

HEGEL

and the Hermetic Tradition

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Hegel's Initiation Rite: The Phenomenology of Spirit

1. Initiation

The Phenomenology of Spirit was conceived by Hegel in 1806 as an introduction or propaedeutic to the tripartite system of Logic-Nature-Spirit. It is therefore quite reasonable to ask if the *Phenomenology* is really a necessary part of the system, or merely something "tacked on."

Hegel's Absolute, unlike Schelling's, cannot be expressed in a simple formula, like "the indifference point," or "the coincidence of opposites." According to Hegel, to grasp the Absolute we must go through the Science, go through every moment of the Absolute, and remake it for ourselves. Furthermore, a preparatory exercise is necessary before we can reach this point. A few lines down from the passage just quoted, Hegel writes that "truth is not a minted coin that can be given and pocketed ready-made" (Miller, 22; PG, 29).¹ Hegel believed that the consummation of the love of wisdom in Absolute Knowing was not equally possible in every historical epoch. Instead, he held that his achievement was possible only at a particular point in history, the end of history, when the philosophical, cultural and religious achievements of the ages were spread out before his gaze, when the accumulated substance of history was converted to an account on which he could draw. Furthermore, he could not have acquired Wisdom without the consciousness of this ground. Thus, it is not enough to stand with Hegel at the end of history and read his books: one must work through the system in full consciousness of what has made it possible, and one must overcome all false or partial standpoints that would make assimilation of the system impossible.

If the *Phenomenology* is intended in part to acquaint readers with the intellectual and cultural strata on which the system stands, then is it a work of history? In a way, yes. In the final paragraph of the *Phenomenology*, Hegel writes that the totality of the forms of Spirit "regarded from the side of their free existence appearing in the form of contingency, is History; but regarded from the side of their [intellectually] comprehended organization, it is the Science of Knowing in the sphere of appearance." (Miller, 493; PG, 531). The *Phenomenology of Spirit* displays the forms in which Spirit has appeared in time. We may think of each as

1. This is an allusion to Lessing's *Nathan the Wise*, 4:6.

a "mode" of consciousness or mind. Hegel shows how each "mode" is an approximation of what he calls at the end of the book "Absolute Knowing."³ The *Phenomenology* stands in the same relation to history as the *Philosophy of Nature* stands to nature. The *Philosophy of Nature* is an account of the fundamental moments, the eidetic divisions, which nature exhibits to scientific consciousness. It is not a history of nature, in the sense that Hegel thought that natural beings appeared in the order of his chapter headings and divisions. (Hegel rejected biological evolution.) Similarly, the object of the *Phenomenology* is not to present a history of mind, but a "natural history" of its fundamental forms in their logical relationship.

As is often pointed out by confused readers, however, Hegel covers much the same ground again in the *Philosophy of Spirit* (which even includes a section titled "Phenomenology"). This is true, but the context and purpose of the *Philosophy of Spirit* are completely different from those of the *Phenomenology*. The *Phenomenology of Spirit* shows that all forms of consciousness or mind aim at Absolute Knowing. This includes cultural or social forms in which mind "embodies" itself, such as natural science, art, and religion. However, none of these forms actually achieves Absolute Knowing. Hegel's purpose in the *Phenomenology* is to give his readers a total theory of psychology, science, society, culture, and history in terms of their telos, Absolute Knowing. The *Phenomenology* is an Aristotelian Science, understanding all of its objects in terms of their "striving" after the knowledge of God.

The *Phenomenology* merely describes Absolute Knowing; it does not achieve Absolute Knowing itself. This is the task primarily of the *Logic*, for in working out the categories of the *Logic* the self-reflection of Idea is realized. The categories of the *Logic* are never explicitly discussed in the *Phenomenology*, but they are there beneath the surface. The *Logic* is the recollection of the categorical structures underlying Spirit. The *Logic* is the unconscious in-itself of Spirit become for-itself. In the *Philosophy of Nature* we understand nature as an "other" to Idea, striving to express Idea. The *Philosophy of Spirit* repeats much of the ground of the *Phenomenology*, this time in the full context of an understanding of Idea and its imperfect embodiment in nature. Spirit must be covered again, for once we have glimpsed Idea, and understood the antecedents of Spirit in nature, our understanding of Spirit will of necessity be transformed.

