the Trinity (which are indeed thought of as relations, and not essential properties or accidents), which are given as 'paternity' (said of the Father), 'filiation' (of the Son), and 'spiration' (of the Holy Spirit).¹¹⁵ These relational titles denoting personality have always, historically, been problematic for Christian orthodoxy, as, on the one hand, and as stated, it cannot be said that they simply describe expressions or aspects of the divine nature, nor, on the other hand, can it be said each person of the Trinity is a being unto itself, for such a view naturally leads to a position of 'tri-theism', contradicting the declared 'oneness' of the Trinity.¹¹⁶

Böhme rejects the notion of personhood, not only of the *deus absconditus*, but the entire Trinity itself. Man 'can on no ground say that God is three persons, but he is threefold in his eternal procreation; he bears himself in a trinity, and yet in this eternal procreation is to be understood only one essence, neither Father, Son, nor

ΕΠΕΤΗΡΙΣ ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΚΗΣ ΣΧΟΛΗΣ (ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟΥ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ), 27 (1986), 177–216 (p. 196). Trans. of article in Harold H. Oliver, *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 41 (1996), 327–357.

¹¹⁵ Scott David Foutz, 'On the Implications of the Self-Consciousness of the Divine Essence: An Examination of Augustine's Application of the Triunal Nature of Human Self-consciousness to the Godhead as found in *De trinitate*, books 8–15', *Quodlibet*, 1 (1999) 20–60. Alternatively, these relations of the Trinity can be said to apply to the relational titles of God *qua* creator, God *qua* redeemer, and God *qua* sanctifier.

¹¹⁶ In addition this raises the spectre of there being three prime movers and three necessary beings. The simplicity or oneness of God is, perhaps, the single most strongly argued case by classical theists, from either the pagan (esp. Parmenides, Aristotle, Plotinus, Avicenna, Maimonides, and the Pseudo-Dionysius) or Christian tradition (esp. Aquinas, cf. the *Summa Theologiae*, 1. q3. aa1–8).

Spirit'.¹¹⁷ As such, Böhme's understanding of the immanent trinity cannot be grounded in Luther's thought.¹¹⁸ This realisation that the (human) concept of personhood cannot be applied to the divine appears most strongly in the *Mysterium Magnum*, where a clear criticism of those who would portray the Trinity in such a manner is given:

There is no ground for calling God threefold in person, but that he is threefold in his eternal generation [*sodern er ist dreyfaltig in seiner ewigen Gebarung*]. He begets himself in Trinity; and yet in this eternal generation or begetting we are to understand only one essence and generation; neither the Father, Son, or Spirit but one eternal life [*sondern das einige, ewige Leben*].¹¹⁹

The rationale for this rejection of personhood is that Böhme's God is eternally generative: for instance, the Father did not create the world at a specific point in time, but is continually generative — the world is thus constantly changing through the Father's continual involvement in salvation history.

I cannot describe to you the whole deity by the circumference or extent of a circle, for it is immeasurable; but to that spirit which is in God's love it is not incomprehensible: it comprehends it well, yet but in part; therefore take one part after another, and then

¹¹⁷ *Myst. Mag.*, 7. 11.

¹¹⁸ Miller, 'Luther and Boehme', p. 283. Luther's trinitarian scheme has, in this regard, extended even to the modern day. Louis Berkhof argues that, 'We should be careful not to set up man's personality as the standard by which the personality of God must be measured. The original form of personality is not in man, but in God; his is archetypal, while man's is ectypal. The latter is not identical with the former, but does contain faint traces of similarity with it. We should not say that man is person, while God is super-personal (a very unfortunate term), for what is super-personal is not personal; but rather, that what appears as imperfect in man, exists in infinite perfection in God. The one outstanding difference between the two is that man is uni-personal, while God is tri-personal'. *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1939), p. 85.

¹¹⁹ *Myst. Mag.*, 7. 11.

you will see the whole.¹²⁰

I speak here as to the kind and manner of the devil [to speak in a knowingly erroneous manner], as if the light of God had not yet kindled itself [...] and as if the deity had a beginning; I can in no other or nearer way offer it to your judgement, that you may understand it [...] Neither can I declare it to you in any other manner; for I must write so, as if the generating, or geniture of God had or took a beginning, when things came to be thus; but I write here really true, and precious dear words, which the spirit alone understands.¹²¹

The monikers of 'Father', 'Son', and 'Spirit' are used by Böhme as simply a convenient means to describe this process, as parts of the whole.¹²² At this stage in his process of manifestation, however, God is not aware of his own generative power. In virtue of being the *deus absconditus*, he is, as Luther surmised, unknowable to us, but, unlike Luther, Böhme argues that this unknowability extends to even his own knowledge of himself. Böhme writes that 'God himself knows not what he is: for he knows no beginning of himself, also he knows not any thing that is like himself, as likewise he knows no end of himself'.¹²³ As he has not yet indulged in his power of creation, there is no other to know him. He has not, in Hegelian terms, arrived at self-consciousness. Therefore, God remains at this point as nothing, even to himself.¹²⁴ Where Hegel will reformulate the persons of the Trinity as 'moments', Böhme does the same, calling them 'effects', 'operations', or 'principles'.¹²⁵ The First Principle is thought about in terms of 'eternal nature' (*die ewige Natur*), the non-divine 'other' to

¹²⁰ *Aurora*, 10. 41.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 23. 24–35.

¹²² Miller, 'Luther and Boehme', p. 284.

¹²³ *Aurora*, 23. 18.

¹²⁴ *Myst. Mag.*, 29.

¹²⁵ Martensen, p. 60.

the immanent trinity. Where its necessity is concerned, Böhme draws a number of similes:

The birth of the eternal nature is like the [thoughts of] or senses in man, as when a [thought or] sense is generated by something, and afterwards propagates itself into infinite many [thoughts] or as a root of a tree generates a stock and many buds and branches, as also many roots, buds, and branches from one root, and all of them from that one first root.¹²⁶

For Böhme, God can only be rightly described as a person in the moment of his divine othering, in the historical figure of Jesus Christ. It seems, for Böhme, that it is generally misunderstood, by both 'the ignorant as well as by the half learned', that 'God is not a person except in Christ, [for] he is an eternally generating power and the kingdom with all beings'.¹²⁷ God 'is generating himself in a threefold aspect, and in this eternal generation there is nevertheless to be understood only one essence and generation; neither Father, nor Son, nor Spirit; but only the one eternal life, or good'.¹²⁸ This 'three-fold aspect' is the immanent trinity, the 'three-made' or 'three-fold spirit' (*dieser dreifache Geist*), the narrative of the self-manifestation of God. It is 'the eternal, unfathomable, divine essence, and in its nature [is] three persons, whereof one is not the other'.¹²⁹ As Hegel will also argue, Böhme conceives each being of the Trinity as sharing an identical essence.¹³⁰ In sum, the Trinity is, for

¹²⁶ *Princ.*, 3. 9.

¹²⁷ *Myst. Mag.*, 7. 5.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 7. 11.

¹²⁹ *Incarnation*, II, 2. 4.

¹³⁰ Whether this indeed is strictly true, is subject to debate. While Böhme does concede that the beings of what later came to be called the immanent trinity are united in essence through the processes of

Böhme, one essence manifested to the world through one personality, Jesus Christ — of ‘the three persons in the deity’, Böhme urges the reader to ‘know that the Lord our God is one God only’.¹³¹

Hegel, too, labels the traditional attributions of the persons of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Spirit) as ‘figurative’ and ‘childlike’. Hegel argues that these attributions, when pursued by the understanding, give way to three separate gods and a loss of divine subjectivity and unity.

This is a childlike relationship, a childlike form. The understanding has no other category, no other relationship that would be comparable with this in respect of its appropriateness. But we must be aware that it is merely a figurative [*bildliches*] representation; the Spirit does not enter into this relationship [...] The differentiation that the divine life goes through is not an external [process] but must be defined *solely as internal*, so that the first, the Father, is to be grasped just like the last [the holy Spirit]. Thus the process is nothing but a play of self-maintenance, a play of self-confirmation.¹³²

A further rationale for this rejection of personhood is that Hegel’s God is eternally generative: for instance, the Father did not create the world at a specific point in time, but is continually generative — the world is constantly changing through the Father’s involvement in salvation history. Therefore, in order to arrive at the truth that ‘all three [persons] are Spirit’, Hegel attempts to go beyond the simple representative

differentiation and manifestation, the immanent trinity is also not an essence (*kein Wesen ist*) as it does not yet ‘bring about a determinate divine life’. Cf. O’Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, p. 34; *Myst. Mag.* 1. 5–6.

¹³¹ *Grace*, 1. 25.

¹³² *LPR*, III, pp. 194—195. Emphasis mine.

language of both traditional Christianity and Böhme's system, and categorises these beings in the language of *Denken*. The 'persons' of the Trinity are renamed 'elements', 'spheres', 'kingdoms', or 'moments',¹³³ determinations through which God develops, realises, and returns to himself.¹³⁴ The Trinity is not comprised of three separate beings or persons, but of one developing personality (*Persönlichkeit*). According to Harris, where the traditional attributions of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are concerned, Hegel's construction pursues the following formulation:

[Hegel's] exposition identifies the persons of the Trinity with the three phases of the speculative idea: God the Father is absolute thought — the idea of philosophy expounded in metaphysics. God the Son is the divine life of the finite 'universe', expounded in the philosophy of nature (including *Sittlichkeit*). God the spirit is the totality of speculation, the conceptual motion through which the life of the world receives its rational explanation.¹³⁵

In the 1827 lectures, Hegel expands upon his own new formulation:

(1) First, in and for itself [*an-und-fürsich*], God [is] in his eternity before the creation of the world and outside the world. (2) Second, God creates the world and posits the separation. He creates both nature and finite spirit. What is thus created is at first an other, posited outside of God. But God is essentially the reconciling to himself of what is alien, what is particular, what is posited in separation from him. He must restore to freedom and to his truth what is alien, what has fallen away in the idea's self-diremption, in its falling away from itself. This is the path and the process of reconciliation. (3) In the third place, through this process of reconciliation, spirit has reconciled with itself what is distinguished from itself, in its act of diremption, of primal division, and thus is the Holy Spirit, the spirit [present] in its community.

¹³³ Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, p. 127.

¹³⁴ *LPR*, III, p. 186. The terms 'elements' and 'moments' are used throughout the 1824 and 1827 lectures, while 'spheres' and 'kingdoms' persist throughout the 1831 lectures (Hodgson, p. 127, n. 1). This thesis will follow the tradition of modern Hegel scholarship in referring to the persons of the Trinity as moments.

¹³⁵ Harris, *Night Thoughts*, p. 155. Cf. Rosenkranz, *Hegels Leben*, p. 139.

These are not external distinctions, which *we* have made merely in accord with what we are; rather they are the activity, the developed vitality, of absolute spirit itself.¹³⁶

To distil the essence of the content of Hegel's proposed 'depersonalisation' of the Trinity, the traditional trinitarian persons of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit become, according to Hegel's new formulation, moments of

1. Universality (*Allgemeinheit*). In the language of the *Vorstellung*, the Father, transcendent, and removed from creation. In the language of *Denken*, the idea existing as purely in-itself, with an other neither on the immanent level (i.e. the λόγος) nor on the economic level (i.e. the λόγος as incarnated in Jesus Christ, or creation).
2. Particularity (*Besonderheit*). In the language of the *Vorstellung*, the Father as incarnate in his Son, Jesus Christ. In the language of *Denken*, the othering of the universal Father in a particular spirit, as being-for-itself, as self-consciousness. It constitutes, economically, the appearance of the idea in creation.
3. Individuality (*Einselnheit*). In the language of the *Vorstellung*, the ungenerated, fullest expression of the nature of God. In the language of *Denken*, the consciousness of God as spirit, God as self-manifest. The fullest expression of this idea is as God present, not only to himself, but also to creation, as a totality. The third moment is realised historically in through the

¹³⁶ LPR, III, pp. 273–274; Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, p. 127. Emphasis mine.

death and resurrection of Christ, which constitutes the reconciliation (*Versöhnung*) and continuing presence of God in creation as spirit.

Here it can be seen that each moment of Hegel's triad represents a stage in the activity of divine self-manifestation: (1) The movement from simple and abstract universality or absolute substance existing purely for-itself; (2) to the appearance of universality in creation as a finite and differentiated particularity; (3) to the return of said particularity to universality as individuality, as absolute spirit or absolute subjectivity.¹³⁷ As Hegel concludes, it is in these three forms 'that the divine idea explicates itself. Spirit is the divine history, the process of self-differentiation, or diremption, and return into self'.¹³⁸ Each moment is not indistinguishable from one-another; their discourse is not perichoretic (mutually relating) *per se*, rather they are chronologically interconnected.¹³⁹ The first moment is the beginning, the source or ground; 'God in his eternal universality [...] who distinguishes himself, determines himself'.¹⁴⁰ The second moment 'is the first self-doubled'¹⁴¹, an 'other' created by the first as a medium for self-reflection, God as 'posit[ing] an other to himself'.¹⁴² One does not go to two as a 'mere duality', but is the institution of a medium for return.¹⁴³

For Hegel, as with Böhme, both immanent and economic trinities are really

¹³⁷ Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, p. 127.

¹³⁸ *LPR*, III, pp. 186–187; Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, p. 127

¹³⁹ O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*, p. 68.

¹⁴⁰ *LPR*, III, pp. 284–285.

¹⁴¹ Desmond, *Hegel's God*, p. 117.

¹⁴² *LPR*, III, pp. 284–285.

¹⁴³ Desmond, *Hegel's God*, p. 109.

one and the same, part of the whole that is the eternal Trinity. The persons of the immanent trinity do not have any kind of ontological priority over those in the economic, or vice-versa, because each is 'co-essential'.¹⁴⁴ Each being of the Trinity is present in one another, for that is how Hegel can declare that 'it is as a totality that God is the spirit'.¹⁴⁵ The perceived difference is one of mere abstraction.¹⁴⁶ Desmond argues, however, that this interpretation of Hegel may not in fact be accurate.¹⁴⁷ There appears to be a 'blurring' of both with regards to the second moment (particularity), in that it appears to have a 'double aspect'.¹⁴⁸ For Hegel it is both 'immanent within the eternal life of the divine' and, within creation, seemingly "outside" eternity, entirely immanent to itself'.¹⁴⁹ The second moment both 'names God in self, self-differentiated into an other that is his own other or Son' and 'names moment of difference between the Godhead itself and creation as other'.¹⁵⁰ Simply put, the incongruity lies in that the second moment is concerned with self-differentiation in the immanent trinity, and creation in the economic trinity.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁴ As is argued by Hodgson (*Hegel and Christian Theology*, p. 131) and many others. Anselm Min, however, argues against the majority opinion, in stating that it is Hegel's opinion that the Father has 'ontological priority' over the other persons of the Trinity, by virtue of being the source of the divine nature. 'The Trinity and the Incarnation: Hegel and Classical Approaches', *The Journal of Religion*, 66 (1986), 173–193 (p. 185).

¹⁴⁵ *LPR*, III, p. 283, n. 93.

¹⁴⁶ Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, p. 131.

¹⁴⁷ Desmond, *Hegel's God*, p. 108.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

§ 2. 2. *The Incarnation*

For Christian orthodoxy, the second moment of the Trinity is invariably caught up with the notion of the divine λόγος, which, in John's Gospel, becomes manifest in the historical person of Jesus of Nazareth.¹⁵² Literally, the 'Word became flesh': the divine other, existing before creation, manifests itself 'in man's likeness' in history.¹⁵³ The orthodox notion of Sonship, however, applies not to the pre-existent immanent other, but to the incarnate God.¹⁵⁴ The notion of Jesus as the incarnate 'son of God' (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ) is derived, primarily, from four thematic justifications in scripture: the literal, the moral, the metaphysical, and through the appellation of others. Instances of these four themes range from Jesus' divine conception by the Holy Spirit in Luke,¹⁵⁵ his practise of the traditional formula of Christian moral philosophy in Matthew,¹⁵⁶ the affirmation of his consubstantiality with the Father in John,¹⁵⁷ to the variety of

¹⁵² John, 1. 1–2; also Revelation 19. 11–13 where John's figurative representation of Christ is called the 'Word of God'. John's use of the word λόγος to signify the second person of the Trinity is based upon his reading of certain passages from Genesis, the deuterocanonical books, and the writings of the Alexandrian Jews. See John Ignatius Döllinger, *The First Age of Christianity and the Church*, trans. by Henry Nutcombe Oxenham (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1867), p. 163. The Johannine reading is one which is supported by Böhme and Hegel, against Philo's Heraclitean conception of the λόγος as a non-personal, Platonic universal, for it cannot, as such, be associated with the notion of a historical Messiah. Cf. Philo, *Philonis Judaei: Opera quae Reperiri Potuerunt Omnia*, trans. by Thomas Mangey, 2 vols (London: [n. pub.], 1742), I, p. 413, II, p. 625.

¹⁵³ Döllinger, p. 172. See Jesus' declarations to this effect in many passages in John's Gospel, such as: 'before Abraham was, I am' (πρὶν Ἀβραάμ γενέσθαι, ἐγὼ εἰμὶ) (John 8. 58); the confirmation of his own divine 'glory' (δοξά) 'before the world was' (πρὸ τοῦ τὸν κόσμον εἶναι) (John 17. 5); and the 'reascending' (ἀναβαίνοντα) of Jesus 'where he was before' (ὅπου ἦν τὸ πρότερον) (John 6. 62). Cf. Strauss, II, p. 19.

¹⁵⁴ Döllinger, p. 165.

¹⁵⁵ Luke 1. 35.

¹⁵⁶ Matthew 5. 45.

¹⁵⁷ John 17. 21. Cf. David Friedrich Strauss, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, trans. by George Eliot, 3 vols (London and New York: Continuum International, 2005), II, p. 13.

occasions, throughout the Gospels, where Jesus is called 'the Son of God', 'the Christ' (ἡ Χριστός), or 'king' (βασιλεύς).¹⁵⁸

The necessity of a physical appearance of God in history is accepted by Christian orthodoxy in general, and Luther in particular, who 'rejects the abstract, Aristotelian onto-epistemology in favour of interpreted truth discovered in linguistic relation to a radically historical source, Jesus Christ'.¹⁵⁹ Many subtle theological distinctions are drawn in order to separate the appearance of the λόγος in creation from a mere theophany, in the classical style. As one modern theologian points out:

The presence of God in Jesus is not identical with God's presence in the world generally, as in creation, or the universal presence of the Holy Spirit in the believers. Nor is it to be confused [...] with a universal incarnation of God in every human being in which God is simply, without distinction, identified with the human in pantheistic fashion, in which the λόγος becomes *Homo generalis*, a Platonic universal, turning the individuality of humans into a mere appearance. The humanity assumed by the λόγος did not exist prior to the union with the divine, and it was real humanity, not a mere external garment, that the λόγος put on, which would turn the Incarnation into a mere theophany in human form.¹⁶⁰

In this regard, the manifestation of the divine upon the material plane does not constitute a gross change of either substance or form. The divine does not superimpose itself substantially upon the human, nor does the human superimpose itself upon the divine. In the same way, God does not simply *appear* to be human in

¹⁵⁸ Strauss, II, pp. 13–14. Examples of the fourth theme, Jesus' appellation by others as the Son of God, are, for instance, when the devil issues a challenge to Jesus, 'If thou be the Son of God' (Matthew 4. 3), Nathanael's declaration, 'You are the Son of God, the King of Israel' (John 1. 49), Peter's confession, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God' (Matthew 16. 16; John 6. 69), and the high priest of the Sanhedrin's adjuration to Christ if he be 'the Christ, the Son of God' (Matthew, 26. 63).

¹⁵⁹ Thom Chittom, 'Theological Hermeneutics', *Reviews in Religion and Theology*, 12 (2005), 493–500 (p. 494).

¹⁶⁰ Min, p. 178.

the person of Jesus Christ, nor does Christ, as an historical figure, take on the trappings of a god in appearance only. Christ is conceived as outwardly human in his 'appearance, attitude, and *mien*', but was essentially not 'a man, like all others', rather 'the incarnate Son of God'.¹⁶¹ In Hegelian terms, the Incarnation is 'the paradigm case of unity in difference'.¹⁶²

The primary reflection on the Son, for both Böhme and Hegel, is his relationship to the Father. This relationship is a problematic one for Christian orthodoxy; it often being posited that, although the Father is related to both the Son and creation (*qua* creator), he is not influenced (or affected) qualitatively by this relationship. As was Aquinas's sentiment, God is not related to the world according to his intentional being.¹⁶³ Relation, as a category, takes on a peculiar meaning in classical theology, in that 'the addition of relations to a being does not necessarily add to or subtract from its *absolute* real being and perfection. It *relates* the subject to its term but does not necessarily change or modify it internally in any non-relative way'.¹⁶⁴ The push, for both philosophers, is to somehow reconcile God's

¹⁶¹ Döllinger, p. 172. Scripturally, Paul's Epistles do not directly argue for the supernatural generation of Jesus, rather it is taken as something which is (traditionally) assumed, for it is stated that Jesus was 'born of a woman' only (Galatians 4. 4.). Similarly, Paul argues against Matthew's Gospel account by stating that Jesus was not, in fact, the descendent of Adam, as Christ is fundamentally opposed to him by virtue of being the 'new Adam'; the father and founder of a new generation opposed to the old. Cf. I Timothy 2. 5; Hebrews 9. 15; Ephesians 5. 29–30; I Corinthians 10. 16–17. Hegel is of the same opinion as Paul in this regard, in referring to Christ as 'the second Adam' (*Ph. der Religion*, III, p. 126).

¹⁶² Anslem Min, The Trinity and the Incarnation: Hegel and Classical Approaches', *The Journal of Religion*, 66 (1986), 173–193 (p. 178).

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 180. That is to say, a relation to the world is not part of God's real being. The concept of God would still be intact, for Aquinas, if he had no relation to the world, for Aquinas pursues the usual orthodox conception of God as not being contingent upon creation.

¹⁶⁴ William Norris Clarke, *The Philosophical Approach to God: A Neo-Thomist Perspective* (Winston-Salem, N. C.: Wake Forest University Press, 1979), p. 101.

transcendence from the world in his absolute being, in what he is himself (in scholastic terms, in his *ens naturale*), and yet still preserve a connection or relation to created reality. As one commentator puts it, 'in some real and genuine way God is affected positively by what we do [...] his consciousness is contingently and qualitatively *different* because of what we do'.

'If we would write of the Incarnation,' Böhme argues, 'we must reflect upon the cause, and consider what moved God to become man, seeing he was not in need of this for the realisation of his being'.¹⁶⁵ Böhme follows the orthodox theological attribution of the Word to the Son. Where the Father is the *Verbum Fiat* (the act of speaking), the Son is the *Verbum Domini* (the creative word itself, spoken by 'the master') — it is 'the Father that speaks [...] and the Word which is spoken out of the centre of the Father is the Son'.¹⁶⁶

For it is said [John 1. 1–3]: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made'. In this brief statement we have the whole ground of the divine and natural revelation in the Being of all beings. For 'in the beginning' means the eternal beginning in the will of the Groundless for a ground, that is, for the divine apprehension, since the will apprehends itself in the centre for a foundation [...] For the one will apprehends itself in the one power, wherein lies all hiddenness, and breathes itself forth through the power into an intuition, and this wisdom, or intuition, is the beginning of the eternal mind, as the conspection of itself. This amounts to saying, the Word was in the beginning *with* God, and *was God* himself. The will is the beginning and is called God the Father, and he apprehends himself in power, and is called the Son [...] And in this connection it is said: The Word (i.e., the formed power) was in the beginning *with* God. For here two things are to be understood: namely, the unformed power, i.e., in *In*; and the formed power which is the *with*, for it has come into something and so into

¹⁶⁵ *Incarnation*, I, 1. 5.

¹⁶⁶ *Threefold*, 1. 40. See Stoudt, p. 204.

motion. The *In* is still, but the *with* is formed and compacted, and from this compaction and motion arise nature and creature, together with all being.¹⁶⁷

When the Father speaks his Word — that is to say, when he generates his Son — which is done continually and eternally, that Word first of all takes its origin in the first or acrid quality [i. e. ‘sourness’], where it becomes conceived; in the second or the sweet quality it receives its activity; in the third it moves; in the heat it arises and ignites the sweet flow of power and the fire. Now all the qualities are made to burn by the kindled fire, and the fire is fed by them; but this fire is only one and not many. This fire is the true Son of God himself, who is continuing to be born from eternity to eternity.¹⁶⁸

It is clear that Böhme realises the necessity of the Father to posit the Son in order to come to self-consciousness. When the Father comes to ‘apprehend himself in power’, to project specific visions upon the mirror of creation, he is then ‘called the Son’.¹⁶⁹ Böhme uses the imagery of ‘Will’ or ‘Eye’ and ‘mouth’ to describe the relationship between Father and Son.¹⁷⁰ Where the Father is the Will, the Son is ‘the Will’s mouth or understanding’, the ground of the Groundless, the ‘other’ in the perichoretic dialogue of the immanent trinity.

The Father is the first of all conceivable beings, but if the second principle were not becoming manifest in the birth of the Son, he would not be revealed. Thus the Son, being the heart, light, love, and the beautiful and sweet beneficence of the Father, but being distinct from him in his individual aspect, renders the Father reconciled, loving, and merciful. His birth takes place in the fire, but he obtains his personality and name by the ignition of the soft, white, and clear light, which he is himself.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁷ *Grace.*, 2. 7–11. Emphasis mine.

¹⁶⁸ *Aurora*, 8. 81.

¹⁶⁹ *Incarnation*, II, 2. 4.

¹⁷⁰ This analogy is, at its heart, Gnostic. For example, a passage (55. 5) in the so-called ‘Fourth Treatise’ of the *Codex Jung* reads, ‘since he [the Trinity] is for himself alone [sic] understanding, since he is for himself alone eye, since he is for himself alone mouth’. Cf. Pahor Labib, *Coptic Gnostic Papyri in the Coptic Museum at Old Cairo*, 11 vols (Cairo: Cairo Government Press, 1956) I, pp. 3, 4, 7, 8, 11–46.

¹⁷¹ *Princ.*, 4. 58.

Böhme makes use of a secondary kind of imagery to describe this Father-Son, Groundless-ground relationship. The divine relationship is something akin to the cabbalistic relationship of an 'eternal', 'second', or 'secret' sun to the sun of our solar system. This secret sun was believed to be the true source of light behind the sun, which did not illumine the earth through its own power.¹⁷² As Böhme writes:

The light and the power of the sun disclose the mysteries of the external world by the production and growth of various beings. Likewise God, representing the eternal sun, or the one eternal and only good, would not reveal himself without the presence of his eternal spiritual nature, wherein alone he can manifest his power. Only when the power of God becomes differentiated and relatively conscious, so that there are individual powers to wrestle with each other during their love-play, will be opened in him the great and immeasurable fire of love by means of the forthcoming of the Holy Trinity.¹⁷³

As the sun in the terrestrial plane transforms acerbity into concord, so acts the light of God in the forms of eternal nature. This light shines into them and out of them; it ignites them so that they obtain its will and surrender themselves to it entirely. They then give up their own will, and become as if they had no power at all of themselves, and are desirous only for the power of the light.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² Another reading of this analogy refers to the Incarnation specifically, in that while the 'power' of the sun is impossible to conceive for human beings on earth, it, nevertheless, exists as a definite body in space and time (Hartmann, *Boehme*, p. 239). As Böhme writes, 'We may compare the sun to Christ in his aspect as a created being, and the whole depth of space may be compared to the Father' (*Incarnation*, 1. 8.). Cf. Jakob Böhme, 'The Considerations upon Esaias Stiefel's Booke [sic] Concerning the Threefold State of Man and the New Birth' [hereafter *Stiefel*], in *The Remainder of Books written by Jacob Behme* [sic], trans. by John Sparrow (London: Printed by M. S[immons] for Giles Calvert, 1662), 2. 422; *II Apol. Tilke*, 2. 251. This kind of solar analogy applied to the divine has its basis as far back as the Egyptian religion, where a division was made between the so-called 'heavenly' sun (*Tûmû* or *Atûmû*, lit. 'creator') and the 'earthly' sun (*Khopri*, 'he who appears'). Cf. Gaston Maspero, *Dawn of Civilization*, trans. by M. L. McClure (London: Kessinger one vol. repr. of 1894 two-volume edition, 2003), p. 138. This analogy may have filtered down to the Old Testament writers through the Egyptian captivity, and to the New Testament variation where 'the brightness of the sun is manifested in its rays' (Döllinger, p. 162) through Hellenic conquest of Egypt. Cf. Hebrews 1. 3; Colossians 1. 15.

¹⁷³ *Grace*, 2. 28.

¹⁷⁴ *Theos. Punkt.*, 5. 3.

What again distinguishes Böhme from his Hermetic and cabbalistic peers is that this imagistic relationship between Father and Son is, of course, taken to be one of pure analogy. While, according to his seven-stage narrative, the Son is represented by the second and sixth qualities of 'sweetness' (immanently), and 'tone' (economically), and hermetically by the expansive, embracing powers of Jupiter and Mercury,¹⁷⁵ Stoudt comments, nevertheless, that 'Böhme asserted that God dwelt beyond analogy because he was not the aethereal deep: He is *like* the heavens, but he is not the heavens. His Christ was *like* the sun, but he was not the sun. This analogy interpenetrates all reality.'¹⁷⁶

In short, Böhme's inward-looking, contractive first principle requires an outward-looking, expansive second principle for the same reason. This othering, the creation of a ground for the Groundless, is God's coming to self-consciousness.

In this chaos the eternal nothing comprehends itself in an eye or eternal power of seeing, for the beholding, feeling, and finding of itself. In such case it cannot be said that God has two wills, one to evil, and the other to good. For in the unnatural, uncreaturely deity [i.e. the immanent trinity] there is nothing more than a single will, which is called also the one God; and he wills in himself nothing more than just to seize and find himself, go out from himself, and with the outgoing bring himself into intuition [...] There is no cause of the divine power [...] save the one will, that is to say, the one God who brings himself into a threefoldness as into an apprehensibility of himself. This apprehensibility is the centre [...] and is called the heart or seat of the eternal will of God, in which the Groundless possesses itself in a ground. This heart [...] of the Groundless is the eternal mind of the will, and yet has nothing before it that

¹⁷⁵ Jupiter, for Böhme, corresponds with man's capacity for reason (*Aurora* 25. 112), and is thus the power behind all life (*Aurora* 26. 16). Mercury corresponds with the creative word, the *Verbum Fiat*, which acts as a catalyst for Jupiter, bringing to life what would be inert (*Clavis* 26; *Threefold*, 9. 96).

¹⁷⁶ Stoudt, p. 86. Emphasis mine.

can will, save only this one place of its self-discovery. The first will is therefore the father of its heart or the place of its discovery [...] The unfathomable will [...] generates itself within itself into a place of apprehensibility. And the place is a ground and beginning of all beings, and possess in turn the unfathomable will, which is God the Father.¹⁷⁷

As stated, Böhme makes a division between God's coming to self-consciousness, and God coming to self-manifestation. Böhme's immanent trinity is concerned with coming to self-consciousness, his economic trinity is concerned with self-manifestation. Self-consciousness is, for Böhme, logically prior to self-manifestation.

The Son is a person other than the Father, for he is the light-world, yet dwells in the Father, and the Father begets him in his will. He is truly the Father's love, as well as wonder, counsel, and power, for the Father begets him in his *imagination* [that is to say, in *thought*], in himself, and leads him forth through his own fire, through the principle, through death, so that the Son makes and is in the Father another world or another principle than the fire-world in the darkness.¹⁷⁸

Further,

Had the hidden God, who is merely one essence and will, not led himself by his will out of himself, had he not brought himself out of eternal comprehension in the *temperamenta* into a differentiation of wills, and had he not led the same differentiation into a subjectivation of natural and creaturely life, and did this same differentiation not stand in strife in life, how then would the hidden will of God, which in itself is single, become manifest to itself.¹⁷⁹

In terms of Böhme's qualitative narrative, while the Groundless has found its ground in-itself (as represented by the transition from the first to second qualities, from consciousness to self-consciousness), it has not done so for-itself (in terms of self-

¹⁷⁷ *Grace*, 1. 8ff.

¹⁷⁸ *Incarnation*, II, 3. 11. Emphasis mine.

¹⁷⁹ *Contemplation*, 1. 10.

manifestation). The mirroring of God has, thus far, taken place 'in the darkness', and now it 'craves for the light'; to show itself in creation. Thereby, the fifth quality is posited: the Groundless as entering into substantiality, the Father of the economic trinity, or 'love' in Böhme's terminology. The quality of love is, for Böhme, a 'theogonic hypostatization', 'the tendency of the many to be encompassed within the One', likened, by one commentator, to the centripetal force of Plotinus, the ἐπιστροφή.¹⁸⁰ Astrologically, it is represented by the movement from Saturn to Venus, from a contracted, restrictive nature, to an expansive, universalising love.

The first three [qualities] are merely qualities conducive to life, the fourth is life itself, but the fifth is the true Spirit. Whenever this power has been evolved from the fire, it lives within all the others and changes them all into its own sweet nature, so that painfulness and enmity cannot be found therein in any shape whatever.¹⁸¹

The fifth quality is the true love-fire, which in the light separates from the painful fire, and wherein divine love appears as a substantial being. It has within itself all the powers of divine wisdom; it is the trunk or the centre of the tree of eternal life, wherein God the Father becomes revealed in his Son by means of the speaking Word.¹⁸²

For Böhme, then, the consequence of this divine will for a ground (the divine 'love-play' in Böhmean terms) is two-fold. Firstly, this desire will result in God's self-subjectivation and self-consciousness. Secondly, it will result in God's self-

¹⁸⁰ Stoudt, p. 209. Cf. Eduard Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen*, 6 vols in 3 parts (Leipzig: [n. pub.], 1881), III, 2, p. 47ff.

¹⁸¹ Jakob Böhme, *A Table of the Three Principles* [hereafter *Tab. Princ.*], trans. by H. Blunden and John Sparrow (London: Printed by M. Simmons, 1654), 1. 46.

¹⁸² *Grace*, 3. 26.

manifestation.¹⁸³ The first result becomes the τέλος of the immanent trinity, while the second result is the goal of the economic trinity. Immanently, this divine desire will be realised in the diremption or ‘othering’ of the Groundless, as the λόγος. Economically, the desire will be realised in the manifestation of the λόγος in creation, in the historical person of Jesus Christ. Whether immanent or economic, however, both trinities are, for Böhme, united by a general will: the will of the Groundless for a ground. This is represented by Böhme alchemically, for while all other attributions change in the immanent to economic transition, its elemental nature remains the same — ‘one spirit [separating] into two principles’.¹⁸⁴

Behold a bright flaming piece of iron which of itself is dark and black, and the fire so penetrates through the iron that it gives light. Now, the iron does not cease to be; it is iron still; and the source of the iron retains its own property; it [the fire] does not take the iron into it but it penetrates through the iron; and it is iron then as well as before, free in itself; and so also is the source of the fire; in such a manner is the soul set in the deity; the deity penetrates through the soul, and dwells in the soul, yet the soul does not comprehend the deity, but the deity comprehends the soul.¹⁸⁵

The content of Böhme’s thought on the Incarnation is strongly reminiscent of Hegel’s. For Hegel, God is only as such if he reveals or manifests himself. Throughout the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* this sentiment recurs: ‘Spirit that does not appear is not’,¹⁸⁶ ‘God is a living God who is real and active’,¹⁸⁷ and ‘A God who

¹⁸³ Stoudt, p. 201.

¹⁸⁴ Jakob Böhme ‘Vierzig Fragen von der Seelen [hereafter *Seel. Frag*]’, in *Sämtliche Schriften*, III, 1, 66.

¹⁸⁵ *Threefold*, 6. 84ff.

¹⁸⁶ *Werke*, XI, p. 18.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

does not manifest himself is an abstraction'.¹⁸⁸ Christ, therefore, embodies 'the immediate certainty and presence of divinity'; the 'that which is (*das Ist*)'.¹⁸⁹ For the truth 'to become certain to men, God must appear in flesh in the world'.¹⁹⁰ The establishment in the orthodox mindset that Christ was at once fully divine (*vere Deus*), 'consubstantial with the Father' and fully human (*vere homo*), 'consubstantial with man' serves to illustrate this point.¹⁹¹ Christ's life, death, and resurrection represent the life of God himself, which, though immanent in history, yet remains utterly transcendent.¹⁹²

For Hegel too, the second moment of the Trinity is invariably bound up with the λόγος. Hegel's envisioning of the λόγος is identical to Böhme's, in that it is envisaged according to the Lutheran scheme of the union of God and man, rather than the highest expression of the revealed nature of the divine.¹⁹³ As Lakeland comments, the importance of the Incarnation, for Hegel, as with modern theologians such as Karl Rahner, is in that there is no 'definitive and absolute gulf between divine and human', that there is 'a clear revelation of a relationship of nonexclusiveness between God and human beings'.¹⁹⁴ Due to this focus upon the importance of the humanity and historicity of Christ, Emilio Brito argues that Hegel's christology approaches a kind

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 135.

¹⁸⁹ *VPH*, III, p. 132.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 141, and passim.

¹⁹¹ Claude Welch, ed. and trans., *God and Incarnation in Mid-Nineteenth Century German Theology: G. Thomasius, I. A. Dorner, A. E. Biederman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 208.

¹⁹² Anselm K. Min, 'The Trinity and the Incarnation: Hegel and Classical Approaches', *The Journal of Religion*, 2, 66 (1986), 173–193 (p. 177).

¹⁹³ Emilio Brito, *La christologie de Hegel: Verbum Crucis* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1983), p. 575.

¹⁹⁴ Lakeland, p. 68.

of 'reverse Arianism', in that the abstractness of the Father is seen as inferior to the more concrete moments of Son and Spirit.¹⁹⁵ As Hegel has it,

[The second moment], determinacy, activity determining itself, which according to the broadest designation is λόγος — rationally determinative activity, or precisely the word. The word is this simple self-expression that neither makes nor becomes a hard and fast distinction, but rather is immediately perceived, and that, because it is so immediate, is likewise taken up into interiority and returns to its origin.¹⁹⁶

For Hegel, the relationship (*Verhältnis*) between the Father and the Son is as follows. God, as Father, is not aware of his own generative power. In virtue of being the *deus absconditus*, he is, as Luther surmised, unknowable, but, unlike Luther, Hegel follows Böhme in arguing that this unknowability extends to even his own knowledge of himself. As he has not yet indulged in his power of creation, there is no other present to know him. He has not, in Hegelian terms, arrived at self-consciousness. Therefore, God remains, at this point, as nothing, even to himself. Nevertheless, the Father has an in-dwelling nascent spark (the Eckhartian *Fünklein* or *Spinter*) or drive to come to self-consciousness, as a pre-requisite to manifesting himself in creation, to distinguish himself from himself.¹⁹⁷ This creative act of distinguishing is not in the manner of *creatio ex materia*, rather it is out of God's own being, from 'the nothingness of the world itself, out of which the world has been created'.¹⁹⁸ The result of this

¹⁹⁵ Brito, *La christologie de Hegel*, p. 585. Cf. Lakeland, p. 65.

¹⁹⁶ *LPR*, III, p. 97.

¹⁹⁷ Hegel's *Trieb* is associated, by some commentators, with the theological conception of *kenosis*, for *Trieb* is precisely the struggle with 'a primordial nothingness or emptiness', a 'nothing' which is attempted to be willed into being. Cf. Altizer, p. 73.

¹⁹⁸ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Begriff der Religion*, ed. by Georg Lasson (Hamburg: Felix

distinguishing or 'othering' is God as posited as the Son. The Son, as the Father's other, is distinct from the Father in part (*qua* Son opposed to Father), but not as a totality. Although distinct from the Father, the Son does not persist outside the being of God, for the identity of the Father is preserved in the otherness (*Anderssein*) of the Son. The Son is the Father's self-expression — the Son is the divine 'gathering-together' (*Sichsammeln*), who 'unites the two qualities of being the totality in itself and of being posited as other'.¹⁹⁹

In the Son God knows himself as God. He says to himself: I am God. The in-itself ceases to be negative. The separating and the sphere of God's self-consciousness is therein reconciled with his simplicity, and the kingdom of the Son is completely [one with] the kingdom of the Father. The self-consciousness of God is not a turning into itself and an otherness of the Son, just as it is not the otherness of that which turns into itself or of the simple Godhead, but the contemplation in the Son is [God's] contemplation of the latter as himself, yet so that the Son remains Son, as the inseparable and at the same time as the separate.²⁰⁰

God, taken in his aspect as a simple essence, as the unknown Father, cannot for Hegel rightly be called God, for he has no knowledge of himself. 'God', as Walsh succinctly puts it, 'as an absolute essence is not absolute God'.²⁰¹ Walsh continues that it was Böhme's greatest achievement in recognising that the Father, taken without his Son,

Meiner, 1966), p. 147. See Chapter Three of this thesis.

¹⁹⁹ Walsh, 'The Historical Dialectic of Spirit', p. 20; Hegel, *Die absolute Religion*, ed. by Georg Lasson (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1929), p. 91.

²⁰⁰ Hoffmeister, *Dokumente*, p. 304. Compare with Böhme's observation 'The Father is called a holy God only in the Son (that is in the power of light in the divine joy-kingdom, as in the great gentleness and love), for that is his true revelation within which he is called God'. *Schriften*, VII, *Myst. Mag.*, 7. 14.

²⁰¹ Walsh, 'The Historical Dialectic of Spirit', p. 19.

his revealer, his selfhood (*Ichheit*) is in fact no God at all.²⁰² It is when the Father gives up his abstractness, his universality, through the creation of the Son that he may be properly termed 'God'.²⁰³ As Hegel's summarises in the philosophy of religion lectures, 'the universal must pass into actuality through the particular'.²⁰⁴ In this way, the Incarnation, as a paradigm, is the *τέλος* into which the world is 'drawn'.²⁰⁵ Hegel's determination to end 'mystery', therefore, ends with the Incarnation, which is the final 'ending of all mystery whatsoever'.²⁰⁶ Hegel quotes Böhme in his own realisation of this truth, for, he writes, 'no thing can be revealed to itself without opposition (*Entgegensetzung*); for if there is nothing that opposes (*setzt entgegen*) it, then it always goes out of itself and does not return again to itself. If it does not return into itself, as into that from which it originated, then it knows nothing of its origin'.²⁰⁷ Hegel concedes that the relationship between Father and Son is taken from 'organic life and is expressed in imaginative form'.²⁰⁸ Since neither the Father nor the Son for Hegel are treated as actual persons, however, the relation is a purely figurative one. Therefore, it 'never entirely corresponds with to the truth that is sought to be expressed'.²⁰⁹ Though the Father eternally begets the Son, in distinguishing himself

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ As Altizer comments (p. 74), it is at this stage where '[God] is known as freely externalizing itself, abandoning itself to the shape of an immediate being'.

²⁰⁴ *VPH*, I, p. 85. Trans. in Crites, 'The Gospel According to Hegel', p. 248.

²⁰⁵ *VPH*, III, p. 727; *LPH*, p. 320.

²⁰⁶ Altizer, p. 86.

²⁰⁷ 'Geschichte der Philosophie', p. 313. The quote originates in Böhme's 'Vom Göttlicher Beschaulichkeit', in *Sämtliche Schriften*, IV, 1. 8. Trans. in Walsh, 'The Historical Dialectic of Spirit', p. 19.

²⁰⁸ *LPR*, III, p. 79.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

from himself, no real persons are created by this relationship for 'God himself is this entire activity'.

God is the beginning, he acts thus; but he is likewise the end, the totality, and it is as totality that God is spirit. God as merely the Father is not yet the truth (thus in the Jewish Religion he is conceived of without the Son). He is rather both beginning and end; he is his own presupposition, constituting himself as presupposition; he is the eternal process.²¹⁰

SECTION THREE

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Christian orthodoxy describes the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Trinity, distinct from, but coequal, coeternal, and consubstantial with the Father and the Son. It is depicted as God 'in the fullest sense', and, as such, remains ungenerated and proceeds (ἐκπορεύεσθαι) or is 'spirated' (breathed out) from the Father to the Son.²¹¹ The argument for the Holy Spirit's procession from the Father is based upon scriptural descriptions of the Spirit as being 'of God' or 'of Christ' (cf. I Corinthians 2. 11–12; Galatians 4. 6; Romans 8. 9). The Holy Spirit's procession from the Father is affirmed by the earliest of Christian statements, such as the Nicene Creed ('I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and the giver of life, who *proceeds* from the

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ *Catholic Encyclopedia*, p. 503. The Holy Spirit is conceived of as ungenerated for it is said to appear throughout the course of salvation history, even prior to the Incarnation. It is active in creation (Genesis 1. 2.), involved in historical biblical events (e. g. Deuteronomy 34. 9.), and is the inspiration of the prophets (e.g. Isaiah 61. 1).

Father and the Son'), and the Athanasian Creed ('The Holy Spirit [...] neither made, nor created, not begotten, but *proceeding*). In more recent times, the procession of the Spirit from Father to Son is testified to by such orthodox doctrinal statements such as the *Articles of the English Church* ('The Holy Spirit, *proceeding* from the Father and the Son'), and the *Westminster Confession of Faith* ('the Holy Spirit eternally [*proceeds*] from the Father and the Son').²¹²

The Holy Spirit is represented by Böhme as the third and seventh qualities of 'bitterness' and 'body' according to his generation narrative. Hermetically, they are represented by the reconciling powers of Mars and the moon (*Luna*).²¹³ In terms of the intertrinitarian relation, where the Son is the mouth of the Father, the Holy Spirit is the Word it speaks. As Böhme writes in the *Six Theosophical Points*, 'if the Godhead according to the first and second principle is to be regarded only as a spirit and without any conceivable essentiality, there is in it nevertheless the desire to

²¹² Cf. Richard Watson, *Theological Institutes: Or, a View of the Evidence, Doctrines, Morals, and Institutes of Christianity*, 2 vols (New York: Lane & Scott, 1851), I, p. 628; *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. (1946 edition)* (Louisville, K. Y.: Office of the General Assembly, 1995), p. 19. This notion of the procession of the Holy Spirit — based upon interpretations of Galatians 4. 6, Romans 8. 9, and Philippians 1. 19 — from the Father and the Son (*ex Patre Filioque procedit*), and not solely from the Father, *through* the Son (*ex Patre per Filium procedit*) has always been problematic for relations between the Western and Eastern churches. The Greek Fathers are of varying opinions regarding this matter: Dionysius the Areopagite, Theodoret, and Gregory Palamas have it that the Spirit proceeds (ἐκπορεύεσθαι) from the Father only; while Cyril of Alexandria (along with the Western Fathers Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerome) taught that the Spirit proceeds (προϊέναι or the Latin *procedere*) from both Father and Son. The 'Filioque issue' or 'controversy', as this dispute has come to be known, stems from the translation of the Greek terms for procession in the New Testament to the Latin. As Maximos the Confessor wrote to Marinus, 'It is true, of course, that they cannot reproduce their idea in a language and in words that are foreign to them as they can in their mother-tongue, just as we too cannot do'. See *Letter to Marinus*, p. 91, 136. See The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, 'The Greek and Latin Tradition Regarding the Procession of the Holy Spirit', *L'Osservatore Romano*, 20 September 1995, pp. 3, 6.

²¹³ Mars, for Böhme, is conceived of as a symbol of angst and wrath (*Sig. Rer.* 4. 20), a Platonic need which is desperate to be satisfied. Luna is called 'the lustful container' (Stoudt, p. 254; *Sig. Rer.* 4. 27), the Platonic plenty which satiates all desires (*Sig. Rer.* 4. 27).

evolve a third principle, wherein rests the spirit of the two first principles, and wherein it will become manifest as an image'.²¹⁴ The third being of the immanent trinity will become the source of revelation in the world, of salvation history, and will allow for the formulation of Böhme's economic trinity. For Böhme, Spirit is 'the first will to nature [...] the former and framer in nature [...] He is the bringer forth, the conductor, and the director'.²¹⁵ Where the Father remains the substance of creation, and the Son the push to create, Spirit, 'born of will, is their instrument'.²¹⁶

The Father is the power [...] and the Son is the light and the splendour of the Father and the Holy Spirit is the moving or exit [*Ausgang*] out of the powers of the Father, and of the Son, and the forms, figures, and images of all [...] and moves or acts, forms or frames, and images all that is in this world.²¹⁷

The Holy Spirit reveals the Godhead in nature. He extends the splendour of the majesty, so that it may be recognised in the wonders of nature. He is not that splendour itself, but its power, and he introduces this splendour of the majesty into the substantiality wherein the Godhead is revealed.²¹⁸

Spirit is 'the fashioner and former of all nature' (*Threefold*, 4. 77), 'the work-master of the world's birth' (*Aurora*, 13. 77), 'the creator of all' (*Threefold*, 8. 72), and 'the opener of nature's divinity' (*Threefold*, 4. 84). Spirit 'dwells in man's soul' (*Aurora*, preface 88), where he is 'responsible for [his] original, essential spirit' (*Incarnation*, I, 10. 1). At the end of history, Spirit bears the responsibility of '[filling] the world,

²¹⁴ *Theos. Punkt.*, 1. 25.

²¹⁵ *Threefold*, 4. 77.

²¹⁶ *Incarnation*, II, 10. 11.

²¹⁷ *Aurora*, 7. 42–43.

²¹⁸ *Threefold*, 4. 82, 5. 39.

bringing it into conformity with God's will'.²¹⁹ The relationship here between the Father and the Spirit is that of the 'alpha and omega' of Revelation, the beginning and end of eternal generation. It signifies the complete transition from the divine no to the divine Yes, the movement from the no-thing of the Groundless, to the everything of Spirit. As the circuit comes to completion, the first quality appears in the seventh, final quality. This is strongly reminiscent of the Hermetic axiom 'as above, so below'.

The seventh principle is the corporeal comprehension of the other qualities. It is called 'essential wisdom' or the 'body of God'. The third principle appears in the seven forms of nature in so far as they have been brought into comprehensibility in the seventh. This principle or state of being is holy, pure, and good. It is called the eternal uncreated heaven or the kingdom of God, and it is outspoken from the first principle, of the dark fire-world and from the holy light-flaming love-world.²²⁰

The seventh form is the state of being wherein all the others manifest their activity, like the soul in the body. It is called nature, and also the eternal essential wisdom of God.²²¹

Hegel's depiction of the Holy Spirit is not entirely dissimilar to the orthodox account: spirit is seen as naturally coequal with the other moments of the Trinity, and constitutes the complete depiction of the nature of God. that 'by the obedience of one the many are constituted (κατασταθήσονται)'.²²² According to orthodoxy, however, the 'fullest mission' of the Holy Spirit was instantiated after the glorification of

²¹⁹ *Seel. Frag.*, 20. 11.

²²⁰ *Grace*, 4. 10.

²²¹ *Tab. Princ.*, 1. 49.

²²² Romans 5. 19.

Christ.²²³ It is, for Hegel, as a product of Christ's Resurrection that spirit owes its entire genesis. Hegel's spirit is generated during a particular point in history: the death and Resurrection of Christ. In this way Hegel's interpretation is closer to John's Gospel than the orthodox account, where the Holy Spirit is conceived of as a kind of *locum tenens* (whom John calls an 'advocate', a 'comforter', or a 'helper') for the loss of the physical presence of Christ.²²⁴

An important variation between the second and third moments of Hegel's trinitarian scheme is that God, as present in Jesus Christ, indicative of the second moment of the trinity, is distinct from God as present in the Holy Spirit, as in creation in general. As has been stated, Hegel considers himself neither a Spinozist nor a pantheist, and, as such, argues that God is not incarnated in his creatures as some Platonic universal.²²⁵ Though, anthropologically, Hegel follows the Hermetic narrative of man as the *μικροκόσμος* (or, stronger still, Hegel echoes the Paracelsian scheme in particular, and envisions man as the *μικροθεός*),²²⁶ the individuality of creatures still needs to be preserved. As such, the third moment is but an extension of the narrative

²²³ This orthodox reading is based upon the following passages: John 20. 22–23; Acts 2. 1–13, 8. 17, 11. 12, 15. 28, 16. 6, 19. 6; I Corinthians 12. 4ff.

²²⁴ John 14. 16, 15. 26.

²²⁵ Min, 'The Trinity and the Incarnation', p. 178.

²²⁶ *PN*, III, p. 108. Hegel's appropriation of the doctrine of macrocosm-microcosm comes as no surprise, for it has long been associated with German mysticism, and, therefore, German Romanticism. German mysticism 'from Hildegard on [...] is preoccupied with large and small "worlds", ranging from the absolute world of divinity to the microworlds encompassed by the smallest organism, space, or discrete things'. Cf. Andrew Weeks, *German Mysticism from Hildegard of Bingen to Ludwig Wittgenstein* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), p. 9. Stouder argues (p. 89, n. 3), based upon Schleiermacher's view, that the macrocosm-microcosm relation began with the Peripatetics and Stoics, who knew it as 'the great analogy'. The doctrine was later revived in the Renaissance by Weigel and Paracelsus. See Schleiermacher, *Speeches on Religion*, p. 133–134. See Chapter Three of this thesis.

of Hegel's ontological system, of God becoming present (*Gegenwart*) to himself through the creation of an other. Where through the second moment God becomes present to himself in 'the interiority of his spirit', it is through the third moment that God becomes present to himself totally, embracing the entirety of his 'concrete historical existence'.²²⁷

While it is true for both Christian orthodoxy and for Hegel that the Father is eternally generative of the Son, the Son dies only once and for all sins.²²⁸ This is of significance to Hegel, because here the consummate dualism between the eternal, transcendent Father and the finite, particular Son is depicted. It is in the third moment, of spirit, then, that the dialectic between the universal and the particular is overcome. The third moment of the Trinity occurs historically at the death and the Resurrection of Christ, for it is clearly stated in the 1831 lectures that, 'The abstractness of the Father is given up in the Son — this then is death. But the negation of this negation [i.e. the Resurrection of Christ] is the unity of Father and Son — love, or the Spirit'.²²⁹ Further, in the *Philosophy of History*, it is stated that it is 'only after the death of Christ could spirit come upon his friends; [...] only then were they able to conceive the true idea of God'.²³⁰ For the transcendent God to pass into true finitude, death is a

²²⁷ Min, 'The Trinity and the Incarnation', p. 192.

²²⁸ 1 Peter 3. 18.

²²⁹ *LPR*, III, p. 370.

²³⁰ *VPH*, III, p. 741; *LPH*, p. 328. Cf. also *VPR*, III (1), pp. 190–198. The *ETW* interprets this even somewhat differently — Christ's death is taken as the reflection of the hatred the Sanhedrin had towards this attempt at transvaluation in particular, and 'the mortified national vanity of the Jews' in general (*Positivity*, p. 70). Simply put, the historical Christ had to die as the world was unprepared to receive his message. Further in the *ETW*, Hegel considers the Resurrection as reality of faith alone, as Christ appears only to his friends (*Spirit*, pp. 291–295; cf. John 20. 14–29; Luke 24. 36–41)

sine qua non. Death is the hallmark, result, or ‘the highest peak’ of finite being,²³¹ for, as Paul has it, ‘the wages of sin [of which finite being is very much an exercise in] is death’.²³² In this way, the Crucifixion of Christ has been declared to be the speculative locus of Hegel’s system.²³³

the highest finitude is not the real life in temporality, but death, the pain of death; this is the highest negation, the most abstract, the natural itself, the limitation, finitude in its highest extreme. The temporal, perfect existence [*Dasein*] of the divine idea [...] becomes evident only in Christ’s death. The highest abnegation [*Entäusserung*] of the divine idea — ‘God has perished, God himself is dead [*Gott selbst ist tot*]’ — is a monstrous, horrible representation, which brings before the representation the deepest abyss of estrangement.²³⁴

What ought too to be remembered is that the Crucifixion is also the Resurrection, that they are ‘two sides of a single event’.²³⁵ The ‘temporality, particularity, historicity, finitude’,²³⁶ or, indeed, the ‘earthliness’, which compose the original negation of the first moment, die, and are themselves negated, upon the Cross with Christ. Hegel’s argument here is completely heterodox, for it is his argument that the physical presence of Christ is obliterated completely during this third moment.²³⁷ Christ

²³¹ Attributed to Hegel, noted in Crites, ‘The Gospel According to Hegel’, p. 256.

²³² Romans 6. 23.

²³³ James Yerkes, *The Christology of Hegel* (Albany, N. Y.: State University of New York Press, 1983), p. 3.

²³⁴ *VPR*, III, pp. 157–158. The line ‘*Gott selbst ist tot*’ is quoted by Hegel here, and elsewhere, from the Easter hymn ‘*O Traurigkeit, o Herzeleid*’. Crites notes (p. 263, n. 23). The significance of this line for philosophy has not gone unnoticed by later hymnists, for, in the most recent editions of the *Evangelisches Kirchengesangbuch*, the line now reads ‘Gotts Sohn liegt tot’. Cf. Donald M. Borchert, ‘The Influence of Hegel in Contemporary God-Is-Dead Theology’, *Praxis* (Zagreb), 8 (1971), 203–214.

²³⁵ Crites, ‘The Gospel According to Hegel’, p. 257.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

²³⁷ It is this christological point which Brito calls the most anti-Christian in Hegel’s philosophy of

returns to the world in spirit only, and the enduring presence of Christ in the community is only as spirit. A further accusation of heterodoxy here may be raised: is there, then, a place within Hegel's christology for the Second Coming or παρουσία? Commentators on Hegel have two readings of the Hegelian 'end of history' —²³⁸ the 'absolutist' and the 'epochal'. The 'absolutist' interprets Hegel's eschatological scheme as reaching a final and definite conclusion, the closure of his system, where 'spirit [has reached] [...] the completion of its work'.²³⁹ The conclusion ends with spirit realising its own freedom and attaining 'complete knowledge of itself'.²⁴⁰ The 'epochal' reading, though agreeing that spirit reaches the state of realizing its own essence, does not see such as an end to history, but instead a new departure, 'leaving the future open to progress'.²⁴¹ The 'absolutist' reading, however, appears to be somewhat antiquated, based on interpretation that Hegel argues for a literal end of history, that, in a Christian context, the goal of spirit has been already achieved at the moment of the Resurrection, and a further return to the world would be of no consequence.