The *Phenomenology* shows why every standpoint other than Absolute Knowing is partial or false and must be abandoned. The *Phenomenology* is the tool by which Hegel puts his readers in the "frame of mind" necessary to work through the pure determinations of the Idea in-itself. This is not the purpose of the *Philosophy of Spirit*. But why work through the *Phenomenology* and the rest of the system? Why achieve Absolute Knowing? In effect, I answered this question in the preceding chapter when I

said that Hegelian philosophy will constitute a perfected form of living in the world; in the words of H. S. Harris, "an actual experience of living in the light of the eternal day."⁴ This is the attraction. All philosophy, including Hegel's, presupposes that at least some men yearn to know themselves and the world fully.⁵ Just as the magicians of old—men such as Agrippa and Bruno—believed that knowledge of the right incantations could give one tremendous power, so Hegel believes that knowledge of the "magic words" that evoke the Absolute can empower the individual by reconciling him with the world. Kojève defines the Hegelian wise man as the man of both perfect self-consciousness and perfect self-satisfaction.⁶ Wisdom and self-satisfaction do not consist, however, in ego-aggrandizement, but in the transcendence of ego and identification with Spirit as such. Kojève writes: "For Self-consciousness to exist, for philosophy to exist, there must be transcendence of self with respect to self as given."⁷ H. S. Harris notes that "In [Hegel's] view we have to annihilate our own selfhood in order to enter the sphere where Philosophy herself speaks."⁸ Here again we see a clear affinity with mysticism.

If it is the task of the *Phenomenology* to achieve this transcendence of the self, then the *Phenomenology* begins to look like a mystical initiation. It is a work that "purifies" the reader for the reception of Divine Wisdom. Traditionally, Hermes, the guide of souls, presided over the initiation rites of the mystery religions.⁹ Garth Fowden writes of the Hermetic initiation that "it is not envisaged as a form or symbol, or something that one just reads about, but as a real experience, stretching all the capacities of those who embark upon it: for it is an extremely tortuous way, to abandon what one is used to and possesses now, and to retrace one's steps towards the old primordial things."¹⁰ (Anyone who has ever attempted to read the *Phenomenology* knows how it can stretch all of one's capacities and be a "tortuous way," indeed, a highway of despair!)

Fowden writes in the same context that "the [Hermetic] initiation falls into two phases, the former emphasizing self-knowledge, the latter knowledge of God."¹¹ Again, there is an interesting parallel to Hegelian philosophy. The *Phenomenology* can be thought of as a voyage of self-discovery, whereas the rest of the system (also a tortuous way) is a dis-

3. H. S. Harris, *Night Thoughts*, 199.

4. "Hegelian Wisdom is a necessary ideal only for a definite type of human being, namely, for the man who puts the supreme value in Self-consciousness; and only this man can realize this ideal. . . . In other words: the Platonic-Hegelian ideal of Wisdom is valid only for the Philosopher" (Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, 84).

5. Ibid., 76–77. Kojève's third definition is that the wise man is the "morally perfect man" (Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, 78).

6. Ibid., 39.

7. Harris, *Night Thoughts*, 51.

8. Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1968), 73.

9. Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 106. Fowden is quoting *Corpus Hermeticum*, treatise iv § 9.