For Hegel, the moments of Father and Son do not remain entirely separate distinctions within the Trinity, but are reconciled in the third moment.²⁴² Spirit constitutes the 'self-recognition of the first [*qua* creator] in the second [*qua*

religion. Cf. Brito, *La christologie de Hegel*, p. 585. Cf. also Lakeland, p. 65.

²³⁸ *PhS*, 103.

²³⁹ *PhS*, 486. This is Brito's argument, cf. Brito, *La christologie de Hegel*, *passim*.

²⁴⁰ Daniel Berthold-Bond, 'Hegel's Eschatological Vision: Does History Have a Future?', *History and Theory*, 1, 27 (1988), 14–29 (p. 15).

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

²⁴² Min, 'The Trinity and the Incarnation', p. 190.

created]’,²⁴³ and the erotic love that ‘binds’ them. For Hegel, this erotic love is the ethical life of the Trinity, which

means precisely the giving up of particularity, of particular personality, and its extension to universality — so, too, with friendship. In friendship and love I give up my abstract personality and thereby win it back as concrete. The truth of personality is found precisely in winning it back through this immersion, this being immersed in the other.²⁴⁴

Here a distinctly Augustinian overtone can again be recognised. Like Augustine, Hegel conceives of the Trinity as a ‘trialectical model of subject and object mediated by a third’.²⁴⁵ For Hegel, love is the ‘distinguishing of two’, and ‘the subsequent sublation of that distinction’.²⁴⁶ ‘Where I’, Hegel writes, ‘have my self-consciousness not in myself but in the other,’ both ‘the other and I are only this consciousness of being-outside ourselves and of our identity’.²⁴⁷ The I and the other relate to each other through ‘intuition, feeling, and knowledge of our unity’.²⁴⁸ In life, when anything attempts to relate to something else, it has a certain amount of distinction to overcome. Life itself is seen as the eternal struggle between the I and the other, universality and particularity, thesis and antithesis, the ‘back and forth’. It is diversification and unification, and is ultimately ‘the resolving of contraction’.²⁴⁹ For Hegel, this phenomenon is seen even in the family life of finite spirits, where there is,

²⁴³ Desmond, *Hegel's God*, p. 117.

²⁴⁴ *LPR*, III, pp. 285–286.

²⁴⁵ Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, p. 134.

²⁴⁶ *LPR*, III, p. 276; Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, p. 136.

²⁴⁷ *LPR*, III, p. 276.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 281.

for instance, ‘a natural unity of members who are persons,’ but also an ‘ethical unity’ which subsists in love.²⁵⁰ The life of the divine family is no different: the Trinity is eternally in a ‘play of love with itself’.²⁵¹ Therefore, the old maxim that ‘God is love’ is given new meaning in Hegel’s trinitarian scheme, for the Trinity is precisely this distinguishing and reconciling relationship. ‘When we, say “God is love,” we are saying something very great and true [...] Love is a distinguishing of two, who nevertheless are absolutely [non-rationally] not distinguished from each other’.²⁵²

Everything concrete, everything living, contains contradiction [*Widerspruch*] within itself; only the dead understanding is identical with itself. But the contradiction is also resolved [*aufgelöst*] in the idea, and the resolution [*die Auflösung*] is spiritual unity. The living thing is an example of what cannot be grasped by the understanding. ‘God is love’ is an expression very much to the point; [...] as ‘love’ God is a person, and the relationship is such that the consciousness of the One [*der Eine*, the personal one] is to be had only in the consciousness of the other. God is conscious of himself [...] only in the other, in absolute externalization. This is spiritual unity in the form of feeling. In the relationship of friendship, of love, of the family, this identity of one with the other is also to be found [...] [This is] the substantial, universal, ethical relationship as such.²⁵³

It is through love that the sublation of the prior distinction of Father and Son is achieved: God now appears as ‘remaining present to himself, and is spirit only through this process of being brought forth’.²⁵⁴ This new unity does not simply mean

²⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 82–83. This sentiment appears even in the early theological writings, in which Hegel declares that, ‘Even in the expression “a son of Koresh”, for example, which the Arabs use to denote the individual, a single member of the clan, there is the implication that this individual is not simply a part of the whole; the whole does not lie outside him; he himself is just the whole which the entire can is’. Knox, p. 260; Nohl, p. 308

²⁵¹ *LPR*, III, p. 195, 292.

²⁵² Ibid., p. 276.

²⁵³ Ibid., pp. 192–193.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 284–285; Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, p. 128. Cf. Desmond, p. 109.

that the aspects of Father and Son cease to be, that they are enveloped by spirit, rather their identities are preserved in a superior understanding of God, in 'the most concrete and encompassing of [all] trinitarian symbols'.²⁵⁵ This symbol is one which recognises that, while the Father 'produces eternally his son', and 'distinguishes himself from himself', God nevertheless is 'this whole act. He is the beginning, the end, and the totality'.²⁵⁶ As Macquarrie puts it, spirit 'as subject, knows itself as reflected in the object, while the object in turn knows spirit as the original subject'.²⁵⁷ God is now present as absolute spirit, as a whole, as wholeness, as a totality.

The Trinity, then, for Hegel, is 'one grand circuit', but is a circuit which is sometimes finite, and sometimes eternal.²⁵⁸ Moreover, each moment shares its essence with the other by virtue of being involved in a 'living relationship'. Where lifeless objects are concerned, 'the whole is other than the parts'.²⁵⁹ For living beings, which the moments of the Trinity are to be, analogously, considered, an identical essence is shared (for it is only through unreflective thinking that they are conceived of as having a separate essence), and the whole is present in every single part. For example, the so-called 'other' posited by God in the second moment is not something truly foreign to its essence which might 'delimit the absolute or render it finite'.²⁶⁰ Hegel makes it clear he is simply using a kind of spatial imagery to differentiate the

²⁵⁵ Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, p. 133.

²⁵⁶ *Werke*, XII, p. 185.

²⁵⁷ Macquarrie, p. 130.

²⁵⁸ Desmond, *Hegel's God*, p. 111.

²⁵⁹ Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, p. 260.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

moments of the divine idea as *an-sich* and *für-sich*, God in his eternal essence, and God as present in creation. The relationship between the first and second moment is not one of 'likeness', but of a 'modification' of the life shared between both. Harris likens their relationship to that of a clan or tribe to its members. The clan does not relate to its members in the capacity of whole-to-part, rather the entire nature of the clan is present in every member of the community.²⁶¹

Hegel further considers the partite 'wholeness' of the Trinity in his reflections on the first chapter of John. Hegel echoes Jesus' 'vine and branches' analogy,²⁶² that

A tree which has three branches makes up together with them one tree; but every son of the tree, every branch (also its other children, leaves and blossoms) is itself a tree; the fibres bringing sap to the branch from the trunk, are of the same nature as the roots; a tree stuck upside down in the earth will put forth leaves from the roots spread in the air, and the boughs will root themselves in the earth - and it is just as true that there is only one tree here, as that there are three trees.²⁶³

For Hegel, the 'oneness' of the tree is contained in each part of the triad of the roots (symbolic of the Father), the trunk (the Son), and the branches (mankind, in and through which spirit moves). Where the 'other children are concerned', the fruit of the tree, is taken by Hegel to symbolise the 'three moment of the process of development

²⁶¹ Harris, *Toward the Sunlight*, p. 360.

²⁶² 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing'. (John 15. 1-5).

²⁶³ *Spirit*, p. 261. See also *Hegels Theologische Jugendschriften*, p. 309.

through which the propagation of the tree takes place in the ordinary way'.²⁶⁴ Harris reads a seasonal aspect in to this development: the bare branches symbolise the Father, the burgeoning fruition of the tree symbolises the 'reflective consciousness' of the Son, and the eventual 'pollination of the blossoms' symbolises the love of the holy Spirit, and the production of new life.²⁶⁵

In summary, the third moment, for Hegel, is the 'self-recognition of the first [qua creator] in the second [qua created]'²⁶⁶ and the love that 'binds' them. It is the sublation of the prior distinction: God now is as 'remaining present to himself, and is spirit only through this process of being brought forth'.²⁶⁷ God is now present as absolute spirit, as 'a whole' (*ein Ganze*), 'wholeness' (*Ganzheit*), or 'a totality' (*Totalität*).²⁶⁸ For Hegel, this transition from universality to particularity is absolutely necessary, for it is the very nature of love itself. One ought to be aware, however, of other, less metaphysical readings of Hegel's concept of spirit. For J. N. Findlay, for instance, spirit is not seen in its customary light of being 'the driving power behind nature and history',²⁶⁹ rather,

Hegel's [...] absolute idealism [...] is not the belief that all things exist only in and for a consciousness, but that all things must be seen either as necessary conditions of, or as stages towards, self-conscious rationality, towards the conscious rational use of universals, or as Hegel calls it [...] spirit. What does Hegel mean by saying that spirit

²⁶⁴ Harris, *Toward the Sunlight*, pp. 360–361.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 361–362.

²⁶⁶ Desmond, *Hegel's God*, p. 117.

²⁶⁷ *LPR*, III, pp. 284–285; Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, p. 128. Cf. Desmond, p. 109.

²⁶⁸ *LPR*, III, *passim*.

²⁶⁹ Martin Henry, G. W. F. Hegel: *A Secularized Theologian?*, *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 70 (2005), 195–214 (p. 208).

is the truth of everything, and is such an affirmation in any way valid or acceptable? [...] [T]his assertion is not to be metaphysically understood: it does not go beyond the facts of human experience, its sense lies in the daylight of our conscious rational life. Spirit is in fact exemplified in the three forms of art, religion, and philosophy: is it there and nowhere else that Hegel's absolute is to be found. And that spirit is the truth of everything does not mean that spirit engineered the world, or was causally responsible for it: spirit makes its appearance at a comparatively late stage in the world's history, its supreme stage, philosophy, is even said to arrive in the world when the shades of night are falling.²⁷⁰ Clearly the sense in which spirit is the truth of everything in the world is a perspectival sense: it is an *Ansicht*, a peculiar view of not something which underlies the universe or is causally responsible for it.²⁷¹

Here is not the place to argue the merits of this particular interpretation of Hegel's spirit. Nevertheless, if Findlay's interpretation were to be considered a true and faithful relation of Hegel's conception of spirit, it bears little resemblance to either the biblical accounts, or Böhme's notion of the Holy Spirit, which is, as previously stated, scripturally based, being conceived of as an active force present throughout creation. For Findlay's reading to be true, it could not, then, be said that spirit is identical with the Holy Spirit of scripture. In this way, such an interpretation of Hegel's God serves to be understood as an entirely non-Christian one.

²⁷⁰ This is an allusion to Hegel's oft used metaphor for philosophy's inability to inform, and only 'de-brief', reality, that 'when philosophy paints its grey in grey, a shape of life has grown, and it cannot be rejuvenated, but only recognised, by the grey in grey of philosophy; the owl of Minerva begins its flight only with the onset of the dusk'. Cf. G. W. F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. by A. W. Wood, trans. by H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 23. The sentiment expressed by this allusion does not originate with Hegel, but harkens back as far as Pythagoras, who likens the philosopher to a spectator at the Olympic games (Cf. Magee, p. 89). Similarly, it was Jacobi's maxim that the purpose of the philosopher was to 'disclose existence'. Cf. Frederick C. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 67.

²⁷¹ John Niemeyer Findlay, 'The Contemporary Relevance of Hegel', in *Hegel: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. by Alasdair MacIntyre (New York: Double-Day & Co., 1972), p. 16. Cottingham's interprets spirit in a similar fashion, that spirit is 'an ultimate stage of development towards which history moves. Spirit, as Hegel insists [...] is not an Aristotelian prime-mover or a Cartesian eternal perfect being. Rather it emerges out of the progressive struggle of humanity to realise itself and understand the world'. Cf. John Cottingham, *Rationalism* (London: Paladin Books, 1984), p. 94.

In summary of his reflections on the Holy Spirit, Hegel assents to the revealed truth of the three-in-one nature of the divine, the idea that 'in each spirit all are contained',²⁷² and the dialectical struggle between each non-personal 'moment' in its drive towards self-consciousness and self-manifestation. For Hegel, what may be said of the Trinity as a whole can be said of its parts. No moment has any kind of priority over the others constitutive of the Trinity, for each is 'co-essential'.²⁷³ Each moment of the Trinity is present in one another, and, as such, Hegel declares that 'it is as a totality that God is the Spirit'.²⁷⁴ There can be no Father without a Son, nor Son without a Father. In this way Hegel's God strongly resembles the Aristotelian final cause, which includes both efficient and formal causes.²⁷⁵

§ 3. 1. *The Question of Quaternity*

For Böhme, the narrative of eternal generation, however, does not truly end at the level of the Spirit: a further aspect is distinguished. According to his scheme of the process of divine self-consciousness and self-manifestation, while the Groundless, as Father, projects itself out of itself as the Son, the self-mirroring that goes on between

²⁷² *Geschichte der Philosophie*, p. 323.

²⁷³ As appears evident throughout the 1831 lectures, and as is argued by Peter Hodgson (Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, p. 131). Anselm Min, however, argues that it is Hegel's opinion that the Father has 'ontological priority' over the other persons of the Trinity, by virtue of being the source of the divine nature (Min, 'The Trinity and the Incarnation', p. 185).

²⁷⁴ *LPR*, III, p. 283, n. 93.

²⁷⁵ J. A. Leighton, 'Hegel's Conception of God', *The Philosophical Review*, 6, 5 (1896), 601–618 (p. 603).

these two aspects of God is the Holy Spirit. But the mirror of the Groundless itself, the medium of projection of this self-reflecting dialogue, is what Böhme terms 'God's visibility', the 'eternal idea', or 'eternal Wisdom' (*die ewige Weisheit*).²⁷⁶ Böhme's conception of Wisdom is one which has its origin throughout a broad spectrum of mystical traditions. Wisdom is taken to be similar to, if not synonymous with, the *Shekinah* of the early Hebrews, σοφία of Gnosticism and the Cabbala,²⁷⁷ the world-soul of Plato and Plotinus, and Wisdom of Wisdom literature (especially the Wisdom of Solomon, and Proverbs).²⁷⁸ Böhme's Wisdom runs almost parallel to this biblical conception, where Wisdom is described as

a breath of the power of God, and a pure emanation of the Almighty; therefore nothing defiled gains entrance into her [...] she is a reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God, and an image of his goodness. Although she is but one, she can do all things, and while remaining in herself, she renews all things; in every generation she passes into holy souls and makes them friends of God, and prophets; for God loves nothing so much as the person who lives with wisdom. She is more beautiful than the sun, and excels every constellation of the stars. Compared with the light she is found to be superior, for it is succeeded by the night, but against wisdom evil does not prevail.²⁷⁹

According to Böhme's seven-stage narrative, Wisdom is the seventh and final quality. Wisdom is expressed by the quality of 'body' (*Corpus*), signified alchemically by silver, the feminine counterpart of masculine gold. Astrologically, Wisdom is

²⁷⁶ Noted in Martensen, p. 59.

²⁷⁷ The conceptual relationship between Böhme's conception of Wisdom and the σοφία of various Gnostic systems is a particularly close one, for both are considered to be essential to the understanding of yet, and yet lie beyond God's essential essence. Cf. Zandee, p. 18.

²⁷⁸ Stoudt, p. 212.

²⁷⁹ Wisdom 7. 25–30.

represented by the moon (or *Luna*), the essence of which was supposed by the cabbalists to be the foundation of the material world. In Böhme's original terminology, Wisdom is 'the likeness of God' (*Threefold*, 4. 41), 'the likeness of the Trinity' (*Ibid*), and 'the likeness according to the deity and eternity' (*Incarnation*, I, 9. 7). As Spirit is the framer of creation, Wisdom is creation's 'framing of itself' (*Grace*, 1. 16), the 'figure in the mirror of God's wisdom' (*Incarnation*, I, 9. 6), and the 'substance wherein the Holy Spirit works, forms, and models' (*Clavis*, 19).

Wisdom is the substantiality of the spirit. The spirit wears it as a garment, and becomes revealed thereby. Without it the form of the spirit would not be knowable; it is the corporeity of the spirit. To be sure, it is not a bodily, tangible substance, like the bodies of men, but has nevertheless substantial and visible qualities which the spirit *per se* does not possess.²⁸⁰

In short, Wisdom is the enduring presence of God in the material world. Wisdom is the mirror or *speculum* of God, the medium of his self-consciousness and self-manifestation. It is the divine movement from the possible to the actual. Before the inception of the λόγος, the mirror of Wisdom reflects nothing save the Groundless itself, for there is nothing else in existence to reveal itself. The image of the Groundless reflected in the mirror of Wisdom is not a direct representation, rather it is speculative, revealing all possible universal attributes of God, a 'wealth of potential glories or miracles which are not yet realised'.²⁸¹ Simply put, what is reflected upon Wisdom is the 'imagination' or, in Böhme's terminology, the *magia*, of the

²⁸⁰ *Threefold Life*, 5. 50.

²⁸¹ Martensen, p. 61.

Groundless. The movement towards concreteness comes about through the λόγος, which impregnates the mirror of Wisdom with visions of specificity, so that the forthcoming 'nature of the deity becomes manifest'.²⁸² Wisdom is 'the begotten being', 'the mirror and ornament of the Holy Trinity in which the powers, colours, and virtues of God become revealed'.²⁸³

[Wisdom is the] mirror wherein the [eternal] will beholds itself and finds what it is; and in the beholding it becomes desirous of the entity which it is itself. And the desiring is a drawing-in [or *inspiration*], and yet there is nothing that can be drawn; but the will draws itself in its own desire, and in its desiring represents to itself what it is; and this representative image is the mirror in which the will sees what it is, for it a likeness of the will. And we recognize this mirror (in which the will itself always beholds and has vision of itself) to be the eternal wisdom of God, for it is an eternal virgin without substantial being; and yet is the mirror of all beings, in which all things have been seen from eternity, whatever could or was to arise.²⁸⁴

It is in the mirror of Wisdom that God reveals his Word, so that 'his three-fold nature [...] becomes manifest'.²⁸⁵ Where the Father is the mute being, the Son is his mouth, and the Spirit is his Word, Wisdom can be seen as the Word's grammar. Wisdom is 'the emanated' (*das Ausgeflössene*), 'the egressed' (*das Ausgegangenene*), 'the exhaled' (*das Ausgehauchte*), the 'discovered' (*das Gefundene*), and 'the articulated' or 'spoken out' (*das Ausgesprochene*).²⁸⁶ Wisdom serves as a female counterpart to the masculine three-fold nature of the Trinity. As such, it is conceived by Böhme with such feminine imagery as 'God's body' (*II Apol. Tilke, 57*), 'the chest or container of

²⁸² *Incarnation*, II, 2. 3.

²⁸³ *Stiefel*, 2. 30.

²⁸⁴ *Incarnation*, II, 1. 9.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, II, 2. 12.

²⁸⁶ *Stoudt*, pp. 214–215.

God' (*Kasten Gottes*) (Ibid., 67), and 'the receptacle (*Incarnation*, II, 1. 10). As female, Wisdom does not create or beget, but is a passive principle, a 'virgin'.²⁸⁷ It is doubtful that Wisdom is equivalent to the Catholic conception of Mary *qua* Θεοτόκος, for she is 'not a genetrix, neither herself reveals anything,' but, 'She is the house of the Holy Trinity, the ornament of the divine angelic world'.²⁸⁸

Not wisdom, but the Spirit of God is the centre, or the discloser. As the soul is manifesting herself in the body by means of the flesh, and as the latter would have no power if it were not inhabited by a living spirit, likewise the wisdom of God is the corporeity of the Holy Spirit, by means of which he assumes substantiality, so as to manifest himself to himself. Wisdom gives birth, but she would not do so if the Spirit were not acting within her. She brings forth without the power of the fire-life; she has no ardent desire, but her joy finds its perfection in the manifestation of the God-head, and therefore she is called a virgin in chastity and purity before God.²⁸⁹

The question naturally arises as where, indeed, Wisdom fits in the traditional trinitarian scheme. Owing to its various definitions, the Trinity cannot be composed of more than three aspects or persons. It is certain, however, that Böhme is not arguing for a possible 'Quaternity'. Where exactly Wisdom belongs in the trinitarian scheme can be surmised by returning to the orthodox definition of the Trinity, of one substance, three persons. Where Father, Son, and Holy Spirit compose the three persons, Wisdom is the one substance. Wisdom is what, to Böhme's mind, holds the Trinity together, as it were: Wisdom is the Trinity's consubstantiality. Although

²⁸⁷ *Theos. Punkt.*, I, 1. 62.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., I, 1. 10. This is not the opinion of O'Regan, who not only advances that 'one cannot rule out Catholic influence about Mary the "Mother of God"', also equates Wisdom to the conception of *sancta sophia* of the Eastern Orthodox tradition (O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, p. 237, n. 11).

²⁸⁹ *II Apol. Tilk.*, 2. 64.

Wisdom is, as Martensen comments, co-eternal with God, it is ‘not God [...] but the friend of God’.²⁹⁰ It must be ‘distinct from the three persons although unable to exist apart from them’.²⁹¹ As substance, Wisdom’s relation to each being of the Trinity is one of revelation and reconciliation. Wisdom permits the revelation of the Father as the Son as other, and allows for the sense of possible alienation between the two to be reconciled. This reconciliation takes place through the mirroring of the one in the other, which is the Holy Spirit. ‘If this spirit did not exist,’ Böhme writes, ‘God would be imperceptible’ to himself and to us.²⁹² In this way, Wisdom is truly the οὐσία of the Trinity.²⁹³

Hegel’s stance on Böhme’s differentiation between the Holy Spirit and its counterpart, Wisdom, is somewhat subtle. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel considers the idea of the Trinity as a quaternity, composed of the immanent Trinity and some unknown, nondivine ‘abandoning’ or ‘emptying’. Peter Koslowski comments that Hegel had ‘flirted’ with the idea of an ‘other’ to the immanent trinity, which was ‘crucially responsible for creation’.²⁹⁴ Clearly, such a quaternity would be identical to Böhme’s scheme, but Hegel ultimately decides against such a proposal, for ‘counting the moments [...] can be regarded as altogether useless’.²⁹⁵ While there is some similarity between Böhme’s eternal Wisdom as the mirror of the Groundless

²⁹⁰ Martensen, p. 59.

²⁹¹ Stoudt, p. 216.

²⁹² *Aurora*, 11. 1.

²⁹³ Stoudt, p. 216.

²⁹⁴ O’Regan, *Heterodox Hegel*, p. 228; Peter Koslowski, ‘Hegel — “der Philosoph der Trinität?” Zur Kontroverse um seine Trinitätslehre’, *Theologische Quartalschrift* 162 (1982), 105–131.

²⁹⁵ *PhS*, p. 453.

and Hegel's creation as the mirror of God, the images the Groundless sees in its projection are, unlike in Hegel's conception, non-specific; they are archetypes or blueprints of the possibilities of manifestation of the Groundless,²⁹⁶ the mirror 'remains eternally a virgin without bringing forth'.²⁹⁷

For Hegel, if Wisdom were to belong to any moment of the Trinity, it would belong to the second moment of the economic trinity, as the portend of the Incarnation as represented by the heavenly, archetypal Adam. Wisdom, for Hegel, is the capacity of being 'the primal man who is entirely pure, an existent other as that first universality, a particular and determinate [*bestimmt*] reality'.²⁹⁸ In God there cannot be, for Hegel, more than one birth, for birth is an eternal generation. Wisdom, then, belongs eternally 'in the bosom of God', and any distinction between Wisdom and the holy Spirit is, categorically, 'no distinction'.²⁹⁹

Throughout this chapter, many instances of similarity have been shown between Böhme and Hegel's thoughts on the doctrine of the Trinity. Both assent to the revealed truth of the three-in-one nature of the divine, the idea that 'in each spirit all are contained',³⁰⁰ and the dialectical struggle between each non-personal 'principle' or 'moment' in its drive towards self-consciousness and self-manifestation. Both take the content of what is given as a revelatory truth, and attempt to rid it of its mysterious element, to make it not dependent on revelation, but on

²⁹⁶ O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, p. 34.

²⁹⁷ *Incarnation*, II, 2. 2.

²⁹⁸ *LPR*, III, p. 99.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

³⁰⁰ *Geschichte der Philosophie*, p. 323.

thought and reason. In this way, both philosophers can be thought of as attempting to make good on the Apostle Paul's statement on the nature of the divine reality, which is first seen as but 'through a mirror dimly' (δι' ἑσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι), but later 'face to face' (πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον).³⁰¹

Where both diverge in their conception of the divine is over Böhme's postulation of yet another divine 'other', Wisdom, the mirror of God's nature in the world. On this issue, it might be said that Böhme commits one of the cardinal sins of philosophy, that of unnecessarily multiplying entities. In terms of a divine dialectic, only one 'other' is necessary, which can be considered Christ *quia λόγος* or 'the eternal son' on the immanent level, and creation or the historical Christ on the economic. Nevertheless, it would not be too extraordinary to say that Hegel's philosophy of the Trinity represents the distillation of Böhme's vision, purged of its imagistic or representational form. If Hegel were to sum up the entirety of his thoughts on Böhme's contribution to the philosophy of the Trinity, the following passage from the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* would be an ideal candidate.

His [Böhme's] way of imagining and thinking is rather fantastical and unrefined; he has not yet risen to the pure forms of thinking. But the ruling and fundamental principle of all the notions that fermented [in his mind], and of all his struggles [to reach the truth], was the recognition of the presence of the Trinity in everything and everywhere; e.g., it must be born in the hearts of persons. It is the universal foundation of everything that may indeed be finite from the point of view of truth, but even its finitude has the truth in it. Thus Jakob Böhme attempted to represent under this category nature and the heart, the spirit of humanity.³⁰²

³⁰¹ 1 Corinthians 13. 12.

³⁰² *LPR*, III, p. 98.

Böhme's recognition of the presence of the Trinity 'in everything and everywhere' doubtlessly had a strong influence on Hegel. The Trinity, then, for both, constitutes not only the narrative of the self-unfolding of God's nature, but also its importance for man and his religion. Though, of course, having its ultimate source in the moments of the Trinity, revelatory religion is historically attributable to, as O'Regan puts it, 'divine activity within the sphere of the non-divine and in no way to intra-divine trinitarian reality'.³⁰³ In other words, although revelation is fundamentally within the provenance of the Trinity, it is in practise extrinsic. The Hegelian reformulation, however, does not make the Trinity a foundational concept at all. Kant's differentiation of the two formulations of the doctrine of the thing-in-itself seems to come into play here, between the negative sense of the noumenon of objects being as abstractions from perception and the positive, and by Kant's own admission impossible, sense of their being as the products of a 'special relationship' peculiar to the thinking subject.³⁰⁴ However, even if the doctrine of the Trinity is not a foundational concept, the revelation dynamic is involved in every moment of the divine, including its perichoretic dialogue. In short, revelation is intrinsic to the Trinity.³⁰⁵

What may be said to be Hegel's ultimate aim in championing this new

³⁰³ O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*, p. 73.

³⁰⁴ Andrew Bowie, *Introduction to German Philosophy: From Kant to Habermas* (Cambridge: Polity, 2004), p. 27.

³⁰⁵ O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*, p. 73.

formulation is to take the content of what is given as a revelatory truth, and attempt to rid it of its mysterious element, to make it dependent not on revelation, but on thought and reason. This is attempted through a transition of mediums of the content of religion, from the representative language of theology to the conceptual thinking of philosophy. In Hegel's estimation, 'Philosophy has the end to know the truth, to know God, for he is absolute truth, and in contrast to God and his explication, nothing else is worth the trouble of knowing'.³⁰⁶ Subsequently, the treatment by Christian orthodoxy of the revealed and unrevealed God becomes seen as something in sharp distinction to Hegel's thought. For Hegel the idea of the unrevealed God is treated as something which can be spoken of affirmatively: the immanent trinity is something entirely accessible to reason. The distinction between the revealed and unrevealed God, between immanent and economic trinities, is therefore treated by Hegel as but a conceptual distinction. In reality, both the *deus absconditus* and *deus revelatus* are merged in to one being.

The self-relatedness of the deity of God takes place in an unsurpassable way in the very selflessness of the incarnation of God. That is the meaning of talk about the humanity of God. It is not a second thing next to the eternal God, but rather the event of the deity of God. For that reason, the economic is the immanent trinity and vice-versa. And thus the crucified one belongs to the concept of God.³⁰⁷

The Trinity then, for Hegel, constitutes not only the narrative of the self-unfolding of God's nature, but also its importance for man and his religion.

³⁰⁶ *Werke*, XII, pp. 280–281.

³⁰⁷ Jünger, *God as the Mystery of the World*, p. 91.

A complete answer to the question of where Hegel's new formulation of the Trinity stands as it relates to Christian orthodoxy remains to be answered. Does Hegel's conception follow traditionally orthodox notions, or does it descend into the heterodox? If the question is considered beyond the usual wrangling over petty theological points and technicalities, and towards a more general account, there is much of Hegel's formulation that can be considered orthodox. Firstly, it can be said that Hegel's arguing for a shared content of philosophy and theology can be seen as the extension of the program of the fathers of the early church (Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen) and the Catholic scholastics who incorporated philosophical elements from Neo-Platonism, Neo-Pythagoreanism, and Neo-Aristotelianism into their own theological systems.³⁰⁸ Secondly, as Hegel's formulation owes so much to Neo-Platonism, it is therefore strongly reminiscent of Augustine's trialectical model of the Trinity, of subject (the Father) and object (the Son) mediated by a third (the Holy Spirit). In turn, this resemblance to Augustine makes Hegel's conception of the Trinity similar to that of Luther and Protestant scholasticism. However, where Hegel's conception of the Trinity is dissimilar to orthodox notions is when those notions have an Aristotelian, and not a Platonic, foundation. While Hegel's concept of God is similar in sentiment to Aristotle's 'thought thinking itself', when that concept is applied to a trinitarian model any such resemblance terminates. Aquinas's Aristotelian trinitarian envisioning of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as a triangle

³⁰⁸ Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, p. 54.

connection by spiration does not match Hegel's scheme, for the Holy Spirit here is not conceived of as logically necessary, and becomes contingent upon Father and Son.³⁰⁹ This incongruity with Aristotelianism with congruity with Platonism leads one to conclude that Hegel's conception of the Trinity moves away from (traditional) Roman Catholic thinking, and approaches, if not succeeds, orthodox Protestant notions.³¹⁰ At its heart, however, the God of Böhme and Hegel is one which is essentially absent from both Catholic and Protestant scholastic traditions, at least until the advent of nominalism and German mysticism.³¹¹

³⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 134, n. 8.

³¹⁰ There is much to be said, however, in favour of an appropriation of Hegel's philosophy by modern Catholic writers, particularly of the French 'rightist' variety: viz. Albert Chapelle, André Leonard, Claude Bruaire, and Emilio Brito. See Chapelle's book, *Hegel et la religion* (Paris: Éditions Universitaires, 1963) and his essay 'L'absolu et l'histoire', in *Hegel et la théologie contemporaine: L'absolu dans l'histoire?*, various editors (Paris: Delachaux and Niestle, 1977), pp. 205–218, where it is argued that Hegel's Christology is closest to 'that of a Catholic theologian' (p. 205). Leonard's article, 'L'absolu et l'histoire selon Hegel', in the same collection, terminates with the statement that Hegel's philosophy of history requires a Catholic theological complement in order to be fully understood, 'a logic which is closer to that of ecclesial tradition' (p. 93). Similarly, Bruaire's 'Hegel et le problème de la théologie', again published in the same collection, argues for the inclusion of Hegel's philosophy of religion into 'a way of thinking that is more open and faithful to the thought of revelation' (p. 98). Cf. also Brito's *Hegel et la tâche actuelle de la christologie* (Paris: Éditions Lethielleux, 1979) and *La christologie de Hegel: Verbum Crucis* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1983).

³¹¹ Altizer, p. 76.

Figure One: Table of Böhme's Qualities and their Attributions

| <u>Quality</u> | <u>Planet</u> | <u>Metal</u> | <u>Element</u> | <u>Person</u> | <u>Description</u> |
|--|---------------|--------------|----------------|---|---|
| 1. Sour (<i>Herb</i>) | Saturn | Lead | Salt | Father (as Groundless), 'Eternal Will' | The divine will to remain unmanifest |
| 2. Sweet (<i>Süss</i>) | Jupiter | Quick-silver | Mercury | Son (as ground), 'Eternal Nature' | The divine will for manifestation |
| 3. Bitter (<i>Bitter</i>) | Mars | Iron | Sulphur | Spirit (as speculum), 'Eternal Wisdom' | The reconciliation of these twin wills |
| 4. Heat (<i>Hitze</i>), or Flash (<i>Schrack</i>) | Sol | Gold | | Son (as mediator) | Creativity arising from the play between the previous three qualities |
| 5. Love (<i>Liebe</i>) | Venus | Copper | Salt | Father (as object of faith) | The beginning of substantiality |
| 6. Tone (<i>Ton; Schall</i>) | Mercury | Tin | Mercury | Son (as presence of God in history) | The principle of Life; the <i>verbum fiat</i> |
| 7. Body (<i>Corpus</i>) | Luna | Silver | Sulphur | Spirit (as enduring presence of God), 'Wisdom' | Corporeality, the substance of the material world |

Figure Two: Böhme's Trinitarian Arrangements

Immanent Trinity

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Sour (Saturn, Luna) | 2. Sweet (Mercury, Jupiter) | 3. Bitter (Mars, Venus) |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|

Transition Point

4. Heat
(Sol)

Economic Trinity

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 5. Love (Venus, Mars) | 6. Tone (Jupiter, Mercury) | 7. Body (Luna, Saturn) |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|

Compare with the cabbalistic Tree of Life

Immanent Trinity

- | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Kether, (Saturn) | 2. Chokmah, (Jupiter) | 3. Binah (Mars) |
|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|

Transition Point

6. Tipareth
(Sol)

Economic Trinity

- | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 7. Netzach, (Venus) | 8. Hod (Mercury) | 9. Yesod (Luna) |
|------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|

CHAPTER III

CREATION AND THE FALL

Hegel and Böhme's commentaries on the narratives of the creation and the Fall of Man, based upon the opening chapters of Genesis, are products of their last years and thereby representative of their mature philosophies. Hegel's commentaries come from his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, collected and published after his death in 1831, while Böhme's primarily come from his *Mysterium Magnum* completed in 1623, fourteen months before his death. Both commentaries ought to be set against the backdrop of Luther's interpretation of the Genesis account, as it was in response to this that both were, for the most part, writing. Hegel would doubtlessly have been familiar with Luther's commentary from his seminary days, while Böhme, though not having Hegel's advantage of Latin, the language in which Luther's commentaries were originally written, would have been familiar with their content either from access to the German editions, or indeed from the sermonised versions, preached from the pulpit.¹ Exegetically, Hegel and Böhme are similar to Luther in a variety of different ways. Luther insisted that he considered 'knowledge of the subject matter [of religion] nothing else than a knowledge of the New Testament, and the entire scripture of the Old Testament is clear when this is well understood'.² Böhme affirms Luther's position, acknowledging that 'whosoever will read and understand right the

¹ Miller, 'Luther and Boehme', p. 262.

² Martin Luther, *D. Martin Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe* [hereafter *Luthers Werke*], 65 vols (Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1883), XLII, p. 600.

history of the Old Testament, he must set before him two types, viz. externally Adam, viz. the earthly man, and internally Christ, and change both these into one, and so he may understand all whatsoever Moses and the prophets have spoke in the Spirit'.³ Hegel goes one step further than both Luther and Böhme, on account of being strongly antipathetic to the Old Testament's Judaic content, and abrogates most of it outright. Nevertheless, Hegel concedes that some material is worth philosophical scrutiny, in particular the book of Genesis.⁴

Böhme's method of comment on Genesis was not based upon any structural or grammatical examination of the text itself. Böhme had no Hebrew, so he could not read the original text, and, as stated, quite poor Latin, so the use of textual commentaries, such as Nicholas de Lyra's popular *Postillae perpetuae in universam S. Scripturam*, were out of the question. The skill Böhme did bring to the table, however, was, as one commentator puts it, in putting the Genesis material into 'new frames of reference and new language which was more akin to the seventeenth century's dynamic *Weltanschauung* than medieval static categories of being'.⁵ This *Weltanschauung* seems to reject Luther's structured and ordered approach to biblical commentary: each text being painstakingly explored in sequential order, line by line. Böhme flits from idea to idea, from one point of inspiration to another — the only semblance of order in his commentary is in his own chronology of themes he wishes

³ *Myst. Mag.*, 46. 29.

⁴ Hans Küng, *The Incarnation of God*, trans. by John Stephenson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Publishers, 1999), pp. 111–116.

⁵ Miller, 'Luther and Boehme', p. 263.

to discuss.⁶ A great deal of Böhme's actual commentary consists in the kind of word games similar to cabalistic modes of exegesis such as *notarikon* (נוטריון) and *temurah* (הרומת).⁷ Such exegetical methods, however, Hegel would doubtlessly with the familiar epithet of *barbarisch*, so Böhme's usage of such will not be expanded upon. What is of significance, however, is that the remaining content of Böhme's Genesis commentary constitutes an imaginative and a-traditional speculative exploration of the 'secret meanings of the hidden spiritual world',⁸ a world into which Hegel is also attempting to delve.

Whereas the theological concept of creation was viewed by Augustine and Luther as purely an *ex nihilo* act, a formulation supposedly informed by the Genesis account,⁹ Hegel and Böhme subscribe to both the *ex nihilo* addition, and the Eckhartian vision of creation *ex Deo*. Creation, for Böhme and Hegel, is seen as an act of divine self-consciousness on the one hand, and divine self-manifestation on the other. Whereas Catholicism (according to Irenaeus and Augustine) and Protestant scholasticism would acknowledge 'a certain domination' of sin in the life of man,¹⁰ Hegel would subscribe to Böhme's viewpoint of the creation of the world and of

⁶ Ibid., p. 267.

⁷ These cabalistic exegetical methods involve the rearranging of words and sentences of holy texts to derive a deeper spiritual (or, indeed, speculative) meaning. For an examination of Böhme's use of such exegetical modes, see Steven A. Konopacki, *The Descent into Words: Jakob Boehme: Transcendental Linguistics* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Karoma Publications, 1979).

⁸ *Myst. Mag.*, 48. 40.

⁹ Twentieth century Old Testament commentator Derek Kidner affirms this orthodox interpretation of creation, that it is 'supported by all the ancient versions, and affirms unequivocally the truth laid down elsewhere (e.g. Hebrews 11. 3) that until God spoke, nothing existed'. *Genesis* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1967), p. 43.

¹⁰ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (London: Geoffrey Chapman: 1994), S. II, 3, 407.

human beings as an essentially evil act. In this way, as Schelling notes, Hegel's entire vision of creation has 'the mythopoetic Böhmean version as its precursor'.¹¹ More recently, Harris intimates in *Night Thoughts* that the Böhmean and Hegelian creation accounts are more closely connected than previously imagined.¹² What unites the Hegelian recollection of Böhme's formulation is the emphasis on speculative interpretation over the literal, biblical sense present in the Genesis narrative.¹³ As Hegel advises, the Bible must be read as any other secular or profane text, with regards to what is finite, historical, and external.¹⁴ In this way, what should be fully appreciated in Hegel's view is the confirmation of spirit, whose testimony does not lie fundamentally in history, but with what exists 'in and for itself' (*an und für sich*). Further, as Frick maintains, there is no barrier in employing non-biblical exegesis, as allegory in scripture itself indicates a reality beyond the text.¹⁵

In their exegeses of creation and fall, the instances in which Böhme and Hegel which will be shown to be similar follows a three part structure. The first part will be in their treatment of the two traditional analogues of creation. The second part will examine the psychology of Adam, the first human being, with particular regard to his relationship with God. In the third part the Fall itself will be discussed, both as an

¹¹ *PN*, I, p. 86. Cf. O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*, p. 152.

¹² Harris, *Night Thoughts*, pp. 406–407.

¹³ O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*, pp. 169–170.

¹⁴ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Christian Religion: Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion. Part III. The Revelatory, Consummate, Absolute Religion*, ed. and trans. by Peter C. Hodgson (Missoula, M.T.: Scholars Press 1979), p. 256.

¹⁵ Johann Frick, *Gründliche Untersuchung Jacob Boehmens vornehmster Irrthuemmer: So auss dessen eigenen Schriften gezeiget und auss H. schrifft widerlegt werden: Vorrede Dr. Elias Veiels* (Ulm: zu finden bey Wolfgang Kraer Buchbindern druckts Ferdinand Manch, 1697) pp. 238–242. Cf. O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, p. 92.

event in itself and its resulting consequences, according to Böhme and Hegel's speculative interpretation.

SECTION ONE

CREATION

The creation of the world, not only for orthodoxy, but also for the entire host of heterodox traditions, is the fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion. For Christianity, the notion of creation acts as the justification and driving power behind any other postulated doctrine. Creation is used to provide an account of the origin of the natural world, its inhabitants, and the relationship each one has towards the other. Equally, it also seeks to describe the correspondences between created nature, its created spirits, and their creator. In the context of a philosophical investigation, the creation of the material world is a question which merits some scrutiny. As Luther inquires,

For what, I ask, does a philosopher know of the heaven and the world if he does not even know whence it came and whither it tends? Indeed, what do we know about us ourselves? [...] Thus all knowledge or wisdom is based solely on the knowledge of the material and formal cause, although in these instances too we sometimes talk dishonourable nonsense. The efficient and final cause we are unable to declare.¹⁶

The act of creation is seen, for Christian orthodoxy, as a creative act of which

¹⁶ *Luthers Werke*, XLII, p. 93

'nothing' is its material. This doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* is propounded so that the creation of the world is a notion distinct from creation in the world.¹⁷ The creative act of the Christian God is differentiated from Plato's demiurge, who creates the world *ex materia*, from a pre-existent or primordial ὕλη. *Creatio ex nihilo* presents itself as a superior notion to the *creatio ex materia* account, for if Plato's primordial matter is one which is 'formless and completely without any determinate characteristics',¹⁸ the undifferentiated ὕλη is really as nothing, and so identical in concept of the *nihil* from which the world is created according to the orthodox account.¹⁹ Macquarrie argues in his book, *The Principles of Christian Theology*, that the aspect of the highest significance in the conception of 'creation from nothing' lies in the relationship it highlights between the infinite God and finite spirits. What is to be human is to be a particular being, and being finds itself defined in opposition to what it is not. Mankind stands in the gulf of being and nothingness, God and the godless, and is, therefore, understood only in relation to what it is and what it is not. The nothingness from which the world is created, Macquarrie argues, is 'an essential constituent of creaturehood', it is 'a universal characteristic of creaturely beings'.²⁰

For Christianity, there are generally two, mutually exclusive, notions, modes,

¹⁷ There is a linguistic precedent in the text for this distinction: the Hebrew verb *bārā* (אָרַב) is translated as 'to create', but never with regard to human beings. See James McKeown, *Genesis* (Cambridge and Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), p. 20.

¹⁸ Macquarrie, *Principles*, p. 215.

¹⁹ This argument is found in Augustine's *Confessions*, bk 10. 11ff, and is recollected by Aquinas in the *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 41, a. 1. Later in this *articulus*, Aquinas argues that the term *creatio ex nihilo*, in addition to meaning 'creation from nothing', is really a description of the power of the divine *qua* first cause. See O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, p. 245, n. 22.

²⁰ Macquarrie, *Principles*, p. 215.

or analogues of the concept of creation: ‘making’ (synonymous with *creatio ex nihilo*) and ‘emanation’ (*creatio ex Deo*).²¹ The first is biblical, strictly following the Genesis narrative, and is subject to the most commentary by Christian orthodoxy, The second, that of emanation (which Irenaeus describes as a προβαλεῖν προβολὰς),²² has a tenuous scriptural foundation at best, but has had a long tradition of philosophical and theological concordance, from the Neo-Platonists of the early church, to the German mystics, and beyond. In the first analogue, the God of the Genesis narrative is spoken of as a ‘maker’: God ‘made the firmament; he ‘made the two great lights’; he ‘made the beasts of the earth; and he ‘made the earth and the heavens’. God ‘formed the dust from the ground’ and ‘the rib [...] taken from man he made into a woman’.²³ The significance of the analogy of God *qua* maker is that it both represents God in his transcendence, as a creator, distinct from his creation, and as freely willing the created into existence, in virtue of being an absolutely free being. The second analogue, that of emanation, posits the notion that creation is not a fashioning out of a pre-existent material, but a literal ‘flowing forth’ of the divine being from within itself to outside of itself.

Where Böhme and Hegel are concerned, both agree with Christian orthodoxy in thinking of creation as a fundamentally *ex nihilo* act. Both, too, make the distinction between the twin modal forms of creation as ‘making’ and as emanation. Where the two differ from Christian orthodoxy is in considering that these modes are

²¹ Ibid., p. 217.

²² Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, I, 1. 2.

²³ Genesis 1. 7; 1. 16; 1. 25; 2. 4; 2. 7; 2. 22.

not mutually exclusive to each other, but are, in fact, related. Additionally, these analogues have, at least at the level of the representation, a chronological hierarchy. The emanation of creation will be seen to precede the making of the same, based upon a shared reading of an extra-biblical, Gnostic prehistory of creation. This prehistory is the celestial fall of 'the first Son of light', the angel Lucifer. Both Böhme and Hegel will argue that these twin modes have a dialectical relationship: Lucifer's angelic fall serves to be understood, in trinitarian terms, as creation occurring on the preceding, immanent level, while Adam's fall represents creation on the succeeding, economic level.

§ 1. 1. Böhme: Anterior Apostasy and Creation as Renovation

Böhme mirrors the orthodox sense of creation in two modes, with the important distinction of arguing that one is chronological prior to the other. Both modes, nevertheless, are based upon the opening line of Genesis: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth'.²⁴ The terminology Böhme uses in the logical separation of these two creative analogues are: that of the creation (emanation) of 'eternal nature' (*ewige Natur*), the creation of a heavenly world and its angelic inhabitants; and the creation (making) of actual earth, or 'temporal nature', with its denizens of a more bestial variety. This distinction in creation, made by Böhme, goes

²⁴ Ibid., 1. 1.

against the orthodox interpretation of the passage, which is understood as a mere merism, a phrase which juxtaposes two opposing ideas to suggest a sense of totality.²⁵ Böhme's understanding is based upon his reading of Psalm 104, to God as creator and provider, which praises the 'fire and flames' as the 'ministers' or angels of the creative act.

The terms 'flames and fire' denotes the central fire of the eternal nature, in which the creatures [...] stand, as the particular will of a being. But when God would realise his idea in the form of a living creature, as in the form of self-will, he put in motion and separated the central fire in eternal nature. Thus the idea became manifest in the fire, which was accomplished through the breathing forth of the 'yes'. Thus the 'no', as the emanated will of self-receptiveness, took shape in the outbreathed yes, in order that the creature might be established in its own will. And thus its own will is understood in the central fire, that is, in the properties of the fire, in which the creaturely life consists. For if this had not been, then Lucifer could not in self-will have broken himself off from the good, and have fallen. If he had not possessed a volition of his own, then God's power must have fallen. But in this way the creature has broken off from the good and willed to rule in the power and in the properties of the central fire of nature, i.e. in the sphere of transmutation and fantasy; to which the devil likewise came.²⁶

The catalyst for this separation of the creative fire and the creation of heaven is explained by Böhme as the need for the *deus absconditus* to reveal himself to himself in order to come to self-consciousness, a process which has been discussed, at length, in the preceding chapter.

²⁵ Merisms are used often in the Old Testament as a rhetorical device to suggest the all-embracing nature of God. One of the most frequently used pairings is between 'those who go out', and 'those who go in', e.g. 'Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, those who go in with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them'. Psalm 126. 6. See McKeown, p. 20.

²⁶ *Theos. Frag.*, 5. 2–6.

Creation [...] is [...] a manifestation of the all-essential, unsearchable God; all whatever he is in his eternal unbeginning, generation, and dominion, of that is also the creation, but not in omnipotence and power, but like an apple which grows upon the tree, which is not the tree itself, but sprung forth out of the divine desire, and created into an essence, where in the beginning there was no such essence present, but only the same mystery of the eternal generation, in which there has been an eternal perfection [...] For God has not brought forth the creation that he should thereby be perfect but for his own manifestation, viz., for the great joy and glory.²⁷

The 'central fire' is the creative power of God in his 'heaven', i.e. the immanent trinity, which, through the process of divine self-differentiation examined in the previous chapter, is separated and now flares forth 'eternal nature', the heavenly world. Eternal nature is understood, in addition to being the substance of the celestial world, to serve as a prototype or blueprint for the terrestrial world.²⁸ Böhme offers the following analogy to provide an illustration of this concept:

Imagine a mother [a womb] having the seed within herself. As long as she contains the seed as such, it belongs to herself, but when it becomes a child then is the seed not hers, but it is the property of the child. Thus it is with [creation]. [It has] all been configured out of the divine seed; but after this has been done, each is its own [thing] to itself.²⁹

Thus it is with the birth of eternal and temporal nature. Eternal nature brings about the essence which is used in the making of the material world, an 'essence without which

²⁷ *Sig. Rer.* 4. 1–2.

²⁸ 'Eternal nature' is described, more accurately, as any created realm, other to the immanent trinity. Böhme, in fact, posits a number of realms other to the earth, the notion which will be dealt with later in this section.

²⁹ *Aurora*, 4. 34. Böhme gives further clarification on this idea in the *Forty Questions* (19. 7), stating that 'everything has been from all eternity, but merely as ideas, and not as corporeally existing things. Only incorporeal spirits existed [as ideas] in eternity, as in a world of magic, where one thing contains the other in potentiality'.

nothing can exist'.³⁰ Therefore, this essence is, Bohme argues, the 'root' or 'source' (*Urkund*) of manifestation.³¹

The depth of this substance is without beginning or end, its breadth cannot be reached, there are neither years nor time, no cold nor heat, no moving of the air; no sun or stars; no water or fire; no sight of evil spirits; no knowledge nor apprehension of the affliction of this world; no stony rock nor earth; and yet a figured substance of all the creatures of this world.³²

The dialectic present between the material world and the celestial world becomes clear in Böhme's account of the two 'falls' from God: Adam's fall is read as echoing the angelic fall which permitted such an event to occur in the first place. Böhme argues that previous commentators thought they had 'the axe by the handle' in the interpretation of the 'making' analogue of creation, but, nevertheless, have failed to give the extra-biblical story of the angelic fall its proper due.³³ While this narrative may be extra biblical, Böhme's interpretation of it is accomplished with reference to scripture. A difficulty lies, however, in that the scriptural representation of angelic beings is seldom clear; whether an angel represents a way in which God expresses himself to creation, or if angels are, in fact, actual spirits belonging to some supernal order, hierarchically higher than man, is uncertain.³⁴ In the accounts presented in the Old Testament, when the burning bush appears before Moses, for instance, it is as an

³⁰ *Ohne Wesen nicht bestehen mag. Princ.* 1. 27. This essence is the 'no-thing' which is the Groundless, and so, for Böhme, creation is an inherently *ex nihilo* act. Stoudt, p. 245. For a further elaboration on this point, see Koyré, p. 321, and ff.

³¹ *Myst. Mag.*, 4. 17.

³² *Princ.*, 9. 21.

³³ *Aurora*, 13. 2.

³⁴ Macquarrie, *Principles*, p. 234.

appearance of 'the angel of the Lord'. The words spoken from the bush, however, are from 'God' or the 'Lord'.³⁵ This ambiguity extends into the New Testament: the angels are presented as real and personal spirits in Luke's Gospel, but as insubstantial appearances in dreams and visions in Matthew's.³⁶ This uncertainty is present, too, in Böhme's writings. The angels are made in the concrete image of God and are, therefore, 'the brethren of men'.³⁷ They are the product of the Trinity's 'birth',³⁸ and born of the first principle and the immanent trinity.³⁹ Nevertheless, Böhme also conceives of them in a more abstract fashion, as 'the formed powers of God's Word', the product of 'God's outspeaking' and 'his thoughts',⁴⁰ or, what Stoudt calls, as 'the formed individualized ideas of God'.⁴¹ What, indeed, constitutes an accurate representation of the angels, in both scripture and in Böhme's system, cannot truly be known. Philosophical speculation, especially on behalf of the scholastics, on the nature of the angels is well known, so it is, perhaps, best to leave the inquiry with its most appropriate historical provenance. An argument from Macquarrie, however, should be noted, that both representations of angels (as abstract apparitions and as concrete beings) can be, nevertheless, reconciled according to their *telos*, which is, as

³⁵ Exodus 3. 2, 4.

³⁶ See Matthew 1. 20, 2. 13, 2. 19, 2. 22; Luke 1. 11, 1. 26, 2. 9.

³⁷ *Aurora*, 5. 2. In this way they resemble men physically, having appendages such as hands and feet (*Aurora*, 12. 78, 83), mouths, and some manner of apparatus for breathing, (*Aurora*, 6. 10) to eat of the paradisaical fruit (*Aurora*, 6. 17). They have, however, no limbs (*Aurora*, 6. 12), teeth or wings (*Aurora*, 6. 17, 12. 84). They are, however, of the same substance as God: 'God has created the holy angels, not by means of any substance foreign to his own self, but out of his own self, out of his power and eternal wisdom' (*Aurora*, 4. 26).

³⁸ *Myst. Mag.*, 8. 1.

³⁹ *Princ.*, 4. 67.

⁴⁰ *Theos Frag.*, 6. 5.

⁴¹ Stoudt, p. 236.

Paul has it, the 'ministering spirits sent forth to serve'.⁴² We shall, therefore, consider Böhme's understanding of the angel Lucifer in this Pauline light.

Böhme accounts for Lucifer's fall in two ways: firstly, according to the traditional narrative of angelic rebellion against God; and secondly as a failed attempt at mimesis of God's coming to self-consciousness and self-manifestation. The first instance describes the traditionally Christian, if ex-biblical, account of Lucifer's rebellion and ejection from heaven, a fate shared with an unspecified number of other divine beings.⁴³ Lucifer, interpreted by Böhme from this narrative, is represented as the personification of eternal nature, but is discontent with this arrangement. Lucifer, Böhme writes, was the

property of eternal nature, and would not live in renunciation, but wished to rule in and with the holy name [...] His creaturely will elevated itself [...] and abused the holy name in it [...] He [...] broke off from the unity. He wished to rule over the yes with the no, for the no had elevated itself in him and despised the yes.⁴⁴

In Böhme's terminology, this angelic fall from grace was precipitated by Lucifer's attempt at imitation of God's own transition from a state of contraction to one of expansion, from an inward looking perspective before creation, to a more embracing

⁴² Macquarrie, *Principles*, p. 235. See Hebrews 1. 14.

⁴³ Lucifer, in Böhme's narrative, was not only a denizen of heaven, but also ruler of the unformed earth, in addition to many other 'worlds' contingent upon our own realm (see Martensen, p. 204). It is highly unlikely that Böhme here is suggesting such worlds are other inhabited planets, for such a notion is unfamiliar to his period, rather such worlds should be understood spiritually, as higher noumenal planes of existence. While Böhme is not specific in numerating the horde of rebellious angels, he does number the amount of angels as a whole as 'a thousand times ten thousand' (*Princ.* 15. 3), which has a discrete cabalistic significance.

⁴⁴ *Theos. Frag.*, 7. 2-7.

viewpoint after creation. Lucifer did not fear God's punishment for he was not a 'created' being (for he was emanated, not made), and, as both Böhme and Hegel argue, death is the inevitable consequence of finitude.⁴⁵

Lucifer knew well that he himself was not God, and he foresaw the judgment of God; but he had no sensible perception of it, but only a bare knowledge [i.e. a theoretical knowledge]; his sensible perception was only of the Fire-ground that burned within him, and incited him to wish some thing altogether new, to uplift himself above all kingdoms and above the whole deity.⁴⁶

Lucifer's attempted transition from the one state to the other was impeded, however, by his prideful 'personal (*eigener*) will' or 'self-will' (*Eigenwille*), a 'counter will' to remain contracted and self-sufficient.⁴⁷ Lucifer withdrew his imagination away from the expansive aspect of God, the 'light-centrum', and oriented his consciousness towards the opposite pole: the contractive 'nature-centrum', the 'dark matrix', the fire-principle, 'fire's might', or the Lutheran 'wrath' (*Zorn*) of God.⁴⁸ Whereas God completed the transition from immanence to economy, and, as a result, in his new state 'moved very meekly and lovingly', Lucifer, who had not completed this

⁴⁵ In this way Böhme's Lucifer ought to be understood as a Byronic and Miltonian character: 'If he made us — he cannot unmake/ We are immortal! — nay, he'd have us so,/ That he may torture: — let him!' (*Cain: A Mystery*, Act 1, scene 1), and 'What tho' the field be lost? All is not lost! [...] Since, by fate, the strength of gods,/ and this empyreal substance cannot fail!' (*Paradise Lost*, lines 105–117). It might be argued that Böhme's presentation of Lucifer does not, in fact, have scriptural warrant: the 'great sea monsters' of Genesis 1. 21 are from the Hebrew *tannîn* (תנין), meaning 'dragon', and defined as the adversary of God (Isaiah 27. 1) or, indeed, Lucifer. The sea monsters are 'created' by God in the same way the world was, represented by the use of the Hebrew verb *bārā*. Therefore Lucifer is, at least scripturally, represented as a created being. See McKeown, p. 25.

⁴⁶ *Myst. Mag.*, 9. 9; *Aurora*, 14.

⁴⁷ *Aurora*, 13. 48.