10. Ibid.

2. Hegel writes in the preface: "It is this coming-to-be of Science as such or of knowledge that is described in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*" (Miller, 15; pg. 21).

covery of the Absolute or God. Of course, as I have already indicated, the entire Hegelian philosophy is both a knowledge of the Whole and of the self. In a discussion of Oriental mysteries that is applicable to the Hermetic tradition, Joseph Campbell writes: "In the sacred books of the Orient, the ultimate mystery of being is said to be transcendent, in the sense that it 'transcends' . . . human knowledge, thought, sight, and speech. However, since it is explicitly identified with the mystery of our own being, and of all being whatsoever, it is declared to be immanent as well: in fact, that is the main point of most Oriental, as well as of most pagan, primitive, and mystical initiations."¹¹

Jacques d'Hondt and others have claimed that the *Phenomenology's* "initiation" was inspired by the Masons. John Burbidge writes that the *Phenomenology*, "with its lengthy and arduous process of initiation, came at a time when Hegel was frequenting the company of known Masons, some of them graduates of the banned *Illuminati*."¹² K. J. H. Windischmann, a Mason discussed in the last chapter, took the *Phenomenology* of Spirit as a Masonic manifesto in the tradition of Lessing. He refers to this elliptically in an 1810 letter to Hegel: "The study of your system of Science has convinced me that this work will some day, when the time of understanding arrives, become the primer [*Elementarbuch*] of the liberation of mankind, as foretold by Lessing. You understand, of course, what I am trying to say, and you also recognize what this work is to me (what merely as *writing* [*Schrift*], but as *work* [*Werk*])."¹³ It is significant that a Mason—on the basis of a few cues—could so easily take the *Phenomenology* as a Masonic document.¹⁴

In chapter 2, I discussed the Masonic character of Hegel's 1796 poem "Eleusis." Significantly, the *Phenomenology* makes several references to the Eleusinian initiation mysteries. The most famous occurs in the preface: "Appearance is the arising and passing away which itself does not arise or pass away, but is in-itself [*an sich*], and constitutes the actuality and movement of the life of truth. The True is thus the Bacchanalian revel [*bacchantische Tümel*] in which no member is not drunk; yet because each member collapses as soon as he drops out, the revel is just as much transparent and simple repose" (Miller, 27; pg. 35). The Eleusinian mysteries and the cult of Dionysus (Bacchus) were associated with each other starting around the late fifth century and early fourth century.¹⁵ Later in the *Phenomenology*, Hegel refers to the "Eleusinian mysteries of Ceres and Bacchus" (Miller, 65; pg. 77; the poem "Eleusis" also refers to Ceres, or Demeter).

Another allusion to Bacchus/Dionysus appears in the preface in Hegel's discussion of the essential moment of negativity in the path to

Absolute Knowing: "But the life of Spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself in it. It wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment, it finds itself" (Miller, 19; pg. 26). Like the Egyptian Osiris, Dionysus was, of course, torn to pieces and then resurrected. To a Mason, these lines would have been highly significant. The central legend in Masonry is that of Hiram, the master builder, who was murdered, buried, resurrected, dismembered, put together again, and then reburied. Each Master Mason is supposed to identify himself in his initiation with Hiram. As Alexander Piatigorsky writes, "All Master Masons are raised from a Figurative Death."¹⁶ What dies in them is ignorance. They are "torn apart" and then led to enlightenment. "The candidate moves from total ignorance to the knowledge of the Word, or from the total darkness to the light which would enable him to 'leave the death.'"¹⁷

In Bruno, Schelling has "Anselm" remark that in the Eleusinian rites, "men first learned that there is something unchanging, uniform, and indivisible beyond the things that ceaselessly change and slide from shape to shape."¹⁸ Anselm then invites Bruno to describe the kind of philosophy imparted by the mysteries. Hegel accepts Schelling's description of the mysteries completely. In the *Phenomenology*, he writes that

we can tell those who assert the truth and certainty of the reality of sense-objects that they should go back to the most elementary school of wisdom, viz. the ancient Eleusinian mysteries of Ceres and Bacchus, and that they have still to learn the secret meaning of the eating of bread and the drinking of wine. For he who is initiated into these Mysteries not only comes to doubt the being of sensuous things, but to despair of it; in part he brings about the nothingness of such things himself in his dealings with them, and in part he sees them reduce themselves to nothingness. (Miller, 65; pg. 77)

Schelling remarks that the purpose of "all the mystery rites is none other than to show men the archetypes of all that they are accustomed to seeing in images."¹⁹ Hegel's *Phenomenology* is an initiation into the knowledge of those "archetypes" (the categories of the *Logic*) via a transcendence of the understanding, with its penchant for the particular and for the image.