⁴⁸ *Threefold*, 9. 38; *Theos. Frag.* 7. 1–5.

ontological transformation, 'moved very darkly, hard, cold, and fiery',⁴⁹ despising humility and meekness and willing to act in his own name.⁵⁰ Because of such a substantial disharmony between the substances of Lucifer and God, the relationship or understanding between the two was severed forever. And so,

The heart of God should now unite and qualify with the heart of the angel, but that could not be; for there was now hard against soft, and sour against sweet, and dark against light, and fire against a pleasurable gentle warmth, and a hard knocking or rumbling against a loving melodious song.⁵¹

Lucifer's move towards this contractive principle was primarily accomplished in thought, and its consequences were a loss in his imagination of the divine world, and an imagining of the material world.⁵² In short, Lucifer imagined himself into the world of matter, where he there could be 'the prince of the world of fantasy'.⁵³ For Böhme, then, it was through Lucifer's imagination that the material world came into being. While this imagining particularised Lucifer into a concrete definition, distinct and alien from God,⁵⁴ the world he generated does not bear this concreteness. The world Lucifer created is not our material world, but 'eternal nature', a kind of formless waste, a 'nothing' sloughed off by the angelic fall. It is akin to an archetype or blueprint of the material world, but a seriously deficient one. It is this nothing,

⁴⁹ *Aurora*, 13. 57.

⁵⁰ *Grace*. 4. 31; *Myst. Mag.* 10. 12.

⁵¹ *Aurora*, 13. 58.

⁵² In Böhme's parlance, Lucifer lost the power of the possession of the 'divine names'. *Theos Frag.* 8. 9.

⁵³ Stouidt, p. 246. See *Sig. Rer.* 16. 15.

⁵⁴ *Grace*, 4. 32.

generated by Lucifer's expulsion from the heavenly choir, that will become the 'immaterial material' of creation *ex nihilo*.

Biblically, this nothing is the *tōhū wābōhū* (והת ובהו) , the 'waste and void' with which God wrestles at the beginning of time. Seminal biblical commentator Franz Delitzsch comments that *tōhū wābōhū* carries the implication of a distortion and corruption of an pre-existing order.⁵⁵ Böhme reads the appearance of *tōhū wābōhū* in an identical way, as an event which has catastrophic and poisonous (*giftige*) ontological consequences as a result.⁵⁶ Chief among these 'poisonous infections' is the establishment of the possibility of evil action in creation, which is considered in the Gnostic fashion as a place of imprisonment and exile for Lucifer and evil.⁵⁷ 'The devil resides in this world, and he continually infests external nature; but he has his power only in the wrath, in bitter desire.'⁵⁸ This strange narrative is not peculiar to Böhme, but it is found in the corpus of Western literature, in early Christian poetry in particular.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Franz Delitzsch, *Neuer Commentar über die Genesis* (Leipzig: Dorffling & Franke, 1887), § 104. Delitzsch's interpretation is based upon passages from the Prophets which speak of the degenerating effect of the *tōhū wābōhū*, for instance: 'the streams of Edom shall be turned into pitch, and her soil into sulphur; her land shall become burning pitch [...] He shall stretch the line of confusion over it, and the plummet of chaos [over] its nobles [...] all its princes shall be nothing. Thorns shall grow over its strongholds, nettles and thistles in its fortresses [...] Wildcats shall meet with hyenas, goat-demons shall call to each other' (Isaiah 34. 11–14), and 'I looked on the earth, and lo, it was waste and void [...] I looked on the mountains, and lo, they were quaking, and all the hills moved to and fro [...] there was no one at all, and the birds of the air had fled [...] the fruitful land was a desert [...] all its cities were laid in ruins' (Jeremiah 4. 23–26).

⁵⁶ O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, p. 43.

⁵⁷ *Aurora*, 16. 1, 3; 17. 38; Zandee, p. 17. Lucifer's ultimate fate for Böhme, however, is the traditional one, being 'cast with his legions out of his throne, and immediately shut up by the darkness and had been grasped by the fierce pride-wrath of the hellish foundation'. *Theos Frag.* 13. 3.

⁵⁸ *Incarnation*, I, 2. 4.

⁵⁹ The earliest named English poet, Cædmon, wrote the follow lines of verse in the seventh century:

Creation is seen, therefore, by Böhme, in a Gnostic fashion, as a divine *faux pas*.⁶⁰ The consequence of creation in this manner is the movement from 'eternal nature' into 'temporal nature, from eternity into time, and the instantiation of the possibility for evil which time brings with it.⁶¹

The external world, in being born [coming into objectivity], makes for itself a new *principium* or beginning. The generatrix of the temporal is a reproduction of the eternal generatrix, time originates in eternity, and even here eternity, with its wonderful production, appears, in its powers and capabilities, in an especially temporal form and shape.⁶²

The third principle, or the visible elemental world, is an issue of the first and second principles, which is produced by the motion and outbreathing of divine power and divine will. In it is figured the spiritual world according to light and darkness, and brought into a created [objective condition].⁶³

According to the Böhmean narrative, evil, traditionally the *partie honteuse* of any

'Behind them their abode/ [...] stood, [...] void of habitants; Since the malignant spirits to their place/ of exile banish'd, left such vacant space [...] Then our Lord weigh'd within himself how he/ Might fill again each heav'n bright canopy;/ The mansions the proud rebels left behind/ For a new race created he design'd.'. *The Fall of Man or Paradise Lost of Cædmon*, trans. by William H. F. Bosanquet (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1860), p. 5. Compare with Nikolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig's nineteenth century interpretation of Cædmon's poem: 'World dead; empty and desolate; Hell-wilderness; Gloom and darkness; the Shadow-kingdom; the World's-corpse; Winter night; rocks bare; goblins cold; dead forces; Work thereafter; Angels fell; confusion all; — Spirit brooded over the deep'. Martensen, p. 226, translator's note.

⁶⁰ Compare Böhme's thoughts with the statement in the Gnostic *Gospel of Philip* (123. 3) that, 'The world began with a false step (παράπτωμα). For he who created it desired to create it imperishable and immortal. He (i.e. the creator) fell and had no share in the hope for the world was no imperishable nor was its creator'. Cf. 'Das Evangelium nach Philippus', *Theol. Literaturzeitung*, 84 (1959), columns 1–26. However, compare these heterodox viewpoints with the interpretations from orthodoxy in McKeown (pp. 20, 21): 'God created a perfect world that later suffered a catastrophe which left it in chaos' and 'God created the raw material from which he would form the world; he would then proceed to shape and order this raw material'.

⁶¹ This movement from the heavenly to the earthly is suggested by the Genesis narrative itself: the phrase 'the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1. 1) is inverted to read 'the earth and the heavens' (Genesis 2. 4)

⁶² *Myst. Mag.*, 6. 10.

⁶³ *Tab. Princ.*, 5.

philosophical system, serves to be understood as the inseparable consequence of particularity. Evil consists in the positing of a false other or *centrum*, an ontological anomaly in nature.⁶⁴

Evil neither is nor is called God; this is understood in the first principle, where it is the earnest fountain of the wrathfulness, according to which God calls himself an angry, wrathful, jealous God. For the original [sic] of life, and of all mobility, consists in the wrathfulness; yet if the same [...] be kindled with the light in God, it is then no more tartness, but the severe wrathfulness is changed into great joy.⁶⁵

Biblically, this possibility appears as ‘darkness’; that ‘darkness covered the face of the deep, while the spirit of God swept over the face of the waters’.⁶⁶ Darkness is, traditionally, the scriptural signature of evil and of the wrath of God.⁶⁷ However, here the second analogue of creation comes into play: the fashioning or ‘making’ of the *tōhū wābōhū* into the concrete material world. This is accomplished, Böhme argues, by God’s direct intervention into the state of fallen nature. Böhme’s commentary now moves from extra-biblical tradition into the actual narrative from Genesis. The creation of the concrete world, ‘temporal nature’, is accomplished in the customary way, through the *Verbum Fiat* and the *Fiat lux*.

⁶⁴ Martensen, p. 211.

⁶⁵ *Princ.*, 1. 1–2.

⁶⁶ Genesis 1. 2.

⁶⁷ The biblical sense of synonymy between conceptions of darkness and wrath is illustrated in the following passages from the Prophets: ‘The great day of the Lord is near [...] That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, day of *darkness* and gloom, a day of clouds and thick *darkness*’ (Zephaniah 1. 14–15); ‘Alas for you who desire the day of the Lord! It is *darkness*, not light [...] Is not the day of the Lord *darkness*, not light, and gloom with no brightness in it?’ (Amos 5. 18–20).

God spoke: *let there be light!* and there was light. And with this coming to be light, the devil's might and strength was wholly withdrawn from him in the essence for here the light shone in the now awakened power, in the darkness; which light the prince of wrath could not comprehend [...] It was the light of nature, which was useless to him.⁶⁸

The 'light' spoken of here has been subject to much commentary, both on the part of orthodoxy and by Böhme himself. Nahum M. Sarna comments that 'the source of this supernal, nonsolar [for the sun has yet to be created] light of creation became a subject of rabbinic and mystical speculation [...] this light is the effulgent splendour of the divine presence'.⁶⁹ The light is interpreted by Böhme to be of a Paracelsian nature: it is the 'quintessence' and 'source' of the four terrestrial elements.⁷⁰ This act of creative renovation proceeds from a *Quall*, the incomprehensible driving force behind all reality and which is the core of all living things.⁷¹ This *Quall*, it can be argued, serves as a convenient device for Böhme to distance God from the world and its inhabitants which, as will later become apparent, will fall into evil. Between the darkness engendered by Lucifer's fall and the appearance of a new light, another *contrarium* or dialectic arose:⁷² 'The darkness remained in the wrathful property, not only in the earth, but also in the whole deep; but in the light's nature the light of

⁶⁸ *Myst. Mag.*, 12. 14. Compare with Psalm 33. 9: 'For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm'.

⁶⁹ Nahum M. Sarna, *JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society: 1989), p. 7.

⁷⁰ *Princ.*, 7. 7; *Contemplations*, 3. 21. For an in-depth study of Paracelsus's conception of this divine light, see Henry Maximillian Pachter, *Paracelsus: Magic into Science: Being the True History of the Troubled Life, Adventures, Doctrines, Miraculous Cures* (New York: Schuman, 1951), pp. 208–212.

⁷¹ Stoudt, p. 257. See *Seel. Frag.* 1. 51; *Myst. Mag.* 8. 20. The notion of *Quall* is, of course, pure vitalism, and must be seen as the product of Böhme's time.

⁷² *Gelassen* 2. 10.

nature did arise [...] from the quintessence'.⁷³ The dead world, sloughed off by Lucifer's fall, was animated by this light which 'broke through the darkness', making 'the dead body of nature spring and flourish'. But the light is necessary for the darkness, for 'life proceeds out of death, and death must therefore be a cause of life. Else were there no such poisonous, fierce, fervent source fire could not be generated, and there could be no essence [...]; hence there would be no light, and also no finding of life'.⁷⁴ Further,

The inner world, the world of light, dwells in the external world, and the latter receives power from the former. She blooms in the external power, but this power knows nothing of it.⁷⁵

The powers of eternity work through the powers of time, like the sun that shines through water, while the water does not apprehend the sun, but only receives the heat; or, like a fire, which glows in the iron, but the iron remains iron nevertheless.⁷⁶

The spiritual world is hidden within the visible elementary world, and acts through the latter, and by means of the *separator*, or the soul of the outer world, it shapes itself in all things according to the character and quality of each thing; but the visible being receives the invisible one not in its own power, neither does the external thing become changed into the inner one, but the inner power merely takes shape therein, as we may see if we observe the growth of herbs, trees and metals.⁷⁷

Creation is, therefore, the mixture of the light and the good, and the dark and the evil:

⁷³ *Myst. Mag* 12. 15ff.

⁷⁴ *Theos Punkt*, 1. 68.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 6. 2.

⁷⁶ *Myst. Mag.*, 12. 20.

⁷⁷ *Contemplations*, 3. 19. See also: 'This terrestrial world is based upon the world of darkness, and if the good had not been also embodied therein, there would be in it no other doing than that of the world of darkness; but this is prevented by the divine power and the light of the sun' (*Theos. Punkt.*, 9. 17); 'We see that the earth has a great hunger and desire after the power and the light of the sun, and likewise the external being craves for the interior one. Thereby it receives the form of the latter as a light and power, without, however, being able to grasp the interior spirit itself; for the spirit does not dwell in the exterior, but has possession of its own self in its own interior state' (*Theos. Punkt.*, 6. 9).

it is a plane of struggle between these two dialectically opposed forces. As Böhme concludes, 'The external world has been outbreathed from the holy and from the dark world. It is, therefore, evil and good, and in love and wrath; but, compared with the spiritual world, it is only like a smoke or a fog.'⁷⁸ Goodness is still present in the created world, but only implicitly. Böhme uses the following analogy of the constitution of a tree to illustrate this notion:

Behold a tree. Outwardly it has a hard and rough shell, appearing dead and encrusted; but the body of the tree has a living power, which breaks through the hard and dry bark and generates many young bodies, branches, and leaves, which, however, all are rooted in the body of the tree. Thus it is with the whole house of this world, wherein also the holy light of God appears to have died out, because it has withdrawn into its principle, and therefore it seems dead, although it still exists in God. But love ever and again breaks through this very house of death and generates holy and celestial branches in this great tree, and which root in the light.⁷⁹

Nevertheless, Böhme argues, creation, just like this tree, will ultimately perish. The created world is not identical to God, but is only a created product, and, therefore, does not share in his eternity. 'The external world is not God, and will not be God in all eternity. The world is merely a state of existence wherein God is manifesting himself'.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ *Myst. Mag.*, 3. 10.

⁷⁹ *Aurora*, 24. 7.

⁸⁰ *Stief.*, 2. 316.

§ 1. 2. *Hegel on Creation as Differentiation*

Hegel makes a similar division between the two modes of creation as Böhme does, between the *ex Deo* emanation of the immanent other of God, resulting in the construction of a blueprint of the material world, and the *ex nihilo* creation of the actual world.⁸¹ Just as the eternal Son was posited in the immanent trinity as a necessary other for God's coming to self-consciousness, the world is created as a necessary distinction for God's coming to self-manifestation. As Hegel argues, 'Merely eternal, or abstract spirit, then, becomes an other to itself: it enters existence, and, in the first instance, enters immediate existence. It creates a world'.⁸² The difference between the two analogues is, therefore, between otherness considered implicitly and explicitly, between pure concept, existing only in thought and actual manifestation (*Erscheinung*), present in the world of appearance.

The specifics of the process of creation *qua* emanation are rendered by Hegel as 'positing' (*Setzen*), 'division' (*Urteil*), and 'release' (*Entlassen*);⁸³ the sense of synonymy with the three moments of the Trinity being readily apparent. 'Positing' and 'division' carry the sense of being a formal declaration or a 'verbal shaping', and, on account of this, Hegel argues that creation is not primarily a physical act, but an

⁸¹ Stephen D. Crites, *Dialectic and Gospel in the Development of Hegel's Thinking* (Pennsylvania, P. A.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), p. 500.

⁸² *PhM*, 769.

⁸³ Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, p. 142.

intellectual one.⁸⁴ They are identical with the Böhmean *Verbum Fiat*, the biblical ‘let there be’, the creative word which begins the process of creation. As Hegel argues, it is ‘the absolute judgement or primal division [*Urteil*] that grants independence to the side of other-being; it is goodness that grants the idea as a whole to [this] side in its estrangement’.⁸⁵

The emanation of the other of the immanent trinity is but a passive ‘being for another’, lacking in actuality, as its existence is dependent upon the Father.⁸⁶ This ‘being for another’ is posited by Hegel in the same way as Böhme’s representation, as Lucifer, whom Hegel calls ‘the first-born Son of light’.⁸⁷ Unlike Böhme’s conception, Hegel’s Lucifer, as with any attempt at personalisation of the divine, is but a caricature: he has no independent existence. Lucifer, Hegel argues, must not be thought of as an independent force, for to do so reduces man to a ‘self with no essential reality of his own and the mere ground which couples them [the forces of good and evil] together, and on which they exist and war with one another’.⁸⁸ Lucifer, according to Hegel’s account, is, too, represented as the anticipation of Adam, as the immanent expectation of the economic.⁸⁹ Hegel’s representation of Lucifer, like Böhme’s, is as a being who desires only to assert his contractive self-will against the

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ *LPR*, III, p. 86.

⁸⁶ Crites, *Dialectic and Gospel*, p. 501.

⁸⁷ *PhM*, 771. Lucifer is a Son in the same way that Adam and Christ will be considered to be. Each represents a necessary stage in the idea of sonship.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 773.

⁸⁹ So too, once Lucifer fell, ‘another was at once created [...] in his place’, namely Christ. Ibid., 771.

expansive divine. For Hegel, 'self-centeredness' is 'characteristic of evil',⁹⁰ and 'evil is nothing else than [...] self-concentration'.⁹¹

Nature is the negative because it is the negative of the idea. Jakob Böhme says that God's first-born is Lucifer; and this son of light centred his imagination of himself and became evil: this is the moment of difference, of otherness held fast against the Son, who is otherness within the divine love.⁹²

The treatment of Lucifer's fall here echoes the Böhmean account, for in both there is Lucifer's movement out of creation and into the realm of pure thought, becoming shut-up in himself and self-centred.⁹³ This self-centredness is the defining characteristic of evil in both the Hegelian and Böhmean accounts. A difference, however, between the two treatments arises here, for in Hegel's account it does not involve evil as the *other* of God, in the manner of some kind of Manichean dualism, but is an *othering* of the divine as a process.⁹⁴

As already noted, Jakob Böhme described this transition to the moment of the Son as follows: the first and only-begotten was Lucifer, the light-bearer, brilliance, clarity, but he imagined himself within himself, i.e., he posited himself *for* himself, advanced to being and thereby fell [...] This [first] other is not the Son but rather the external world, the finite world, which exists outside the truth.⁹⁵

As with Böhme's account, for Hegel Lucifer's fall is representative of the end of the *ex Deo*, emanationist creative account, and the beginning of the *ex nihilo* analogue,

⁹⁰ *PhM*, 772.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 773.

⁹² *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, p. 19.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 468.

⁹⁴ O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*, p. 156.

⁹⁵ *LPR*, III, p. 119.

the 'making' mode of the creative process. The Luciferian fall, for Hegel too, is a 'falling into time' and space for spirit; creation in fact being fallen spirit itself.⁹⁶ As with Böhme's reading of the Genesis *tōhū wābōhū*, the godless alien waste engendered by Lucifer's fall, Hegel argues that nature itself has neither knowledge of God, nor any relationship to him, except through mankind. Mankind is that which in nature is its 'dependent side': it 'recognises the presence of the divine' in nature, and 'raises nature to its truth'.⁹⁷ Therefore, like the implicit goodness nascent in nature according to Böhme's scheme, Hegel's divine 'slumbers' in nature, awaiting prelapsarian man to come to self-consciousness, so it may come to be actualised.⁹⁸ It is the institution of the possibility for evil in the world. 'The differentiation,' Hegel argues, 'which in the first [moment] of the idea was only a show [*Schein*], now comes into its own right'.⁹⁹ The movement from show to manifestation, from infinity to finitude, is realised through the appearance of Adam (*geschichtlich*) as a concrete person.

It is no longer absolute but finite spirit that is posited; inasmuch as what is differentiated is itself something internally differentiated into nature and finite spirit,

⁹⁶ O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*, p. 153. This is also argued by Karl Daub, the Talleyrand of German thought, in his *Judas Ischarioth, oder Betrachtungen über das Gute im Verhältniss zum Bösen*, 2 vols (Heidelberg: [n. pub.], 1816–18), written during his Schelling period. Daub's assent to this idea does not necessarily lend a great deal of credence to the argument, however, for as Otto Pflieger argued, Daub's 'hopeless addiction' to the 'perverse principle of speculative thought' was ever untempered by any notion of historical criticism. See *The Development of Theology in Germany Since Kant: and its Progress in Great Britain Since 1825* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 132. One may appreciate the irony, however, if such a criticism were to be applied to the present subjects of this thesis.

⁹⁷ Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, p. 146.

⁹⁸ *LPR*, III, p. 293–294.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 365

we have the creation of the world, the form in which the Son actually becomes the other.¹⁰⁰

Hegel posits two divisions: the first being of the Son present in the immanent trinity; and the second being the Son present in the economic trinity, and thus in the world of creation.¹⁰¹ These two divisions are, as argued in the previous chapter, purely representational, for no such a division exists in any rational terms. As Hegel puts it, 'This differentiating as something independent is only the explicitly negative moment of other-being, of being-external-to-self, which as such has not truth but is only a moment [...] In God himself this is the disappearing moment of appearance'.¹⁰²

The final stage of the tripartite nature of creation is a 'release', referring to a 'letting be' 'or letting go' (*Entlassen*).¹⁰³ Just as division is necessary for the positing of the other of God, that otherness must eventually be released or sublated. This has no deleterious effect upon God, for creation is only a moment, and each moment must inevitably disappear (for each moment is, by definition, *eine verschwindende Erscheinung*, 'a disappearing appearance').¹⁰⁴ And so, God, as concept, becomes expanded by this experience. This is the very core of freedom, which is the essence of

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. Cf. p. 294, n. 128.

¹⁰¹ While the first Son, Lucifer, is annulled by the appearance of the second Son, Adam, both are ultimately sublated by the coming of the third Son, the historical Jesus Christ.

¹⁰² *LPR*, III, p. 87–88.

¹⁰³ Hegel's use of 'release' to describe the letting go of the other of God is similar in sense to Eckhart's use of *lassen* and *gelassen* to portray the attitude the Christian should have towards worldly goods and possessions. See Robert Froman, *Meister Eckhart: The Mystic as Theologian* (Rockport, M. A.: Element, 1991), pp. 77–80; Oliver Davies, *Meister Eckhart: Selected Writings* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1994), pp. XXIX–XXXI. The same attitude is espoused by Böhme throughout *The Way to Christ*.

¹⁰⁴ *LPR*, III, 88–89.

spirit: the radically free being, God, releases what is intrinsic to itself, for creation is no risk to the freedom of the absolutely free.¹⁰⁵ Once creation is released, it becomes a moment without selfhood, for it is no longer contained in God, at least representationally. It is then the duty of religious consciousness to instantiate the element of self into creation, thus playing out the divine drama on the microcosmic level.

The phrase ‘the disappearing moment of appearance’ carries overtones of Böhme. Hegel considers the creation of the material world as but a blip on the divine radar of eternity, ‘it is only a *flash of lightning* that immediately vanishes, the sound of a word that is perceived and vanishes in its outward existence the instant it is spoken’.¹⁰⁶

SECTION TWO THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ADAM

It has been argued, by Christian commentators from the first to the eighteenth centuries, that Adam had an incredible understanding of the natural world.¹⁰⁷ The

¹⁰⁵ Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, p. 144.

¹⁰⁶ *LPR*, III, p. 88.

¹⁰⁷ Peter Harrison, ‘Original Sin and the Problem of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 2, 63 (2002), 239–259 (p. 241). This assessment of the scope of Adam’s knowledge is based upon Genesis 2. 19–20, where it is stated that God ‘out of the ground [...] formed every animal of the field and bird of the air, and brought them to man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field’.

extent of what encompassed Adam's body of knowledge was much contested,¹⁰⁸ but one thing remained a constant, that the extent of Adam's knowledge has yet to be surpassed. As the seventeenth century churchman Robert South argued, Adam,

came into the world a philosopher, which sufficiently appeared by his writing the nature of things upon their names: he could view essences in themselves, and read forms with the comment of the respective properties; he could see consequents yet dormant in their principles, and effects yet unborn in their causes; his understanding could almost pierce into future contingents, his conjectures improving even to prophecy, or the certainties of prediction; till his fall it was ignorant of nothing but of sin.¹⁰⁹

How this supernatural natural knowledge functioned, whether it be the result of direct revelation from God,¹¹⁰ or through a greater acuity of Adam's prelapsarian senses, was also subject to much debate. The most common view espoused by Christian orthodoxy, however, was that Adam's mind, before the Fall, was working in perfect fashion, possessing 'a perfect philosophy', functioning in a manner in which its

¹⁰⁸ See Martin Luther, 'Lectures in Genesis', in *Luther's Works*, ed. by Jaroslav Pelikan and H. Lehman, 55 vols (St Louis: 1955-19-75), 1, p. 68, 120; John Calvin, *Commentary on Genesis*, 2. 19, ed. and trans. by John King (Grand Rapids, Mich: 1948), p. 131; George Walker, *History of the Creation* (London: 1641), p. 193; John Greene, *The First Man, or A Short Discourse of Adam's State* (London: 1643), p. 1; Nicholas Culpeper, *Complete Herbal* (Ware: [n. pub.] 1653; repr. by Wordsworth Editions, 1995), vii.

¹⁰⁹ Robert South, *Sermons Preached upon Several Occasions* (Oxford: 1679), pp. 127-128.

¹¹⁰ For example, there is the Thomas Morton's comment on the matter that Adam's knowledge was 'not gotten by sense, experience, observation, and by his own industry (and yet it was afterward to be increased by this means) but engendered in his mind by the finger of God'. See Thomas Morton, *A Treatise of the Threefold State of Man* (London: [n. pub.], 1596), pp. 222-223. For other writers of the period of a similar position, see also Robert Bostocke, *The Difference Between The Auncient Phisicke...and the latter Phisicke* (London: [n. pub.], 1585), Sig. Gi^v; John Parkinson, 'Epistle to the Reader', in *Paradisi in Sole* (London: [n. pub.], 1629), ; Ambroise Paré, *The Workes of that Famous Chirurgion Ambrose Parey* (London: [n. pub.], 1634), preface; Henry Cornelius Agrippa, *Of the Vanitie and Vncertainty of Artes and Sciences* (London: [n. pub.], 1569), Sigs. 4^r, 186^r.

creator had originally designed.¹¹¹ Seventeenth century theologian George Burches exhorted his readers to ‘look how that parts and faculties both of soul and body were ordered, and framed, and justified, and exercised in righteousness. So likewise the same parts and faculties, both of soul and body are confused, distempered, deformed, and perverted by iniquity and sin’.¹¹² As Peter Harrison comments, when, postlapsus, Adam was no longer the master of nature, he was also no longer the master of his own mind.¹¹³ The Fall ‘was thus supposed to have wrought havoc with the internal harmony of the human being, resulting not merely in a moral fall, but in a fall from knowledge and the ability to discover truth. Original sin, in short, consisted in both a propensity for moral wrongdoing and an inability to recognise truth’.¹¹⁴

One of the many issues Protestantism and Catholicism found themselves opposed to each other were on the exact consequences of the Fall. For Catholic thinkers, the primarily focus of the Fall was the privation of Adam’s supernatural powers. Aquinas argued that man’s ‘natural gifts’, his capacity for reason, ‘remained after sin’, for ‘the light of natural reason [...] pertains to the species of the rational soul, is never forfeit from the soul’.¹¹⁵ Similarly, Descartes followed the Thomistic

¹¹¹ Harrison, ‘Original Sin’, pp. 242, 244.

¹¹² George Burches, *Mans Inbred Malady* (London: [n. pub.], 1655), p. 17.

¹¹³ Peter Harrison, ‘Reading the Passions: The Fall, the Passions, and Dominion over Nature’, in *The Soft Underbelly of Reason: The Passions in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. by Stephen Gaukroger (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 49–78.

¹¹⁴ Harrison, ‘Original Sin’, p. 243.

¹¹⁵ *Summa Theologiae*, 1a 95. 1, Blackfriars edn., ed. by Thomas Gilby, 60 vols (London: Blackfriars, 1964–1976). Harrison notes (‘Original Sin’, p. 245) that Catholic, especially Franciscan, theology returned to the Alexandrian Fathers in considering the notion of original sin as of little real ontological or epistemological consequence. See also Norman Powell Williams, *Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin: A Historical and Critical Study* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1927), pp. 410–414.

scheme,¹¹⁶ in claiming that the faculty of reason remained intact postlapsus,¹¹⁷ and in defining the phenomenon of human error as ‘privations’, the ‘negation of a great perfection among created things’.¹¹⁸ The Catholic view is in sharp distinction to the Reformed view, which argues not only for the loss of Adam’s faculty of reason, but also of the image of God himself. Luther maintains that ‘It is clear that the natural endowments did not remain perfect, as the scholastics rave’,¹¹⁹ and that, where the image of God is concerned, it is ‘through sin [that] this image was so obscured and corrupted that we cannot even grasp it with our intellect’.¹²⁰ Calvin states that ‘the sophists in the papacy feign that some part of the reason remains sound and entire [whereas] the whole soul is vitiated, from reason even to the affections’,¹²¹ and that, though the image of God was not ‘totally annihilated’, it was nevertheless ‘so corrupted that whatever remains is frightful deformity’.¹²² Both Luther and Calvin’s statements represent the majority of the Reformed view of the ‘negative epistemological consequences’ of the Fall of Man account.¹²³ Further, beyond their

¹¹⁶ Roger Ariew argues in an essay that Descartes would have been familiar with Aquinas’ thought on the epistemological consequences of the Fall from his education by the Jesuits at La Flèche. ‘Descartes and Scholasticism: The Intellectual Background to Descartes’ Thought’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Descartes*, ed. by John Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 58–90.

¹¹⁷ Descartes, *Meditations* 3.5, CSM II, 35; *Objections and Replies*, 5.372, CSM II, 256; *Principles of Philosophy*, §11, CSM I, 199.

¹¹⁸ Descartes, *Principles*, 1, §31, CSM, 203–204, 207; *Objections and Replies*, CSM II, 258, cf. II, 218.

¹¹⁹ Luther, *Luther’s Work*, I, p. 167, 142. Cf. Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles* I. 7.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

¹²¹ Calvin, *Commentaries on Ezekiel*, I, p. 375.

¹²² Calvin, *Institutes* I.XV.4 (I, 189). Later Calvinists even more strongly worded the implications of the Fall. Robert Burton writes of the ‘the sin our of our first parent Adam’ as constituting the entire cause of the ‘destruction of God’s image’. *Anatomy of Melanchony*, 2 vols (London: Printed for J. Cuthell, 1892), I, p. 122.

¹²³ Harrison, ‘Original Sin’, p. 249. The view that Luther and Calvin’s analyses on the epistemological implications of the Fall represent the majority opinion of Protestant orthodoxy, see Reynolds, *Treatise*

reaction to Catholic epistemology, the Reformers rejected any speculative or extra-biblical interpretation of Adam. Gnostic and Hermetic notions that the prelapsarian Adam was an androgynous being found itself met with particularly scathing comments, and the very fact that such a view was postulated was used as further evidence of the degeneration of the faculty of reason post Fall. Luther spits that, 'These pagan ideas prove that reason is not able to establish anything with certainty concerning God and his works but only invents reasons against reasons and teaches nothing perfectly or soundly'.¹²⁴

In their exploration of the psychology of Adam, the primary theme which comes to the fore, for Hegel and Böhme, is the dichotomy between a series of dualising 'oppositions' (in Böhme's language) or contradictions (in Hegel's). As Hegel notes, in considering the Genesis story, one must first observe the 'great contradictions' contained therein.¹²⁵ Hegel argues that this is due to the representative character of the narrative, that 'images and mere representations cannot portray a deep speculative content in its true and proper form, and therefore essentially without contradiction'.¹²⁶ These contradictions are listed variously as: the supernatural and the natural, immortality and mortality; the eternal world and the material world; lightness

of the Passions, p. 5, 44, 483; William Perkins, 'An Exposition of the Creed', in *Workes* (London: [n. pub.], 1605), pp. 181–182. See also Gisbert Voetius, 'De errore & heresie', I.iv, II.i, in *Selectarum disputationum theologicarum*, 4 vols (Ultrajecti: [n. pub.], 1648), III, p. 701, 714, 702.

¹²⁴ *Luthers Werke*, XLII, p. 53. However, if the figure of Christ is interpreted as the 'Second Adam', Böhme's portrayal of Adam himself as an androgynous being has distinct Pauline undertones. Cf. Galatians 3. 28; Colossians 3. 11.

¹²⁵ *LPR*, III, p. 153.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

and darkness; knowledge and ignorance; androgyny and sexuality; and submission and desire. Some of these oppositions presented in the psychology of Adam are particular to Hegel, some particular to Böhme, and some are shared by both. The meeting point between both, however, is in the overarching theme of such oppositions: in universality and versus particularity. Hegel and Böhme treat Adam as a being who, before the Fall, shared in the universality of God, and who, post Fall, lost this universality in favour of particularity. The discussion of Adam's psychology will begin with the specific oppositions identified by both men, and work towards this common, shared centre.

§ 2. 1. Böhme 's Reading: Man as a Mixture

Böhme writes, in a 1621 tract against one of his contemporaries, that 'God created Adam to [enjoy] eternal life in paradise, in a state of paradisiacal perfection'.¹²⁷ As the perfect image of God, Adam was created in a state of bodily immortality:

Before his fall, man could rule over the sun and the stars. Everything was in his power. Fire, air, water, and earth could not tame him; no fire burned him, no water drowned, no air suffocated him; all that lived stood in awe of him.¹²⁸

No heat, no cold, no sickness, no accident, nor any fear could touch or terrify him. His body could pass through earth and rocks without breaking anything in them; for a man

¹²⁷ *Stiefel* 1. 36.

¹²⁸ *Threefold*, 11. 23.

who could be overpowered by the terrestrial nature, or who could be broken to pieces, would not be eternal.¹²⁹

The similarity to the orthodox interpretation, however, ends here. Böhme eschews any further method of literal exegesis: the character of Adam in the Genesis narrative is treated, by Böhme, not as an historical figure, but as an archetypal one. Böhme subscribes to the Hermetic and cabbalistic notion that the Adam of the Fall account refers to *Adam Kadmon* (קדמון אדם), the ‘heavenly Adam’, primordial man, or the *Urstand* in his own terminology. Böhme also refers to Adam as the *Füncklein* and the *glimmende Docht*, the spark which is ignited briefly before it is snuffed out.¹³⁰ *Adam Khadmon* is the ‘Aristotelian final cause [...] logically prior to the rest of creation, and simultaneously the end towards which creation is moving’, and not *Adam Harishon*, the historical Adam taken as a real earthly figure.¹³¹ This ‘heavenly Adam’ is treated by Böhme as a cosmic figure, a being superior to that of traditionally orthodox depictions. He is the master of all he surveys, he holds the keys to both heaven and earth, he is an innocent, with no knowledge of evil nor any evil vice.¹³²

When God had created Adam thus, he was then in paradise [...] and this clarified man

¹²⁹ *Incarnation*, I, 2. 13.

¹³⁰ *Busse*, passim. Compare with Hegel’s comment that whatever appears must eventually disappear: it is *eine verschwindende Erscheinung* (‘a disappearing appearance’). *LPR*, III, 88–89.

¹³¹ Magee, p. 230.

¹³² *Incarnation*, I, 4. 7; *Myst. Mag.*, 16. 2; *Dreyfach*, 11. 23. Böhme’s characterisation, thus far, is scripturally based: Genesis portrays Adam as having the power to subdue (*kābaš*/כבש) the earth and rule (*rādā*/רדה) its creatures. *Kābaš* is suggestive of ‘rape’ (Esther 7. 8), ‘pillage’, or ‘subjugate’ in the sense of hostile action done to one’s enemies (Numbers 32. 22), while *rādā* connotes a rule over the reluctant (Leviticus 26. 17; Ezekiel 34. 4). See McKeown, p. 27.

was wholly beautiful and full of all knowledge;¹³³ and there God brought all the beasts to him, that he should look upon them, and give every one its name, according to its essence [...] And Adam knew what every creature was, and he gave to every one its name, according to the quality of his spirit [...] And Adam [went about] wholly naked, as he then went; his clothing was the clarity of virtue; no heat nor cold touched him; he saw day and night with open eyes; in him there was no sleep, and in his mind there was no night, for the divine virtue was in his eyes; and he was altogether perfect.¹³⁴

Böhme includes some supernatural elements to his characterisation of Adam's constitution (such as his supposed ability to reproduce by imagination alone, to pass through matter, to endure without earthly sustenance, and warp reality through the use of magic words),¹³⁵ but any further discussion of such will be neglected, as Hegel does the same. Where Böhme's reading will be seen to be identical to Hegel's is in its treatment of Adam as the divine in microcosm, both as the *μικροκόσμος* and *μικροθέος*, the literal *imago Dei*. Adam is the true 'the similitude of God':¹³⁶ incorruptible, androgynous, and '[partaking] in the paradisiacal substantiality of the divine.'¹³⁷ This psychological reading of Adam is partly Platonic, partly Gnostic, and partly Judaeo-Christian: an idea revived by Paracelsus in the sixteenth century, and

¹³³ A problematic viewpoint as, before the loss of primordial unity, it is posited that no evil existed.

¹³⁴ *Princ.*, 10. 17–18.

¹³⁵ Magee, p. 44. See *Seel. Frag.*, 4. 7; *Dreyfach* 11. 23; *Incarnation*, 1, 2, 13; *Sig. Rer.* 12. 2. Though peculiar, these powers have some philosophical and theological justification. Adam's use of magic words (or *Ursprache* Böhme's terminology) corresponds to Plato's theory of language in the *Cratylus*, in that the carpenter imposes the *κερκίς* (or even the *κλίνη* of the *Republic*, X) on the piece of wood on which he works. See Raphael Demos, *The Philosophy of Plato* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930), p. 263; Alfred E. Taylor, *Plato, the Man and His Work* (New York: Dial Press, 1936). Of course, for Plato language describes the mere copies which sensible objects are said to be, while, for Böhme, the Adamic language was descriptive of the inner essence of things. In this way, Böhme is perhaps closer to the Pseudo-Dionysius than to Plato. Also, Böhme's view conforms precisely to the orthodox Christian view point Adam did not reproduce for he was both an individual and species together (Stoudt, p. 266).

¹³⁶ *Princ.*, 17. 11.

¹³⁷ O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, pp. 44–45.

appropriated by Böhme, then Hegel, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹³⁸

As Böhme puts it:

The image in Adam was not transitory, or corruptible. Also if we will say, that *Adam* (before his Fall) lived in the source [or property] of the four elements, then we can no way maintain, that *Adam* was not a corruptible image. For at the end, the four elements must pass away, and go into the eternal element.¹³⁹

As the *imago Dei*, Adam was made in the likeness of God:¹⁴⁰ when the '[the spirit of God] became inbreathed into the image of man, then was heaven in man; for God willed to reveal himself in man, as in an image created after his own likeness, and to manifest the great wonders of his eternal wisdom'.¹⁴¹

As the image of God, the structures and processes of Adam's mind acted in accordance with one another: his thoughts and his will were as one, focused completely upon God.¹⁴² The mind of Adam 'was innocent like that of a child, playing with the wonders of its father. There was in him no self-knowledge of evil will, no avarice, pride, envy, anger, but a pure enjoyment of love'.¹⁴³ The state of Adam's mind was, to a great extent, the product of his androgyny — sexual differentiation being long associated (from Plato to de Lyra), not only with bodily mortality, but also with the disintegration of the mind. So too, Adam's sexual undifferentiation is an idea which Böhme and Hegel find attractive.

Owing to Böhme's own acceptance of this theory, the extent of Adam's

¹³⁸ See *Myst. Mag.*, 2. 5.

¹³⁹ *Princ.*, 17. 3.

¹⁴⁰ Genesis 1. 27.

¹⁴¹ *Stiefel*, 1. 36.

¹⁴² Hartmann, *Boehme*, p. 151.

¹⁴³ *Threefold*, 11. 23.

knowledge was that only of the universal: ‘the language of God and the angels, and the language of nature’.¹⁴⁴ That is to say, Adam, as a divine androgyne, was capable of knowing only those things for which it was possible for him to know. The material world of particularity and differentiation was outside his provenance. To reiterate, Adam’s knowledge of these divine languages was in virtue of his being of the one substance with God: the soul of Adam, the angels, and God were, *qua* Adam as the *imago Dei*, identical. Böhme also includes the power of Adam to name the creatures of the earth, based upon, no doubt, a literal reading of the Genesis narrative. The Adam of the Genesis narrative is portrayed as the lord of nature who has ‘dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth’.¹⁴⁵ Böhme concurs with the content of this depiction, agreeing that ‘everything was subject to Adam’, in virtue of the ‘divine power [being] manifested in him’.¹⁴⁶ As such, this ability of Adam’s is explained by Böhme that, as Adam was the blueprint of creation, his essence was inside every creature, and so the Adamic power of giving each creature ‘its appropriate name’ was a simple recognition of this shared essence.¹⁴⁷

For Böhme, the most important details of Adam’s psychology lie in his

¹⁴⁴ Jakob Böhme, ‘Answers to Forty Questions Concerning the Soul’ [hereafter *Forty Questions*], in *Forty Questions and the Supersensual Life*, trans. John Sparrow (London: n. pub., 1647. Reprint, Kessinger Publishing, 2005), 4. 7.

¹⁴⁵ Genesis 1. 26.

¹⁴⁶ *Myst. Mag.*, 16. 2.

¹⁴⁷ *Princ.*, 10. 17. Note the relationship between Adam as the blueprint of creation, and Lucifer as the creator of the blueprint of creation.

mirroring the principles (or 'moments' in Hegel's revised terminology) of the Trinity. Where the first principle represented by the Father, whose nature is self-involution and is represented by the qualities of wrath, 'fierceness' or 'wrathfulness' (*Grimmigheit*), and 'sternness' (*Schwerigkeit*) in Luther's terminology. The second principle, which proceeds from the first principle, is the divine drive towards manifestation. It is the creative will of God, to reveal himself to beings other than himself. In the language of Luther, it is synonymous with 'mercy' (*Barmhertzigkeit*), and 'love' (*Liebe*). The third principle then, is the unity of the first and second principles. For Böhme, the third principle is synonymous with the terrestrial world. Adam, stands in the midst of these three principles; each one wanting to manifest itself fully through him.

Everything attracted Adam and wanted to take possession of him. The heart of God wanted to have him in paradise and to reside in him, for it said, 'He is my image and likeness'. The kingdom of wrath wanted him, for it said, 'He is mine; for he has issued out of my fountain, out of the eternal mind of the darkness. I will be in him, and he shall live in my power; I will manifest through him strong and great power'. Finally, the kingdom of the world likewise said, 'He is mine for he bears my image; he lives in me and I in him; for he must be obedient to me, for I have all my members [organs] in him and he has his members in me, and I am greater than he. He shall be my steward, and manifest my power and wonders'.¹⁴⁸

Böhme, speculating upon the Genesis narrative, argues that Adam, in his original created state, is the 'embodiment' (*Leiblichkeit*) of the first principle, the will to remain in a state of complete unity and identity with God. In the events leading to the

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 11. 33. The term 'the heart of God' is not to be mistaken for the 'Son of God'. The former is the divine locus of reality, but it is not its Redeemer. See *Aurora*, 3. 36–39; Stoudt, p. 123, n. 24.

Fall, however, Adam turns towards the second principle, the desire, in Hegelian terms, to move from universality to particularity, to differentiate himself from his creator.¹⁴⁹ Ultimately, Adam becomes the embodiment of the third principle (the unity of the divine drives for self-involution and manifestation) displayed in a particular being.

While such a reading of Adam's psychology may seem, on the face of it, entirely speculative, if not somewhat wild, Böhme's commentary does bear some resemblance to orthodoxy. The frame of reference is, as one commentator puts it, dialectical, lying in 'the simultaneous existence of radical opposites'.¹⁵⁰ Luther's treatment of man is as a being standing between the twin poles of redemption and sinfulness, *justus et peccator*, his life being one 'in the midst of death'.¹⁵¹ Böhme's treatment of man is as a being stood in an antagonistic relationship in the midst of the three principles; microcosm stood against macrocosm.¹⁵² Luther also makes time for this macrocosm-microcosm theory, noting that, where Adam is concerned, there 'is such wisdom, justice, and knowledge of all things that he is rightly called

¹⁴⁹ Adam is, in trinitarian terms, the first attempt at a creation of an economic second moment; a ground for the Groundless. There is some scriptural warrant for this notion, highlighted in the Genesis wordplay between the name 'Adam' (*ādām*/אָדָם) and the word for ground (*ādāmā*/אָדָמָה). Although there is no etymological relationship between the two words, they are related to each other by assonance. Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 1–5*, 59 volumes (Waco: Word, 1987), 1, p. 59. That is not to say, however, that their relationship is a speculative one, rather the assonance of words is an often used rhetorical device in the Old Testament to call attention to certain points of significance (e.g. Amos 8. 2; Jeremiah 1. 11–12). See McKeown, p. 31, n. 5.

¹⁵⁰ Miller, 'Luther and Boehme', p. 270.

¹⁵¹ *Luthers Werke*, XLII, p. 147.

¹⁵² This idea of analogy was found in Babylon and India. Cf. Hermann Oldenberg, *Die Weltanschauung der Brahmantexte* (Göttingen: [n. pub.], 1919); also, George Perrigo Conger, *Theories of Microcosmos and Macrocosmos in the History of Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1923); Ernst Cassirer, *Das Erkenntnisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der neueren Zeit* (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1911), pp. 200–244.

μικροκόσμος, world in miniature. For he understands the heaven, earth, and the entire creation'.¹⁵³ As will become clear, Hegel is also sympathetic to this idea: for him, Adam stands between the divine will to remain universal, and the divine push to exteriorise.

Although immortal, Adam is not 'at home' in the 'elementary kingdom of the this world', as it is composed of an entirely different substantial material than Adam himself. While Adam was fashioned from the 'eternal element', the divine substance, the world was crafted from the alchemical 'four elements'.¹⁵⁴ Böhme quotes various New Testament accounts to support this claim, such as: 'My [Christ's] kingdom is not of this world'; '[to his Apostles] I have called you out of this world', and; 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God'.¹⁵⁵ Böhme accounts for his idea again, with further references to scripture:

If he [Adam] had been merely of earth [i.e. creation], and of the four elements, then he might have been burnt in the fire, or drowned in the water, and be stifled in the air; also wood and stone could have bruised him and destroyed him, and yet it is written, that he [the Adamical Man] at the Day of Restitution shall pass through the fire, and be approved, and the fire shall not hurt him.¹⁵⁶

The 'eternal element', from which Adam was created, was fashioned by God into a body composed of three shells or worlds: the outer shell, a 'crystalline body made up by the stars and the four elements'; a middle layer, a 'devilish and dark world'; and an

¹⁵³ *Luthers Werke*, XLII, p. 51.

¹⁵⁴ *Princ.*, 17. 5. The product, as stated, of Lucifer's fall.

¹⁵⁵ John 18. 36, 15. 19; 1 Corinthians 15. 50. Cf. *Princ.*, 17. 2.

¹⁵⁶ *Princ.*, 17. 4.

inner layer, a 'divine, regulating principle'.¹⁵⁷ Where the 'dark world', representative of the first principle, pushed Adam towards prideful self-will, the divine 'regulating principle' (representative of the second principle, and personified by Böhme as a female entity, named alternatively 'Sophia', the 'Venus matrix', the 'heavenly virgin', and 'Eve') pushed Adam away from it.¹⁵⁸ There was also a struggle for dominance within the soul of Adam between the divine eternal element and the worldly four elements, representative of the third principle.¹⁵⁹ For Böhme, Adam was indeed 'a mixed individuality [...] destined to be an image according to the inner, and also according to the outer world'.¹⁶⁰ Here, Böhme is close, not only to the Gnostics who also describe man as a 'mixture' (συμπλέκω) of the higher and lower, but also to the Neo-Platonists, who describe man too as a 'mixture' (μεμιγμένον) of the forms of matter and reason.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ Miller, p. 272. Cf. *Myst. Mag.*, 10. 46, 16 5. See also *Myst. Mag.* 15. 18ff, where Böhme states that 'the soul [...] consists in three kingdoms: the first is [...] the dark and fire-world [...] The second is the holy light world [...] The third [...] is the outward astral and elemental kingdom'. Further, 'Man should be the image and similitude of God, wherein God should dwell. Now God is a spirit, and all the three principles are in him; and he would make such an image, as should have all the three principles in him, and that is rightly a similitude of God' (*Princ.*, 10. 9). Nevertheless, Adam has only *one* soul, however many divisions it may have: 'and if this were not, then it could not be said, that the soul went to heaven or to hell, if it were not in it [...] We are in no wise to think that the soul is God himself [...] But the soul is the [...] formed Word; it is the spirit and the lift of the three principles of divine manifestation' (*Myst. Mag.*, 15. 25).

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid* Miller. Cf. *Myst. Mag.*, 18. 2, 10; 19. 8.

¹⁵⁹ Psychologically, therefore, man is the microcosm of the Trinity. 'All things in this world are according to the similitude of this Trinity [...] Thus you find in man three fountains. First, the power in your whole mind, which signifies God the Father. Then secondly, the light in your whole mind, enlightening the whole mind, which signifies the Son. Then thirdly, there goes forth out of all your powers, and out of your light also, a Spirit which has understanding'. *Aurora*, 3. 82–90.

¹⁶⁰ *Incarnation*, I, 3. 13.

¹⁶¹ See *The Gospel of Thomas*, ed. and trans. by A. Guillaumont, H. Ch. Puech, G. Quispel and others, (Leiden: Brill, 1959), logion 87; Plotinus, *The Enneads*, III, 2. 2.

For the first man was a mixed formation and a mixed creation. And he was a formation of those to the left, of those to the right, and of a pneumatic Logos, whose understanding was divided over each of the two beings, from which the man in formation was taken. Therefore one says, that a paradise was planted for him, so that he should eat of the food of the three types of trees. He was a power of order, which was united with the three types. It is he who gives enjoyment, i.e. the noble nature of the chosen being, which is in him. It became more exalted. It created. And it was not accustomed to inflict wounds upon them. Therefore did they issue an order, while they made threats and brought him in great danger, which is an appeal to evil alone. He allowed him to eat thereof the other tree, which had a double, did not they allow [him] to eat, especially of the Tree of Life [...] abandoned them to that power, which is called the serpent [...] He misled man through the command of those of the thought and through the lusts. It (i.e. the lust) induced him to break the commandments, so that he should die. He was ejected from all the enjoyment that was there [...] It was the work of providence (πρόνοια), so that they should discover that there was but a short time, in which is the place of rest. This he established when the Spirit first considered that man should receive this name, the greatest evil, which is death and ignorance [...] and should received the greatest good, which is everlasting life and which is true knowledge of the All [...] Because of the transgression of the first man, has death become lord and entered into association with all men [Romans 5. 12].¹⁶²

In his state before his Fall, the relationship between the inner, eternal element and the outer, four elements within Adam's soul was harmonious, 'the pure element penetrated through the four elements and kept the *Limus* of earth — that is to say, the external sulphuric [i.e. terrestrial] body within itself as in a state of absorption'.¹⁶³

The rationale for Adam's need to maintain this harmony was that it, for want of a better word, 'attuned' the soul of Adam to that of God. In his prelapsarian state, Adam was psychologically identical with God, and, as Böhme writes, 'when [Adam] remains in the harmonious order [...] he is then the likeness of God'.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² *4th Treatise*, 106. 18–108.

¹⁶³ *Myst. Mag.*, 16. 6.

¹⁶⁴ *Theos. Punkt.*, 6. 12.

§ 2. 2. Hegel's Treatment: Internal Differentiation

For Hegel, next to the concept of God, the 'second element of importance is the *Adam Kadmon*, the first man, *Kether* [כתר], the first that arose, the highest crown, the microcosm, the macrocosm, with which the world that emanated stands in connection as the efflux of light'.¹⁶⁵ Hegel's thoughts on the heavenly Adam are based both on his reading of Böhme, and on August Neander's work, *Genetische Entwicklung der vornehmsten gnostischen System*.¹⁶⁶ *Adam Kadmon*, for Hegel, is the primordial human being, but only in the ontological sense. For Hegel, the heavenly Adam is not a determinate being, rather he is 'the idea of humanity', mankind's 'universal essentiality', and 'the archetype of humanity'.¹⁶⁷ He is the blueprint of what finite spirits will come to be:

The making or creation of the world is God's self-manifesting, self-revealing. In a further and later definition we will have this manifestation in the higher form that what God creates God himself is, that in general it does not have the determinateness of an other, that God is manifestation of his own self, that God is for himself — the other (which has the empty semblance of [being] an other but is immediately reconciled), the Son of God or human being according to the divine image, *Adam Kadmon*.¹⁶⁸

To Böhme's description of Adam as the μικροκόσμος, Hegel adds that the term

¹⁶⁵ *LHP*, II, p. 396.

¹⁶⁶ See August Neander, *Genetische Entwicklung der vornehmsten gnostischen System* (Berlin: [n. pub.], 1818), esp. pp. 88ff., 102.

¹⁶⁷ *LPR*, p. 129, 220, 430.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 129–130.

“the first man” signifies “man as man” — not any particular, contingent individual, not one among many, but the absolutely first man, man according to his concept’.¹⁶⁹ For Hegel, Adam is not only the microcosm, but the macrocosm itself. Adam is oft called ‘the Son of God’, a religious title shared, of course, with Christ.

The rationale for Hegel’s description of Adam as the ‘universal man’ is that it acts as an explanation for how the changes Adam will undergo as a result of the Fall are passed down to succeeding generations. If Adam is taken, in Hegelian terms, as man as a totality, what is common to the whole is then common to the parts — Adam is ‘as one of us’.¹⁷⁰ In this way, Hegel escapes the Augustinian-Lutheran notion of the biological nature of sin, a ‘deficiency residing in the fact that man as such is perceived figuratively as a first man is corrected’.¹⁷¹

Adam, for Hegel too, is a mixed consciousness. He is ‘an internally unresolved contradiction’ between what he is, pre-lapsus, and what he will become (or, in fact, ought to be) post-lapsus: ‘Natural humanity does not exist in the form that it ought to’.¹⁷² In terms of the ordering of consciousness, Adam betrays only the capacity for sensuous experience, and not self-consciousness. Adam wills, and desires, but he does not think.¹⁷³ ‘Thus the natural human being is not liberated within itself vis-à-vis itself and external nature. It is the human being of desire, of savagery

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 159.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 155.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 159.

¹⁷² Ibid., 92–5.

¹⁷³ Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, p. 148.

and self-seeking, of dependence and fear'.¹⁷⁴ At this stage there is no distinction in thought between good and evil, and therefore, Hegel argues, it is at this stage that Adam is not 'actually human'.¹⁷⁵

To expand upon this aspect of Hegel's Adam's psychology, Adam is considered to be a mixed consciousness in respect of the following: in the 'ordering of consciousness' (*Gestalt des Bewusstseins*), Adam has only 'sensuous consciousness' (*die sinnliche Bewusstheit*). Adam is in a state of *Sichselbstgleichheit*, 'harmonious unity' or a state of being 'at one with himself'.¹⁷⁶ Adam is called an innocent, for he is 'not yet spirit for itself'; he does not show forth his inner necessity, and as he is not yet as spirit, he may be 'called innocent', but he is 'not strictly good'.¹⁷⁷ Adam may be happy, but he is not good, for goodness requires the condition of selfhood.¹⁷⁸ But the state of 'harmonious unity' is not what it first appears, for Adam is although explicitly innocent, good, and unthinking, he carries self-consciousness, evil, and thought implicitly. 'For spirit ought not to be implicitly spirit — it is spirit because it is so explicitly'.¹⁷⁹ Evil and self-consciousness are inexorably linked, for 'it pertains to evil to be able to decide, to will, to possess insight into the nature of actions'.

¹⁷⁴ LPR, III, 92–95.

¹⁷⁵ Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, p. 148. See LPR, III, 102–103

¹⁷⁶ PhM, 771; PhS, 468. Miller has the superior translation from the German of this state.

¹⁷⁷ PhM, 770. Within the Genesis narrative there is a contrast between Adam's innocence and the serpent's 'prudence'. The Hebrew words for 'nakedness' and 'prudence' are similar in pronunciation, and, as such, this wordplay in the text highlights the dialectical relationship between the two. McKeown, p. 25. See also Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*. WBC (Waco: Word, 1987), p. 72.

¹⁷⁸ Crites, *Dialectic and Gospel*, p. 501.

¹⁷⁹ LPR, III, 202–205, 295–300.

Hegel's Adam then is caught between the twin poles of universality and particularity: the decision as to whether to remain in a unified, universal state with God, or descend in to the material world, the world of particularity. Adam inevitably chooses the latter, but the means by which he does this will be discussed in the next chapter. For the moment it is worthwhile stating that, for both Böhme and Hegel, Adam's soul, like Lucifer's, carried within it the possibility of a fall from grace, if ever the harmony between the 'principles' or 'moments' should be disturbed.

SECTION THREE

SPECULATIVE READINGS OF THE FALL OF MAN ACCOUNT

For Christian orthodoxy, much has been made historically of the Fall of Man account of Genesis 3. Paul Tillich refers to this Genesis narrative of the as 'a decisive part of the Christian tradition',¹⁸⁰ while Henri Blocher declares that, 'It is obvious that the Eden story is no peripheral anecdote or marginal addition; it belongs decisively to the structure of Genesis and to that of the Torah. It has a major etiological intention'.¹⁸¹ In the early church, the disobedience of Adam and Eve was considered one of mere 'deviation' or 'transgression' from God's ordained plan, and it was not until the time of Augustine that 'the so-called classic view' of the Fall and its consequences

¹⁸⁰ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951–1963), II, p. 29.

¹⁸¹ Henri Blocher, *Original Sin: Illuminating the Riddle* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1999), p. 32.

received wide-scale theological appeal.¹⁸²

What can be said to the strongest return to the Augustinian spirit as the result of the Reformation was through the re-emergence of this doctrine of original sin and its pervasive and severe natural and epistemological effects.¹⁸³ The Reformers view of the degeneration of man and the corruption of the natural world, they argued, is attested to scripturally, both in the Old Testament and the New.¹⁸⁴ The author of Genesis, for instance, describes God's curse upon the world in which man inhabits:

And to the man he said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, "You shall not eat of it," cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.'¹⁸⁵

Similarly, Paul writes that 'the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will

¹⁸² M. D. Gow, 'Fall', *DOTP*, 285–291 (pp. 285, 291). This was also Hegel's view, that the notion of original sin was, for example, never part of the Jewish world-view or in its consciousness as a religion. *LPR*, III, p. 155.