Martin P. Nilsson writes that the Eleusinian rites consisted "in the seeing by the mystae of something which was shown to them."²⁰ The

16. Alexander Piatigorsky, *Who's Afraid of Freemasons? The Phenomenon of Freemasonry* (London: The Harvill Press, 1997), 376.

17. *Ibid.*, 273. Italics in original.

18. F. W. J. Schelling, *Bruno: Or on the Natural and Divine Principle of Things*, in *Werke*, 3:233 (pagination corresponds to *Sämtliche Werke*). English translation: Michael G. Vater (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 134.

19. *Ibid.*, 233: 134.

20. Nilsson, *Greek Folk Religion*, 43.

11. Joseph Campbell, *The Masks of God*, vol. 3, *Occidental Mythology* (New York: Penguin Books, 1964), 109.

12. See Burbidge's introduction to D'Hondt's *Hegel in his Time*, xi.

13. April 27, 1810; Hoffmeister #155.

14. D'Hondt, *Hegel Secret*, 299–300.

15. Martin P. Nilsson, *Greek Folk Religion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), 48.

Phenomenology is just such a showing. It is a "gallery of images" (Miller, 492; *PG*, 530).²¹ It is the self-display of the phenomena of Spirit. (Heidegger writes: "*phainomenon* [in Greek] means that which shows itself, the manifest."²²)

2. Hermetic influences

a) Jena

The *Phenomenology of Spirit* was conceived and written in Jena, where Hegel lived for about six years. We know that during this period Hegel was actively interested in theosophy, a holdover from his time in Frankfurt (see chapter 3). It is likely that both the Triangle fragment and diagram date from the Jena period, though the diagram may have been drawn just prior.

Hegel's lectures on the Philosophy of Nature during this time reflect an ongoing interest in alchemy. In the lectures of 1803 the division "metals-combustibles-neutrals-earths" is connected with Paracelsus's distinction "mercury-sulphur-salt."²³ To repeat H. S. Harris's observation, this reflects Hegel's peculiar insistence on "finding an earlier pedigree [for his observations] . . . in Paracelsus and Böhme."²⁴ Hegel also speaks of the "virgin earth," an old alchemical conception, possibly originating with Böhme, which we first encountered in chapter 2 in connection with Goethe's alchemical experiments. The 1803 lectures also contain discussions of "noble" and "base" metals, as well as a hierarchical structure of metals (though Hegel is somewhat sceptical of the latter).²⁵ As noted in the preceding chapter, Hegel sometimes referred ideas to "the elders" whom Harris takes to be "the alchemists."²⁶

It was in Jena as well that Hegel became deeply immersed in Böhme. H. S. Harris is "inclined to believe in Böhme's influence upon Hegel from 1801 onwards."²⁷ Harris contends that Hegel initially viewed Böhme with uncritical enthusiasm. In 1804–5, however, Hegel gained some critical distance, while remaining sympathetic. Recall that Hegel's account of Böhme in his 1805 *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* is strikingly detailed and positive.²⁸

Hegel's interest in, and sympathy for, Böhme must have been widely known. In 1811, one of Hegel's former Jena students, Peter Gabriel van

21. In the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Hegel declares that the idea that the mysteries imparted a special wisdom is "stupid" and "absurd" (*LPR* 2181–82; *VPR* 2187–88). Eleusis was significant for Hegel as a symbol, but he did not believe that the true and final philosophy was taught there.

22. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 51.