¹⁸³ Harrison, 'Original Sin', p. 243. See also *Luthers Work*, I, p. 166; John Calvin, *Commentary on Jonah*, 1. 5., trans. by John Owen (Grand Rapids, M. I.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1950), pp. 37, 38; *Commentaries on Ezekiel*, trans. by Thomas Myers, 2 vols (Grand Rapids, M. I.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1948), II, pp. 5–44; *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II. ii. 2. ed. by John McNeill, 2 vols (Philadelphia: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1960), I, pp. 270–271. The return is to Augustinian, and not, necessarily, to Augustine himself, for Augustine comments that, 'Nothing is so easy to denounce, nothing is so difficult to understand'. Quoted in Blocher, *Original Sin*, p. 15. Nevertheless, Augustine's viewpoint is essentially that of Paul's in his letter to the Romans, and, as such, he does argue that sin and death are propagated (*propagatio*) by Adam to succeeding generations. See Mark Reasoner, *Romans in Full Circle: A History of Interpretation* (Westminster: John Knox, 2005), pp. 46–47.

¹⁸⁴ The argument from the Reformers is based on readings speculative readings of passages in Hosea, Ezekiel, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and, in particular, Isaiah. Blocher comments that, 'when we turn to Isaiah, with its thematic context of creation and its "Paradise regained" atmosphere (cf. 11. 5ff), the promise that the serpent shall eat dust (65. 25) distinctly recalls the verdict of Genesis 3. 14. Implicitly, all the evils that shall at last be forgotten in the newly created Jerusalem (65. 16ff) are traced back to the original serpent's manoeuvre, for which he was sentenced to dust'. Blocher, *Original Sin*, p. 44. It must be said, however, that references to the Genesis account of the Fall in the succeeding books of the Old Testament are mere allusions, if even that, and not direct references.

¹⁸⁵ Genesis 3. 17–18.

but by the will of the one who subjected it [...] creation [is in] bondage to decay [...] [and] groaning.¹⁸⁶

This returning spirit of moral and epistemological catastrophe was not restricted to the Reformation, however, but was also strongly felt among primarily French, Catholic counter-reformation theologians of the period, particularly due to Montaigne's sceptical essays and the emerging prominence of Jansenism.¹⁸⁷ Additionally, due to the new appreciation for humanism and biblicism that the Renaissance and Reformation brought about, the Fall was not read as an allegory, but an historical truth.¹⁸⁸ In this way, the Fall and the consequences it entailed was not seen as the domain only of theological speculation, but also for metaphysics, epistemology, moral philosophy and psychology.¹⁸⁹

The epistemological consequences of the Fall remain for modern man, argued the Reformers, even if he be saved. Luther's maxim of *simul iustus ac peccator* (simultaneously justified and a sinner) expresses this idea.¹⁹⁰ Against the Catholic Aristotelianism, the Fall for the Reformers led to both sensory and intellectual distortion. Sixteenth century French philosopher Pierre Charron writes in *De La Sagesse* (1601) that the mind 'corrupted and seized on by the force of the passions (or

¹⁸⁶ Romans 8. 20–22

¹⁸⁷ See Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Essays*, ed. and trans. by M. A. Screech (London: Penguin Classics, 1993); Jean Pierre Chantin, *Le Jansénisme* (Paris: Cerf, 1996).

¹⁸⁸ Harrison, 'Original Sin', p. 243. See Peter Harrison, *The Bible, Protestantism, and the Rise of Natural Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 121–129, 205–211.

¹⁸⁹ Harrison, 'Original Sin', p. 243. See Marguerite Shuster's comment to this effect, that 'the contemporary predilection for many [...] to give short shrift to the Fall'. *The Fall and Sin: What We Have Become as Sinners* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2004), p. 4.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 257.

rather by the fall of our first father *Adam*) does likewise perhaps corrupt the understanding, and so from hence come the great part of our erroneous judgements'.¹⁹¹ Bacon declared that 'the human intellect left to its own course is not to be trusted'.¹⁹² Similarly, the Baconian Thomas Browne declares in the *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (1646) that 'the first and father cause of common error is the common infirmity of human nature'.¹⁹³ This crypto-Platonic notion that the Fall, and its consequence of original sin, should be considered solely as a darkening of the senses has no truck with Protestant orthodoxy. Luther declares that,

When the sophists speak of original sin, they are speaking only of wretched and abominable lust or concupiscence. But original sin is truly a total fall of human nature; because the intellect is darkened, we do not acknowledge God and his will and do not perceive his works. In addition, because the will is extraordinarily depraved, we do not trust in the mercy of God and do not fear him but unconcerned and disregarding the Word and will of God, we follow the desire and impulses of the flesh; similarly, our conscience is no longer quiet but thinks of God's judgement, despairs, and adopts illicit defences and remedies.¹⁹⁴

Against rationalism and empiricism, conflicting notions of personal piety and ardent study were frequently posited as solutions in overcoming the epistemological consequences of the Fall.¹⁹⁵ These proposed solutions were not argued as conflicting

¹⁹¹ Pierre Charron, *Of Wisdom, in Three Books*, trans. by S. Lennard (London: 1606), pp. 63–64.

¹⁹² Francis Bacon, *The Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. by James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis, and Douglas Denon Heath, 14 vols (London: Longman, Green and Co., 1857–1874), IV, p. 17.

¹⁹³ Thomas Browne, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, I.i, ed. by Robin Robbins, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), I, p. 5. See Bacon's comment that it is the responsibility of scientific enquiry to 'discharge [knowledge] of that venom which the serpent infused into it [which] makes the mind of man to swell' so that we will be led to the cultivation of 'truth and charity' and 'the true end and termination of error'. *Works*, IV, pp. 20, 21.

¹⁹⁴ WA 42: 86 (18–25)

¹⁹⁵ Harrison, 'Original Sin', p. 251. See Lauren Kassell's comment that 'Study, along with prayer, were

epistemologies, rather were representative of 'different moral or spiritual prescriptions for a universal mental malady'.¹⁹⁶ Glanvill wrote against Aristotelianism, declaring it as being 'built upon the unexamined prejudices of sense',¹⁹⁷ and pronouncing it as of the 'shallow, unimproved intellects that are the confident pretenders to certainty', who were the 'voluminous schoolmen, and peripatetical dictators'.¹⁹⁸ Descartes argued, where the recovery of the *imago Dei* is concerned, that 'man cannot achieve knowledge of natural things so long as he does not know God'.¹⁹⁹ Malebranche argued that, 'The mind becomes purer, more luminous, stronger, and of greater scope as its union with God increases, because this union constitutes its entire perfection'.²⁰⁰ Agrippa was of the opinion that the acquisition once again of true knowledge required,

not much labour [...] but faith and prayer: not the study of long time [sic], but humbleness of spirit and cleanness of heart: not the sumptuous furniture of many books, but a pure understanding [...] It is better therefore and more profitable to be idiots, and know nothing [than] being lofty and proud through the subtleties of science to fall into the possession of the serpent.²⁰¹

In a similar vein, Paracelsian Robert Bostocke declared,

essential activities for anyone who wished to conduct alchemical experiments'. 'Reading for the Philosopher's Stone', in *Books and the Sciences in History*, ed. by Marina Frasca-Spada and Nick Jardine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2000), pp. 132–150 (p. 133).

¹⁹⁶ Harrison, 'Original Sin', p. 252.

¹⁹⁷ Glanvill, *Vanity of Dogmatizing*, p. 73.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15.

¹⁹⁹ Descartes, *Reply to Objections*, VI, CSM II, 290. Descartes mystical assertion here is even more strongly argued for by later Cartesians, such as Pierre Poiret. See Thomas M. Lennon, 'The Cartesian Dialectic of Creation', in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, ed. by Daniel Garber and Michael Ayers, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), I, pp. 331–362.

²⁰⁰ Malebranche, *Search After Truth*, XXXVII.

²⁰¹ Agrippa, *Vanitie and Vncertainty*, Sig. 187^v, 182^v.

The ethnics or heathen have of their own brains de-used [sic] [their capacity for reason] is not founded upon the rule of God's Word, but upon the authorities of men reprobate of God, and such as were idolaters and ignorant of the truth [...] These heathen philistines must needs err and stray, not receiving the key of wisdom, which is the science of God himself, who gives wisdom to the wise.²⁰²

Augustinian Jean-François Senault argued for a complete disengagement with nature:

'Thus all the verses teach us that all the creatures are corrupted, that it is better to pass by them, than to make use of them, that it is safer to condemn them, then to employ them, and that if philosophy teaches us to use of them, religion counsels us their privation'.²⁰³

In Böhme's reading, the Fall of Man account is seen as two-fold: the first stage taking place in the break-up of androgyny heralded by Adam's dream, and the second stage in the actual eating of the fruit of the 'Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil'. Where the angel Lucifer's expulsion from heaven by God served as the anticipation of Adam's fall in idea, the break-down into sexual differentiation serves as a pre-history or portent of the Fall in actuality. While the Fall of Man is anticipated by Lucifer's angelic fall, it is, nevertheless, not a perfect mimesis of such. Lucifer's fall was the result his of attraction to the first principle, the eternal godhead itself, and his wish to usurp the place of God. Adam's fall was constituted, as will be shown, by

²⁰² Robert Bostocke, *Auncient Phisicke*, Sigs. B1^v–B2^r.

²⁰³ Jean-François Senault, *Man Becom Guilty, Or the Corruption of Nature by Sinne, according to St. Augustine's Sense* (London: [n. pub.] 1650), pp. 365–366.

his desire 'to taste good and evil as the vanity of the earth',²⁰⁴ an attraction to the third principle. In Hegelian terms, Adam's fall was anticipated by his desire to move away from the universal and towards the world of the particular.

§ 3. 1. *Böhme's Reading: The Implicit and Explicit Fall*

If Adam was created from an incorruptible, divine substance, the question arises what exactly are the conditions of possibility for his descent into mundane existence, into mortality. The answer given by Böhme is that the eternal element from which Adam was created is 'without understanding',²⁰⁵ that it has no end or purpose within itself, but is malleable, capable of being oriented towards the moral poles of good and evil (towards the first or the second principle). While God contains his *telos* within himself, Adam does not *per se*: the *imago Dei* 'is not the heart of God, but it reaches into the heart of God'.²⁰⁶ As such, the Fall of Adam is seen by Böhme primarily as an act caused by the imagination. The imagination (or 'lust' according to one of his English translators) is rendered by Böhme as a means by which man orients his consciousness towards the poles of either the first or second principle, the divine will towards self-contraction and self-expansion respectively.²⁰⁷ Imagination is a force

²⁰⁴ *Myst. Mag.*, 18. 31.

²⁰⁵ *Princ.*, 17. 7.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 17. 13.

²⁰⁷ *Aurora*, p. 23.

which is 'able to create actual images (from the divine substance) and to give [...] a consciousness to those forms.'²⁰⁸ Imagination not only impresses itself as the form of a substance, but also is the *substance itself*.²⁰⁹ In Adam's case, it is oriented towards the prideful self-will of the first principle, forsaking the will to exteriorise, and to become solely in-himself (*an sich*). The motivating factor for the orientation of Adam's imagination towards the first principle is what Böhme terms the 'spirit of the world', the personification of the third principle, the created world of the four elements.²¹⁰

But when the wisdom of God saw that man, from the spirit of the world, came to [this orientation of the imagination], to mingle himself with the four elements, then came the commandment and said; *Thou shalt not eat of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*.²¹¹

Adam's imagination or lust, equivalent to the Gnostic conception of the same (called ἐπιθυμία, ἐνθύμησις, or πάθος) enjoined by the spirit of the world, lead him to desire to gain the knowledge of the 'spirits of nature'. Adam broke the happy 'equilibrium' between imagination and desire, causing *lust* to become the veritable

²⁰⁸ 'Great Theosophists', *Theosophy*, 5, 26 (1938), 197–204. The 'divine substance' here is actually aether, which has its parallels with Hegel's early, albeit discarded, work. Cf. Magee. The particular usage of 'imagination' is recollected by Böhme from Paracelsus. This imagination is a '*imaginatio activa*' rather than the faculty of abstraction and the power over the unreal, the '*maitresse d'erreur et de fausseté*'. In the Paracelsian and Böhmean sense it gives one access to, and the power of impression upon, the μεταξύ, the μέσοκόσμος, or the '*mundus imaginalis*'. Cf. Faivre, *Western Esotericism*, p. 76, n. 44. Hegel, also, speaks of the imagination: as *Phantasie* (fantasy or fanciful imagination) and as *Einbildung* (imagination), a term closer to Böhme's notion.

²⁰⁹ There are parallels between this idea and that of Hebrews 11. 1: 'Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen'.

²¹⁰ *Princ.*, 17. 10–15.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 17. 16.

Hegelian *Begierde*, 'an infinite, negative, insatiable striving'.²¹² This destruction of Adam's psychological harmony signifies the destruction of the pre-existing unity with God, and the shame felt in his new loss of innocence.²¹³ The destruction of this harmony is read by Böhme in an additional pre-history which prefigures and portends Adam's fall: the dream of the loss of a rib and the subsequent appearance of Eve.²¹⁴ The soul of Adam 'fell in love with the creation of the formed world in its differentiation, and not being conscious of the power of distinguishing, she [the soul] entered into lust, into differentiation'.²¹⁵ This desire to experience differentiation led to a clouding of the divine image Adam previously enjoyed. Adam, therefore, was drawn down into the world of differentiation, the terrestrial world of the four elements, and into sleep. Before this pulling down in to the terrestrial world, Adam had no need to sleep, as Böhme explains,

Now to an understanding man it is very easy to be found and known, that there neither was, nor should be any sleep in Adam, when he was in the image of God. For Adam was such an image as we shall be at the Resurrection of the dead, where we shall have no need of the elements, nor of the sun, nor stars, also [of] no sleep, but our eyes shall be always open eternally, beholding the glory of God.²¹⁶

²¹² Magee, p. 45. Desire itself is somewhat of an ambiguous term. Hyppolite suggests that desire is the psychological end of self-consciousness. 'the end point of desire is not, as one might think superficially, the sensuous object — that is only a means— but the unity of the I with itself'.²¹² Crito argues that the telos has already been achieved with the immediate satiation of desire. Further, self-consciousness is already present in desire. Jean Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Samuel Cherniak and John Heckman (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), p. 160.

²¹³ Genesis 3. 7.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 2. 21–22.

²¹⁵ *Grace*, 6. 33.

²¹⁶ *Princ.*, 12. 17.

Adam's falling asleep signifies 'death' and 'surrender' for Böhme, and is identified with various biblical instances of a similar variety, such as the temptation of Israel at Mount Sinai by Moses, Christ's forty days in the desert, and his rest in the tomb, as each instance involves a transition from one state to another.²¹⁷ For Israel, their giving in to the temptation of pagan gods caused them to enter a period of dormancy as a nation, a forty year trek in the wilderness. Where the figure of Christ is concerned, his 'sleep' and subsequent resurrection from the dead is read as the transition from an earthly to a transfigured body. For Adam, his sleep is the loss of his previous 'angelical form' and emergence as a mere elemental 'lump of earth'.²¹⁸ In Böhme's terminology, it is the severance of the *matrix* from the *limbus*²¹⁹, the severance of the source of Adam's being from the positive pole of the imagination which it had previously pointed towards. This idea is identical to the Gnostic notion of 'forgetfulness' (λήθη, which Till translates as 'Erkenntnisunfähigkeit'), the 'inability of knowledge' the demiurge 'inflicted [...] on Adam'. In one Gnostic narrative, the archons 'discussed with each other and said "Come and let us bring forgetfulness over Adam!" And he fell, asleep. But forgetfulness is the ignorance, which they brought upon Adam and he fell asleep'.²²⁰ This transformation is engendered, Böhme states, by the 'spirit of the world' which God permitted to coerce him into sleep so the

²¹⁷ Ibid., 17. 26, 29. However, Adam's falling asleep is interpreted in orthodox spheres as an assurance that Adam is not directly responsible for Eve's existence, i.e. that Eve was not created from Adam by his own power, rather that her appearance was due to God's intervention. See McKeown, p. 34.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 17. 31.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 17. 58.

²²⁰ 'Das Wesen der Archonten', *Theol. Literaturzeitung*, 83 (1958), columns 661–670, 137. 3 (Zandee trans., p. 36).

operation could take place. The result of which was that, when Adam awoke ‘he had flesh and blood; and he was (in his flesh) a lump of earth, and he saw from a three-fold spirit. With his eyes he apprehended the light of the sun, and knew the first image no more’.²²¹ In short, Adam ‘fell asleep in the angelic world, and awoke relatively to the terrestrial world’.²²²

The result of Adam’s dream is, naturally, the break-up of his androgyny and the resulting appearance of Eve. For Böhme, while Adam was crafted from God’s eternal essence, Eve was constructed as a mere facsimile of Adam. What is worse, she is a copy of Adam in his sleeping state, when he is first cast down in to the corruptible elemental world — as such, she is ‘infected with the four elements’.²²³

None can say, that Eve was a pure and chaste virgin before the contact of Adam; for as soon as Adam awakened from sleep, he saw her standing by him, and presently set his imagination upon her, and took her to him and said, ‘this is flesh of my flesh, and bone of my bone; she shall be called “woman”, because she is taken from man’. And she (Eve) instantly set her imagination upon Adam, and so both were mutually kindled with the desire of each other. Where is now the pure chastity and modesty? Is it not bestial? Is not the outward image become a beast?’²²⁴

On account of this, Eve becomes an easy target for further corruption, as evidenced in the Genesis narrative that she was the instigator of Adam’s final fall from grace.

Böhme comments:

[Eve] suffered herself very easily to be persuaded, when the lying spirit said, that the

²²¹ *Princ.*, 17. 31.

²²² *Myst. Mag.*, 19. 4.

²²³ *Princ.*, 17. 32.

²²⁴ *Forty Questions*, 36. 8–10.

fruit would make her wise, and that her eyes should be opened, and she be as God, knowing good and evil; yet he told her not, that (if she eat thereof) she must die; but [he said] she should be wise and fair; which disease [desire or lust] sticks still in the brains of the woman, that she would fain be the fairest beast.²²⁵

Adam's fall from the beatific vision was not complete until after Eve's appearance — he still yet had 'pure eyes, for the fierceness (of *Grimmigheit*) did not yet stick in them', corruption had not 'pressed him wholly'.²²⁶ The consequence of Adam's dream and the appearance of Eve as a result allowed for the possibility of the final fall. When Eve, pressed upon by her imagination, ate of the Tree of Knowledge, thinking 'it would be a good thing to be a goddess', and did not die, Adam did the same.²²⁷ It was at that moment, Böhme declares, that the 'spirit of the world' 'took them captive with the four elements' and made them mortal.²²⁸ The transition from 'Jerusalem to Jericho' as it were, from paradise into iniquity, was complete. Adam was no longer able to partake in his former 'paradisiacal substantiality' as the embodiment of the third principle: he has lost the beatific vision.

The earth is not eternal, and for the sake of the fragility [or corruptibility,] therefore man's body must break [or perish] because he has attracted the corruptibility to him. Thus

²²⁵ *Princ.*, 17. 32.

²²⁶ *Princ.*, 17. 56.

²²⁷ *Myst. Mag.*, 20. 25. For Gnosticism, the Tree of life is the 'opposite of the Holy Spirit' (ἀντίμιμον πνεύμα), which attracts man to evil action. 'Apocryphon of John', in *Die drei Versionen des Apokryphon des Johannes im Koptischen Museum zu Alt-Kairo*, ed. by M. Krause and Pahor Labib (Wiesbaden: Deutschen Archäologischen Institutes, 1960), 56. 14. 'Its branches are the shadows of death'. Apocryphon of John, 56. 19.

²²⁸ *Princ.*, 17. 58. For Gnosticism, the consequences of sin for humanity is that 'they came to the visible elements' (*4th Treatise*, 109. 21), 'they encountered those powers which had their origin in self-conceit and empty thoughts' (ibid., 109. 26), and 'they were in contact with error' (ibid., 110. 1). 'For that reason there was no one who was in agreement with his neighbour over anything, philosophy, medicine, rhetoric, music, [and] 'technology' (ibid., 110. 11).

also the paradisiacal knowledge, delight, and joy is departed from him, and he is fallen into the kindled anger, of the kindled four elements.²²⁹

Böhme's reading of the appearance of Eve, however, is not an entirely misogynistic one. Firstly, Eve's creation is not dispensed with as due to being made from Adam's slough, his rib. Against the reasoning that Eve 'should be far inferior to Adam', Böhme writes that God, 'took from Adam of all essences and properties of every virtue [...] therefore Eve was for certain created out of all Adam's essences'.²³⁰ Further, that she was fashioned from Adam's rib did not make her in any way deformed, but 'altogether lovely'.²³¹ Eve is also read as a necessary and redeeming figure in Adam's tragedy, for although she was the one who 'set the sin on work, and did eat of the false, evil, or corrupt fruit', if Eve had not, and Adam was the first to transgress God's command, 'it would have been far worse than it is'.²³² Consequently, another striking similarity with Hegel's treatment is present: Böhme reads the Fall account as a *necessary* event. The paradisiacal harmony man has previously enjoyed with God is an 'unthinking, unreflective, and thus inferior unity', as such the break-up of this unity is necessary, allowing for a return (*Rückkehr*) to 'a higher state of unity, in *full consciousness* of his nature and the nature of God'.²³³

For Böhme, the idea that there was an intention behind the Fall, that it was not just simply the *felix culpa* of traditional orthodoxy, lies in his reading of the Garden

²²⁹ Ibid., 17. 23.

²³⁰ Ibid., 13. 18–19.

²³¹ Ibid., 13. 36.

²³² *Aurora*, 17. 26.

²³³ Magee, p. 45.

of Eden itself. Böhme points out that the events leading up to the Fall take place in a specific location in creation: the Garden of Eden, planted 'in the East', with a river flowing in to and out of it, then separating in to four named branches.²³⁴ Böhme goes on to explain that,

The whole world would have been all paradise if it had not been corrupted by Lucifer. But as God knew that Adam was going to fall, it bloomed out in only one place, wherein man might find a suitable dwelling-place, and be fortified therein.²³⁵

God saw and knew that man was going to fall, and therefore the Paradise did not bloom and bear fruits in the whole of the world by means of the earth, although it was manifest everywhere, but only in the Garden of Eden, wherein Adam was tempted, did it become revealed in its full magnificence.²³⁶

For Böhme then, the creation of the Garden, set apart from the rest of the world, constitutes God's intention for the events leading up to the Fall, the 'great battle taking place in man' to unfold.²³⁷ Adam could not enjoy being the similitude of God, the *imago Dei*, because he did not in fact realise he was. Adam, in Hegelian terms, lacked self-consciousness, the power of reflection. For Hegel, Adam's transgression of the divine command entailed an ascent of his consciousness, transcending his own supposed limitations.²³⁸ This knowledge of his own freedom, caused ostensibly by the

²³⁴ Genesis 2. 8–14.

²³⁵ *Myst. Mag.*, 17. 7.

²³⁶ *Epistles*, 39. 28.

²³⁷ *II Apol. Tilke.*, 1. 381.

²³⁸ Compare this notion with the following passages from a Gnostic text: 'The Logos brought forth the form of man in a state of deficiency. He [i.e. man] was sick, and he [i.e. the Logos] had made it (i.e. the form of man) unable to know and in a state of ignorance' (*4th Treatise*, 105. 11–13); 'The Logos had produced the first form [of man] through the demiurge in ignorance [i.e. the lifeless body], so that he (man) should receive knowledge that there is an exalted one' (*4th Treatise*, 105. 17–18).

serpent, will ultimately be annulled as man ought not to remain in a state of estrangement from God.²³⁹ This bruising 'of the head of the serpent' is said, both by Christian orthodoxy and by Hegel, to be a messianic prophecy, realised historically during the Crucifixion. Nevertheless, both Böhme and Hegel warn against reading the Fall in a fatalistic way. Böhme explains that 'it was within [Adam's] power to decide' whether or not to transgress God's command, to remain in a state of absolute unity with God, or to descend in to the world of differentiation.²⁴⁰

The will of the soul is free, and she can either sink into nothing within herself and conceive of herself as the nothing, when she will sprout like a branch out of the tree of divine life, and eat of the love of God; or she may in her own self-will rise up in the fire, and desire to become a separate tree.²⁴¹

Further,

The constellation [or power] of the macrocosm should not be permitted to rule over man; but he has his own constellation within himself, which is capable for becoming attuned to the harmony of the rise and evolution of the divine world within.²⁴²

If Adam had not disobeyed God's command, then he would have remained in the paradiscial state of unity with God, and ignorance of the world of differentiation; the soul of Adam 'could have ruled powerfully over the external principle if she had entered again with her will into the heart of God, into the word of the Lord'.²⁴³ However, to remain in such a state would have been anything but blissful for Adam,

²³⁹ *LPR*, III, p. 157.

²⁴⁰ Hartmann, *Boehme*, p. 157.

²⁴¹ *Forty Questions*, 2. 2.

²⁴² *Epistles*, 1. 8.

²⁴³ *Forty Questions*, 4. 2.

as he, as previously stated, still would not realise being in such a state of unity with God. Böhme has great difficulty in reconciling both the freedom of Adam to fall, and yet the necessity of such a fall, as he freely admits:

But now if Adam had continued in paradise, he should have been able to manifest the wonders [wonderful things of God] much better, for they should have been much nearer to the form of angels [as Adam was], and such great sins and abominations had not been brought to effect with many, as is usually done now. But the spirit of grimness [the spirit of the world] in the eternal source would also be manifested, and open its wonders [to Adam]; of which much may not be written, for it is a *Mysterium* that belongs not to us to open.²⁴⁴

Just as he cannot reconcile the relationship between the freedom of the Fall and the necessity of the Fall, nor can Böhme appreciate the relationship between the universal ‘wonders of God’ and their particular incarnations. The consequence of this is a kind of dialectical misery, man cannot reconcile one opposite with another; they cannot be sublated.

Into this great misery man is fallen; and he is fallen quite home to the kingdom of the stars and elements, as to his body [i.e. the terrestrial world has taken possession of man’s corporeal constitution]; what these do with him, that he is, and that stands in the substance; they make one great, another small, one straight, another stooping and crooked; they send one fortune and riches, and another poverty; of one they make a crafty subtle man according to the council and the kingdom of this world, and of another they make an idiot; they make one a king, and break and pull down another; one they kill, another they bring into the world; and they continually drive the mind of man, yet into nothing else but into vain troubles, discontent, and vexation.²⁴⁵

Man’s will and imagination have become perverted from their original state. Man has

²⁴⁴ *Princ.*, 20. 11–12.

²⁴⁵ *Princ.*, 17. 68.

surrounded himself by a world of will and imagination of his own. He has therefore lost sight of God, and can only regain his former state and become wise if he brings the activity of his soul and mind again in harmony with the divine Spirit.²⁴⁶

As to how to overcome the consequences of the Fall, in the fashion of the sixteenth and seventeenth century commentators, Böhme argues that those who are 'learned in arts and sciences' rely solely on their faulty capacity for reason, from which 'nothing comes of it but pride of themselves'.²⁴⁷ In a later work Böhme expands upon this point, arguing that as knowledge does not come from 'academic, or university, or scholastic learning', it must come from 'earnest repentance, fasting, watching, [and] praying'.²⁴⁸

So long as Lucifer has his regiment in man, the creature insists on being his own God [...] the natural Adam in the kingdom of corrupted nature does not and cannot find repentance in his own nature, for there is no possibility for good therein, but the indwelling grace in him awakens the same when the will turns itself to grace.²⁴⁹

But whosoever wills and runs by himself, he separates himself from the entire will of God and leads himself into selfhood in which there is no rest, for he must live in his own will and running and it is a vain unrest.²⁵⁰

Should now the free will with the desire go toward God, he must first leave his false creation [*Etwas*] and as he does this, he is bare and impotent, for he is again in the first nothing [*nichts*]; then when he wants to go to or with God, he must kill or leave behind false selfhood.²⁵¹

²⁴⁶ Noted in Hartmann, p. 6.

²⁴⁷ *Way*, p. 1.

²⁴⁸ Jakob Böhme *The Second Booke*, trans. by John Sparrow (London: Printed by M. Simmons, 1648), Preface.

²⁴⁹ *Myst. Mag.*, 61: 50, 54.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 66. 65.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 27. 5.

§ 3. 2. *Hegel's Reading: The Fall into Finitude*

The Fall account has been interpreted as ‘the supreme negative moment in Hegel’s myth of self’.²⁵² The Adamic myth and account of the Fall is imagistically presented, Hegel argues, by the Genesis author as a string of inconsistencies and oppositions. The acquisition of knowledge from the ‘Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil’, is expressly prohibited by God, and the Fall is accounted for as the failure to obey this command.²⁵³ Hegel finds fault with this account in Genesis, as according to the biblical narrative, the existence of the Tree itself, which does not appear to belong to any group or category of trees, rather being a single, specific tree, expresses the event leading to the Fall not as some ontological concept, but as a contingent, material cause.²⁵⁴ Hegel argues that this literal explanation cannot be correct due to its implications, and wryly quotes Goethe: ‘Bumblebees and wasps? Gods! if apple-eating makes them’.²⁵⁵ Hegel’s rejection of such an explanation, which is historically Platonic-Augustinian, is shared by Luther and Böhme, both of whom affirm the notion of sin as *curvatus in se* (as a ‘turning in upon itself’). Luther agrees with Hegel in that the act of ‘apple-eating’ itself could not result in a loss of God’s good graces, rather the Fall is a result of transgressing the divine command. Adam’s sin is a

²⁵² Crites, *Dialectic and Gospel*, p. 504.