23. Harris, *Night Thoughts*, 274; *Differenz*, II, 4–17. Harris also notes that in the same manuscript Hegel links his use of "earth" with Böhme.

24. *Ibid.*, 274.

25. *Ibid.*, 274, n.

26. *Ibid.*, 85; as Harris notes there are indications of Böhme's influence in the manuscripts of 1801–3 (161).

27. *LPR* 31288; not present in *Werke*, see *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 19, ed. Hermann Glockner (Stuttgart: Frommann, 1928), 377.

Ghert (1782–1852), a Dutchman, sent him Böhme's collected works as a gift. Van Ghert would not have done this unless it was plain to those who knew Hegel in Jena how important Böhme was to him. Hegel thanked van Ghert in a letter of July 29, 1811: "Now I can study Jakob Böhme much more closely than before, since I was not myself in possession of his writings. His theosophy will always be one of the most remarkable attempts of a penetrating yet uncultivated man to comprehend the innermost essential nature of the absolute being. For Germany, he has the special interest of being really the first German philosopher."²⁹ This shows not only that Hegel intended to continue his study of Böhme, but also that he regarded Böhme as a genuine philosopher.

Hegel writes further in the same letter that Böhme's endeavor "constitutes the most arduous struggle both to bring the deep speculative [content], which he holds in his intuition, into representation and so to master the element of representational [thinking] in order that the speculative content might be expressed in it."³⁰ Certainly, Böhme's thought is paradigmatic "picture-thinking," but given the limits of his medium his thought comes amazingly close, in this inadequate form, to capturing the Concept. Furthermore, Hegel thinks that Böhme realized this inadequacy and struggled against it. Hegel continues: "There remains so little that is constant and fixed in his work, because he feels everywhere the inadequacy of representation to what he is trying to achieve, and feels representation again overturned."³¹

Hegel's social contacts in Jena must have encouraged his enthusiasm for Böhme and theosophy in general. David Walsh writes that Jena in Hegel's day

had become the focal point of the German Romantic movement, and many of its greatest figures were assembled there, including Tieck, Novalis, Schelling, F. Schlegel, and A. W. Schlegel. Within that company an intense center of interest was formed by their rediscovery of the German mystical tradition. For the first time the works of the great medieval and Reformation mystics were becoming widely available within their native land. The appearance of Eckhart and Böhme in particular was heralded as a liberating release from the deadness of Enlightenment rationalism. They read, too, the major eighteenth-century commentators of Böhme . . . and the Swabian Pietist theologian Friedrich Christoph Oetinger, in whom they found a more contemporary application of the great mystical insights of the past.³²

Novalis immersed himself in the study of Böhme during the winter of 1799–1800. He came to espouse the Paracelsian view that man is

29. Butler, 573; Hoffmeister #192. The fact that Hegel did not own Böhme's works in Jena should not suggest half-hearted interest in them. It was difficult in those days for a young associate professor, with an annual salary of only 100 thalers, to afford a well-stocked library.

30. Butler, 573–74.

31. *Ibid.*, 574.

32. David Walsh, "The Historical Dialectic of Spirit," 22–23.

charged with the task of redeeming nature and spoke of a "magic idealism." Friedrich Schlegel called Böhme's work "the greatest, most profound, most individual, most admirable work of idealism."³³ He believed he saw a correspondence between Böhme's thought and Fichte's. Paola Mayer conjectures that Böhme was probably read aloud at meetings of the Jena circle in 1799–1800.³⁴