²⁵³ Genesis 2. 16–24. Sarna (p. 19) argues that ‘knowledge of good and evil’ is yet another merism, and refers to a knowledge of everything, not only what is good and evil.

²⁵⁴ *LPR*, III, p. 153.

²⁵⁵ ‘*Hummeln und Wespen — Götter — wenn das Äpfelfressen Götter tät machen!*’. Hegel does not give a source for this citation, and Georg Lasson, Hegel’s modern editor, could not himself trace it. H. S. Harris argues that Hegel is in fact quoting Goethe. Cf. *LPR*, III, p. 167, n. 49.

turning in upon himself, it is, in the language of Böhme, to follow his own prideful self-will and not the will of God. Luther declares that,

When the sophists speak of original sin, they are speaking only of wretched and abominable lust on concupiscence. But original sin is truly a total fall of human nature; because the intellect is darkened, we do not acknowledge God and his will and do not perceive his works. In addition, because the will is extraordinarily depraved, we do not trust in the mercy of God and do not fear him but unconcerned and disregarding the Word and will of God, we follow the desire and impulses of the flesh; similarly, our conscience is no longer quiet but thinks of God's judgement, despairs, and adopts illicit defences and remedies.²⁵⁶

Hegel's affirmation of such a revisionist and speculative reading of Genesis 3 and subsequent interpretation of the material into an account of theodicy has its roots in Böhme. Contrast Hegel's remark that if the physical act of apple-eating results in godhood, then anything that does so will become a god, with Böhme's comment that,

If the gate of the deep was not opened to me in my mind so that I can see [or know] the strife that is against the Kingdom of God then I should also suppose, that the matter [of the Fall] was merely a disobedience about the biting of an apple, as the text in *Moses* barely passes it over.²⁵⁷

Böhme would not agree with Hegel's rejection of the portrayal of the Tree as of a particular, contingent variety, but states that:

The Tree of Temptation was earthly, as now all the Trees are; all the other [sic] were paradisaical, from which *Adam* could eat paradisaical virtue in his mouth, and had no need of stomach and guts; for they [the Trees] were like his body, and [like] the

²⁵⁶ *Luthers Werke*, XLII, p. 86.

²⁵⁷ *Princ.*, 17. 1.

Element, and the Tree of Temptation was like the four elements.²⁵⁸

Böhme's conceptualisation of the Tree of Knowledge in this way is due to depiction of Adam as created from the eternal element, for, if,

God created man of a lump of earth [...] [and] If Adam [before the Fall] had been of the earth earthly, then God would not have forbid him the earthly fruit [...] Reason must not imagine, that God ever made any beast out of a lump of earth, as a potter makes a pot. But he said, *Let there come forth all sorts of beasts, every one after its kind*; that is, out of all essences, every one after the property of its essence [...] How then should the image of God be made out of the fragile [or corruptible] essences? But it [must be and] was made in the paradise out of the eternal [essence].²⁵⁹

A striking similarity between Böhme and Hegel's depiction here becomes clear. For both, the Tree of Knowledge is portrayed as an entity *distinct* in form and substance from the established nature of Adam. For Hegel, the tree is a 'heavenly' universal in contrast to Adam as a particular being. For Böhme, the tree is a contingent, earthly thing in contrast to Adam as a being who is the similitude of the eternal element. Both accounts, then, are fundamentally about the transgressive, and while of course the Fall account, read in any way, is the epitome of transgressive behaviour, what is being highlighted in both of these accounts is not the traditional injunction against disobeying the positive authority of God, rather the proclamation of the innate disjunction between the worlds of the creator and the created. Böhme further declares that, 'when Adam's hunger was set after the 'earthliness' (*Irdigkeit*), it did, by its

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 17. 19.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 17. 20–22.

magnetic power, impress into his fair image the vanity of evil and good; whereupon the heavenly image of the angelical world's essence disappeared'.²⁶⁰ Adam's sin was the lust after earthliness, the material world of the four elements, in disobedience of the divine command. Adam's sin, therefore, echoes Lucifer's: both wished to rise above their station, to know more than was the original intention in their design, and to usurp the place of God. Both are distinguished, however, in that while Lucifer sought mastery over the first principle, Adam willed to enter the third. Therefore, and to return to Hegel, the Fall of Man account must not be read as issuing from 'an entirely finite, commonplace result', but must be read as ideal, as speculative.²⁶¹ Adam's sin is the contravention of God's command to remain in the embrace of the universal, and not to descend in to the world of the particular.

For Hegel, as with Böhme, a strong element of necessity in to the Fall account is argued. For both, the fall of Adam is a necessary event, an incident which brings about a reconstitution of man, closer to his creator's original intention in design.²⁶² The Fall account is, therefore, 'the eternal myth of man's becoming man'.²⁶³ For Hegel, the Fall leads to the acquisition of knowledge, to know the difference between good and evil, and, without that faculty, man would have simply remained 'a beast'.²⁶⁴ While it was forbidden to eat the fruit of the Tree, the knowledge it

²⁶⁰ *Myst. Mag.*, 19. 3.

²⁶¹ *LPR*, III, p. 153.

²⁶² *The Christian Religion*, Peter C. Hodgson commentary, III. 3.

²⁶³ 'Der Sünderfall ist der ewige Mythos des Menschen wodurch er eben Mensch wird' — Glockner, II, p. 43.

²⁶⁴ *LPR*, III, p. 153. See Tillich's comment that 'Creaturely freedom is the point at which creation and

bestowed upon Adam is precisely what it constitutes to be a human being.²⁶⁵ Adam does not fall from the divine image, for even in the biblical narrative God comments: ‘See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil’.²⁶⁶ The knowledge of the particular, the knowledge of the difference between good and evil, precisely constitutes ‘the divine in humanity’.²⁶⁷ There is no mention of Adam’s dream and subsequent appearance of Eve in Hegel’s exegesis of the Fall narrative. It has been argued that the reason for this is that the break-up into differentiation occurs too early in the biblical narrative for Hegel’s exegesis to fit the myth.²⁶⁸

In his prelapsarian state, Adam is an innocent spirit. But, according to the trinitarian scheme of which Adam is a microcosm, his self-consciousness is implicit in his existence.²⁶⁹ How this self-consciousness is made explicit is in the following way. The Fall leads to a ‘separation’ (*Trennung*) in thought between Adam as a concept and Adam as a particular spirit, or between humanity as an idea, and the individual in particular. This separation brings about a ‘cleavage’ within humanity as a concept. At the same time, however, cleavage is essential to spirit, for the nature of spirit is to other itself from itself in order to come to self-consciousness. This separation and cleavage brings about ‘estrangement’ (*Entfremdung*), which is argued

the fall coincide’. *Systematic Theology*, I, p. 256.

²⁶⁵ *LPR*, III, p. 153.

²⁶⁶ Genesis 3. 22.

²⁶⁷ *LPR*, III, p. 154.

²⁶⁸ Crites, *Dialectic and Gospel*, p. 502.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 501.

to be the ‘condition of possibility’ for evil.²⁷⁰ Evil is then actualised or manifested from this possibility in two ways: firstly, when the cleavage is thought to be irreconcilable and becomes ‘alienation’ (*Entfremdung*), and secondly, when humanity tries to escape cleavage by trying to revert to the lost state of nature, postlapsus. Hodgson argues that Hegel is thinking of Paul’s dualism between ‘those who live according to the flesh’ (κατὰ σάρκα) and ‘those who live according to the spirit’ (κατὰ πνεῦμα).²⁷¹ Existence according to the flesh is often condemned by Paul: it is denounced as being the morality of the slave who abases himself before an earthly, and not heavenly, master; it is used as an incitement of the rich and worldly, of whom ‘not many [are] wise κατὰ σάρκα’, and, if one continues to live according to the flesh ‘you will [surely] die: but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live’.²⁷² The relationship between living according to the flesh and according to the spirit is, in Hegelian terms, a distinction between immediate and self-conscious existence. One variety of evil occurs when immediate sensuous is posited above self-consciousness, which is superannuated: it is an immediate and, therefore, ‘inferior and inadequate’ perspective.²⁷³

Through the introspection and introversion (*Insichgehen*) which alienation

²⁷⁰ Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology*, p. 149.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, See Romans 8. 5.

²⁷² Colossians 3. 22–24; 1 Corinthians 1. 26; Romans 8. 13. Paul’s usage of the term, coming from the Hebrew *basar*, has a variety of meanings, from the relationships between fellow humans beings, personal weakness and desire, and corruption by evil. Moravcsik, p. 66. See also Robinson, *Man* pp. 111–122; Walter David Stacey, *The Pauline View of Man*, (London: Macmillan & Co., 1956) pp. 154–173. Paul’s view would be reiterated in the Reformation, by Luther’s reproval of, so-called, fleshly conduct (*tertius usus legis*).

²⁷³ Edith A. Moravcsik, *An Introduction to Syntactic Theory* (New York: Continuum International, 2006), p. 66.

(*Entfremdung*) brings about, a sense of otherness is engendered. This otherness exists in thought: it is 'thought which contains otherness, and is, thus, the self-imposed opposed thought of good and evil'.²⁷⁴

Man is pictorially represented by the religious mind in this way: it happened once as an event, with no necessity about it, that he lost the form of harmonious unity with himself by plucking the fruits of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and was driven from the state of innocence, from paradise, from the Garden with all its creatures, and from nature offering its bounties without man's toil.²⁷⁵

Adam now experiences the poles of good and evil within his own consciousness, as an inner dialectic.

Evil appears as the first actual expression of the self-concentrated consciousness. And because the thoughts of good and evil are utterly opposed, and this opposition is not yet broken down, this consciousness is essentially and merely evil. At the same time, however, owing to just this very opposition, there is present also the good consciousness opposing that one that is evil, and again their relation to each other.²⁷⁶

Hegel's viewpoint with regard to evil and knowledge is identical to Böhme's in the respect of being necessary in order to overcome the ignorance of the paradisiacal state by first breaking up the divine unity, then returning at the end of history to a harmony closer to perfection. Both philosophers go against the prevailing attitude of religious orthodoxy in this respect, as the acquisition of knowledge for the purposes of what we might call self-improvement is treated by Luther and Protestant Scholasticism as

²⁷⁴ *PhM*, 770.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 770–771.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 771.

Satanic.²⁷⁷ Similarly, for Hegel, where the necessity of the Fall is concerned, and as O'Regan notes, a fall into 'pain' (*Schmerz*) and 'evil' (*das Böse*) is 'a phase of the self-determination of the divine, which self-determination provides the adequate definition of freedom'.²⁷⁸ Adam's fall and the institution of evil in the world is, therefore, read by Hegel according to a 'teleological-eschatological perspective'.²⁷⁹ Teleologically, man's goal of knowledge is heralded by the undesired break-up of the divine unity. Eschatologically, however, man is essentially good, as he wills the reinstatement and reconciliation of the lost harmony with the divine. Further, according to Hegel's analysis, bodily mortality does not become the punishment for Adam's transgression, rather it is part of his eternal nature from his creation. That Adam was prevented from eating from the 'Tree of Life' (which would have made him immortal) is irrelevant — immortality would negate his role in the dialectic as the vehicle for the actualisation of the idea (i.e. God). If knowledge allows for the possibility of evil, then it is thinking which may actualise it. 'Human beings become evil by cognizing,' Hegel writes in the *Lectures in the Philosophy of Religion*, and 'cognition is the source of all evil'.²⁸⁰ The existence of evil is, however, necessary as it is absolutely intrinsic to finite spirit. Hegel writes that 'God [is] the absolutely positive; therefore what differs from him [is] the negative. Evil must exist, otherwise

²⁷⁷ O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*, p. 163.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

²⁸⁰ *LPR*, E 205–206; G 137–138.

there would be no capacity for human progress.²⁸¹ This negative appears on the side of worldly essence, of human being. This negative of God is evil, or wickedness in general'.²⁸² Hegel argues that the contradiction lies in that, while the expulsion from the garden is the means to ensure man's mortality, mortality is yet 'the necessary consequence of finitude'.²⁸³

The entire process may be summed up dialectically in this way: man betrays the divine command, an evil act but allowing the possibility for knowledge, an event 'upon which the rise of consciousness is posited', and yet knowledge is necessary for what it is to be a human being, it is 'the principle of spirituality'. Thesis reflects against antithesis, creating a contradiction. This possibility of reflection is instituted and realised in God's parting words to the serpent, that he 'will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel'.²⁸⁴ Once again, a concept, being the consequence of knowledge (sin), is not taken as an ontological general force or law, but as a contingent, autonomous event (as was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Fall scenario).²⁸⁵ Hegel makes the distinction, however, between two forms of knowledge: the first, seen in the above biblical passage as a consequence of sin, is external to Adam, and the second, reflection in the form of 'concrete cognition', which dwells within him. It is this latter form of knowledge, Hegel wryly remarks,

²⁸¹ Zandee, p. 23.

²⁸² *LPR*, E 205–206; G 137–138.

²⁸³ *LPR*, III, p. 155.

²⁸⁴ Genesis 3. 15.

²⁸⁵ *LPR*, III, p. 156.

which will 'bruise the head of the serpent.'²⁸⁶ As Hegel comments in the *Encyclopaedia*:

The spiritual is distinguished from the natural, and more especially from the animal, life, in the circumstance that it does not continue a mere stream of tendency, but sunders itself to self-realization. But this position of severed life has in its turn to be suppressed, and the spirit has by its own act to win its way to concord again. The final concord then is spiritual; that is, the principle of restoration is found in thought, and thought only. The hand that inflicts the wound is also the hand which heals it.²⁸⁷

The synthesis of this contradiction, therefore, is as Hegel states: knowledge reconciles the rift caused by the Fall, healing 'the injury of separation'.²⁸⁸ Knowledge then, for Hegel, is surely that which 'heals the wound that it itself is'.²⁸⁹

This is a deep truth, that evil lies in consciousness: for the brutes are neither evil nor good; the merely natural man quite as little. Consciousness occasions the separation of the ego, in its boundless freedom as arbitrary choice, from the pure essence of the will — i.e. from the good. Knowledge, as the disannulling of the unity of mere nature, is the 'Fall', which is no casual conception, but the eternal history of spirit. For the state of innocence, the paradisiacal condition, is that of the brute. Paradise is a park, where only brutes, not men, can remain. For the brute is one with God only implicitly [not consciously]. Only man's spirit (that is) has a self-cognizant existence. This existence for self, this consciousness, is at the same time separation from the universal and divine spirit. If I hold to my abstract freedom, in contraposition to the Good, I adopt the standpoint of evil. The Fall is therefore the eternal *mythus* of man — in fact, the very transition by which he becomes man. Persistence in this standpoint is, however, evil, and the feeling of pain at such a condition, and of longing to transcend it, we find in David, when say says: 'Lord, create for me a pure heart, a new *steadfast* Spirit'.²⁹⁰

This argument follows Hegel's ontological scheme of spirit coming to self-

²⁸⁶ *LPR*, III, p. 156.

²⁸⁷ Miller, p. 43.

²⁸⁸ *LPR*, III, p. 155–157.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

²⁹⁰ *LPH*, p. 321f.

consciousness, that God is a finite entity *before* creation, but through the intercession of man the process of God becoming an infinite being is initiated. Mortality, and so the possibility of evil, seen in terms of the separation of knowledge from the infinite, is necessarily connected with the essence of man, and his role in the process of the idea coming to know itself as a whole.²⁹¹ Böhme and Hegel are thus much closer to Christian Neo-Platonism in espousing their kind of epistemology.²⁹² The criticism may be made that in order to accept Hegel's Böhme-based speculative interpretation of the Fall, one must first accept man's role as the vehicle of the actualisation of the spirit. However, this concept is not legitimised at the beginning of the Hegel's system, rather it emerges as an 'absolute truth' at the end of the dialectic.²⁹³

Hegel's speculative treatment of the Fall of Man account in Genesis can be read as a reaction against the general attitude of German Enlightenment writers concerning of human goodness. This attitude constituted a 'naive [...] view' of human action being primarily motivated by an 'aboriginal goodness',²⁹⁴ a rejection of the viewpoint of Protestant scholasticism. Hegel agrees with Protestant scholasticism, disagreeing with the *Aufklärer*, that the Adamic fall constitutes a true and faithful relation of the truth of mankind's origins, and portrays man's nature as an essentially 'evil' one. It is evil in so far that it is erotic rather than agapaic: man's nature is not an overflowing, unselfish love for God, but a heartfelt feeling of lack, a desire to

²⁹¹ O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*, p. 163.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Bowie, p. 85.

²⁹⁴ O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*, p. 158.

rekindle the relationship between himself and God which was lost as a result of the Fall. Nevertheless, Hegel in the same breath agrees with the *Aufklärer*, disagreeing with Protestant Scholasticism, in his rejection of the Augustinian and Reformation doctrine of original sin, passed down to succeeding generations biologically or otherwise, in promulgating the idea that the possibility of committing evil action is part of man's nature from the beginning. Böhme, in the same way, also disagrees with this normative doctrine of original sin, as he believes the regeneration of the uncorrupted *imago Dei* is still possible. For both philosophers, Adam's loss of innocence is really a loss of ignorance, as the possibility of evil is as a necessary prerequisite for knowledge. This move beyond aboriginal ignorance does entail a loss of the beatific vision (*Blick*); *post lapsus*, Adam may only attain a momentary 'glimpse' (*Augenblick*) of what has been lost during certain 'hours of grace' (*Gnadenstunden*).²⁹⁵ This loss, the knowledge of this loss, and all subsequent attempts to regain what has been lost, constitutes the 'agon of history', a concept whose influence is seen as abundantly clear in Hegel's work.²⁹⁶ A criticism of this theme might be informed by Hegel's general ontological scheme, the return of spirit to itself once it becomes to self-consciousness through the process of history. It might be objected that if mankind does indeed return to that paradisiacal state at the end of history, would that not entail a return to aboriginal ignorance? This criticism can be argued to be a misreading of Hegel's own eschatological scheme. And, as previously

²⁹⁵ This use of the term *Gnadenstunden* originates with Pietist biblical scholar F.C. Oetinger. Cf. O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse*, p. 45.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

argued, Hegel's eschatological vision does not merely signify a wholesale return to the earliest, fundamental stage, but also that something new is added. It is not 'a return into the same; it is a return into the *more*'.²⁹⁷

The similarities between Hegel and Böhme's treatment of the Fall of Man account in the Genesis narrative cannot be underestimated. Both subscribe to the view that paradise is not a state which mankind can long endure. For Hegel, knowledge (the acquisition of which is evil as a result) is intrinsic for the definition of man as man; the destruction of the divine unity is the inevitable result. In the same vein, Böhme also warns that the state of innocence is also one of ignorance. Eschatologically, the Fall account serves for both as a necessary point of departure for a return to a superior mode of being with the divine. Man, removed from paradise, estranged from his prior state of universality with God, now is forced to descend in to nature, in to the world of mere particularity.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 169.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis has been to engage in a comparative examination of the content of Böhme and Hegel's speculative thought, as it emerges both through their intellectual development, in their understanding of the concept of God, and in the traditionally Christian accounts of the creation of the world and the Fall.

As it appeared throughout the course of Böhme and Hegel's intellectual development, both philosophers were motivated to find a way of expressing truths which they considered to be perennial, but which could not, they thought, be truly expressed by the religion which claimed them under its authority. The desire to articulate this eternal content took each through various modes of expression: from the reactionary spirit of humanism and Enlightenment criticism, to the writings of Hermetics and the German mystics. Both found, however, that each mode of representation bore some deficiency inherent within it, and returned whence they came, namely to the original spirit of the Reformation. For Hegel, however, this return entailed more than Böhme's, for Hegel believed in the capacity of philosophy, and philosophy alone, to liberate the perennial content of religion from the trappings of mysticism, analogy, metaphor, and simile.

The first instance of this power of philosophical language was examined in relation to the Christian concept of God. Böhme's yearning to reveal the core of the hidden deity spurred on Hegel's desire to move away from the infantile notions of Christian orthodoxy on the nature of the divine, and of the Trinity as a mere mystery yet one which is composed of real persons, and towards a rational,

more cohesive understanding of the eternal unity of God.

The examination ended with an appraisal of their readings of the creation the world and its fall, which, too, were shown to mirror one-another. Both argue against the orthodox separation between creation *ex Deo* and *ex nihilo* accounts, and seek to reconcile them as mere abstractions expressing the manifestation of God in both idea and in appearance. Both also argue strongly for the necessity of a fall from original unity, the speculative reading of which seeks to describe 'the eternal myth of man becoming man'; the movement away from the epistemological innocence intrinsic to paradise and towards the differentiation in thought necessary for the birth of self-consciousness.

To say in conclusion of this comparative study of Böhme and Hegel's thought, it becomes apparent that, while Hegel finds the content of Böhme's theosophical system to be a source of inspiration for his own work, the representational mode of expression in which that content is rendered is utterly inferior to the language of philosophy. Fortunately, as, according to Hegel, both philosophy and theology share an identical common subject-matter, that content can be rescued by stripping away religious analogy, metaphor, and parable, so that the kernel of truth that remains can be expressed in the clear and rational language of thought. To repeat the findings of another commentator, we are led to conclude that 'such qualifications aside, when Hegel comes to the content of Böhme's speculation he is clearly a believer'.¹

How, then, does the content of Böhme and Hegel's thought find itself

¹ David Walsh, 'The Historical Dialectic of Spirit', p. 18.

evaluated amongst succeeding generations of commentators on religion? The content of Böhme's philosophy has had, to say the least, a tremendously varied reception among theologians and philosophers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Theologically, Böhme's body of work was said to have 'as many blasphemies as there are lines' by his latter day pastor, Gregorius Richter, while Böhme personally was considered 'the antichrist', a 'villain of a shoemaker' who had been 'daubed over with dirt by the devil'.² Johann Trick refers to Böhme's work as 'the vilest excrement of the devil', having 'the father of lies for its origin, [...] [who] grunted out of [Böhme's] mouth'.³ In short, the so-called 'ladder of dreams', which Böhme's philosophy was considered, was thought to be a temptation of God and, if studied, would lead the faithful 'down to perdition'.⁴ Some theologians were more sympathetic: Johann Gichtel, for instance, describes Böhme's work as 'a gift from God', claiming that anyone whom 'in our time wish to bring forth anything fundamental [...] must borrow it from Böhme'.⁵ Many other theologians of the period echoed this kind of sentiment, among them John

² Richard Jecht, *Jakob Böhme: Gedenkgabe der Stadt Görlitz zu seinem 300 jährigen Todestage* (Görlitz: Selbstverlag des Magistrats der Stadt Görlitz, 1924), p. 43; 70–71; Franz Hartmann, *Life and Doctrines of Jacob Boehme* (Vienna: Theosophist, 1891; repr. Kessinger Publishing Co., 1992), p. 23.

³ Quoted in Hartmann, p. 23.

⁴ Attributed to Friedrich Delitsch. Noted in Hartmann, p. 23. Much of the poor reputation earned by Böhme's philosophical system is found in Abraham Carlov, *Anti-Böhmius, in quo Docetur quid Habendum de Secta Jacobi Böhmien Satoris Görlicensis* (Wittenberg: Schrödterm 1684); and Abraham Hinckelmann, *40 Wichtige Fragen betreffende die Lehre so in Jacob Böhmens Schriften enthalten* (Hamburg: Schulissischen Buchladen, 1693). The honour of the most voluminous refutations of Böhme's philosophy belongs to Johann Frick and Johann Christoph Holthausen. See Johann Frick, *Gründliche Untersuchung Jacob Boehmens vornehmster Irrthümer: So auss dessen eigen Schrifften gezeiget und auss H. Schrift widerlegt werden: Vorrede Dr. Elias Veiels* (Ulm: zu finden bey Wolfgang Kraer Buchbindern druckts Ferdinand Manch, 1697); and Johann Christoph Holthausen, *Teutscher Anti-Barclajus, das ist, Aussführliche Untersuchung der gantzen Quackerey und Apologia Roberti Barclay* ([n.p]: in Verlegung Johann David Zunners; Druckts Johann Dieterich Friedgen, 1691).

⁵ Cf. Johann Gichtel, *Theosopia Practica* (Amsterdam: [n. pub.], 1722).

Winkler, John Mathaei, Frederick Brenkling, Philipp Jakob Spener, Friedrich Christoph Oetinger, Johann Oberlin, and *le philosophe inconnu*, Louis Claude de Saint Martin, who learned German specifically for the purpose of reading Böhme.⁶ Saint Martin, recalling John the Baptist's proclamation in Matthew 3. 11., declares that he is himself,

not worthy to unloose the shoestrings of this wonderful man, whom I regard as the greatest light that has ever appeared upon the earth, second only to Him who was the Light itself [...] I advise you by all means to throw yourself in this abyss of knowledge of the profoundest of all truths [...] I find in his works such a profundity and exaltation of thought, and such a simple and delicious nutriment, that I would consider it a waste of time to seek for such things in any other place.⁷

Philosophically, it has been said Böhme's work did not receive much appreciation from the rationalists, especially because of his reputation as a alchemist. Böhme did receive a great deal of appreciation from the romantics, however, best known among them Novalis, Heinrich Stilling, Jacobi, Friedrich Schlegel, Goethe, Franz von Baader, and Schelling.

Hegel's theological and philosophical reception has been of a similar nature. After an initial period of good opinion and general approbation in the 1820s and 1830s, Hegel's ontological system slid into its rapid descent in the middle of the nineteenth century — the time of the trenchant criticism of Feuerbach, Stirner, Marx, and Kierkegaard. Unlike the philosophical schemes of mainstream Enlightenment writers, such as Helvétius, Holbach, Bentham, and

⁶ See Louis Claude de Saint Martin, *Theosophic Correspondence between Louis Claude de Saint Martin and Kirchberger, Baron de Liebistorf* (Pasadena, T.X.: Theosophical University Press, 1991).

⁷ Saint Martin, 97. 32, 199. 30.

Burke, Hegel's central thesis, of spirit which descends into the material world to redeem itself, is a position which finds no modern adherents. Little has to be said of Hegel's reception in the twentieth century from those who followed in the tradition of the continentals, of which Schopenhauer, Jung, and Popper come most strongly to mind. While Hegel's concept of spirit finds sympathy among some modern theologians, such as Eberhard Jüngel, Wolfhart Pannenberg, and Jürgen Moltmann, among the majority, Hegel's God serves as an antitype against which the orthodox define themselves.⁸ The most commanding of modern Christian theologians, Karl Barth, Bultmann, Karl Rahner, and Tillich, are 'profoundly ahistorical theologians [...] engaged in a deep negation of Hegelian thinking, and each of whom [affirm] a purely non-Hegelian God'.⁹

It is true that Böhme and Hegel's ontological scheme is quite dead. The cause of this demise lies in the fact that, at heart, both schemes are entirely reactionary. Without the struggle against the values which defined them — between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, the Reformation and the Enlightenment, and rationalism and romanticism — the *raison d'être* of both philosophies no longer applies. Both Böhme and Hegel's philosophical position are productive of a keen sense of *Weltschmerz*, the feeling that the modern world is ideologically dead, cut

⁸ The Hegelian conception of God is rejected not only by Christian theologians across the Catholic and Protestant divide, but also amongst Jewish theologians, such as Rosenzweig, Buber, Levinas, and Derrida. In this way the rejection of the Böhmean-Hegelian conception of God can be said to be truly transconfessional.

⁹ Altizer, p. 82. See Wolfhart Pannenberg, 'The Significance of Christianity in the Philosophy of Hegel', in *The Idea of God and Human Freedom* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973), pp. 144–177; Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974); and Eberhard Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World: On the Foundation of the Theology of the Crucified One in the Dispute between Theism and Atheism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983).

off from any real sense of meaning, and must, somehow, be redeemed with reference to the past. The desire, for both, is as Nietzsche has it, to 'redeem what is past, and to transform every "It was" into "Thus I would have it!" — that only do I call redemption!'.¹⁰ In this way, Böhme and Hegel's central thesis, like those of Rousseau, de Tocqueville, Marx, or Arendt, is dispensed with, for, after the proclamation of 'end of ideology', they are now strangers in the world of the modern-day mainstream.¹¹

But this, as Hegel would argue, is the very nature of spirit. To appear is to eventually disappear, and again to return. There is much, still, to be said for the application of Böhme and Hegel's speculation on modern day theological and philosophical difficulties: of historicism, of the nature of the Church, of personal and civic morality, and of the end of history.

The life of spirit is not one that shuns death, and keeps clear of destruction; it endures death and in death maintains its being. It only wins to its truth when it finds itself utterly torn asunder.¹²

¹⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. by Thomas Common (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993) p. 131.

¹¹ David Easton, *A Systems Analysis of Political Life* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1965). See Taylor, pp. 538—542.

¹² *PhM*, 93.

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This bibliography is divided into five sections. Section One contains primary sources written by Jakob Böhme, while Section Two contains secondary material treating Böhme. Section Three comprises works written by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel or posthumously compiled by others, while Section Four consists of secondary literature treating Hegel. Section Five includes other material consulted that was found most relevant and beneficial to the development of the thesis.

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