Schelling was, of course, an enthusiastic reader of Böhme and Oetinger and likely encouraged Hegel's interest in theosophy. In speaking about his time in Jena, Ludwig Tieck (1773–1853) reported that he found Schelling very receptive to Böhme's theosophy.³⁵ Tieck had left Jena by the time Hegel arrived there, but Hegel was unquestionably familiar with his work. The "Force and the Understanding" section of the *Phenomenology* includes a discussion of what Hegel calls "the topsy-turvy world," *die verkehrte Welt*, the title of a play Tieck published in 1799.³⁶ The first reference to Böhme by a member of the Jena circle occurs in a letter from Schlegel to Novalis, dated December 2, 1798, in which Schlegel mentions that Tieck has been studying Böhme. One of Tieck's biographers states, "None of his works written between 1799 and 1801 is free of Böhme."³⁷ It was Tieck who introduced Novalis to Böhme. In commemoration of this, Novalis later wrote his poem "An Tieck," in which he called Tieck "der Verkündiger der Morgenröte" ("Herald of Morning Glow").³⁸ In Munich in 1804, Tieck established a close relationship with Franz von Baader.

b) The Hermetic Subtext to Hegel's Preface

What we know about the intellectual milieu of Jena can shed a great deal of light on some of the mysteries surrounding the composition of the *Phenomenology*. It is often difficult for interpreters to understand who Hegel is attacking in the *Phenomenology*—especially in the preface—and why he describes his own project in the peculiar way that he does. I have already suggested "initiation" as one possible framework for understanding the project of the *Phenomenology*. I wish now to suggest something even more radical: the background against which we must understand Hegel's programmatic remarks in the preface is his own critical appreciation of Hermetic theosophy.

Hegel's attitude toward the Hermeticism of Böhme and others is sim-

ilar to his attitude toward mainstream religion: he believes that it approaches the truth very closely, but is hindered by its "sensuous" mode of expression. Hegel opposes the school of Romantic intuitionism, often inspired by Hermeticism, which believes that truth is to be felt or intuited. Hegel makes his feeling about the Romantics very plain early on in the preface: "Such minds, when they give themselves up to the untrolled ferment of [the divine] substance, imagine that, by drawing a veil over self-consciousness and surrendering understanding they become the beloved of God to whom He gives His wisdom in sleep; and hence what they in fact receive, and bring forth to birth in their sleep, is nothing but dreams" (Miller, 6; PG, 9).

Just a few passages later occurs the famous paragraph in which Hegel attacks a certain conception of the Absolute as "the night in which . . . all cows are black" (Miller, 9; PG, 13). Commentators usually take this as a reference to Schelling. Indeed, in a letter to Schelling of May 1, 1807, Hegel seems to try to "soften the blow" of the preface, which was about to be printed. He writes that "In the Preface you will not find that I have been too hard on the shallowness that makes so much mischief with your forms in particular and degrades your science into mere formalism."³⁹ But there is more than one passage in the preface that can be taken as addressing itself to Schelling or his followers.

Let us look more closely, then, at the passage in question. A few lines up from the "cows" simile we read the following: "Dealing with something from the perspective of the Absolute [according to Hegel's opponents] consists merely in declaring that, although one has been speaking of it just now as something definite, yet in the Absolute, the A = A, there is nothing of the kind, for therein all is one" (Miller, 9; PG, 13). To be sure, this sounds like a criticism of Schelling's view of the Absolute as the "indifference point" (the language of "A = A" was used by Schelling, who appropriated it from Fichte). However, it sounds even more like the mystical doctrine of the "coincidence of opposites," found in Cusa and others.⁴⁰ Further, Hegel uses the phrase "therein all is one" (*darin sei alles Eins*). Writing this, how could Hegel not have recalled the youthful motto he shared with Schelling and Hölderlin: *hen kai pan*? In his preface to the second edition (1827) of the *Encyclopedia Logic*, Hegel equates the philosophy of *alles eins*, "All is one" with the "Identity-System" (German: *Werke* 8:18). Furthermore, in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* of 1827, Hegel entertains the suggestion that the Identity philosophy of Schelling is equivalent to pantheism (LPR 1:374–75; VPR 1:272).

The passage from the *Phenomenology* continues: "To pit this single

39. Butler, 80; Hoffmeister #95.

40. Klaus Düsing argues that this doctrine was transmitted to Schelling via Jacob's *Über die Lehre des Spinoza*. Jacobi printed extracts from Bruno's *De la Causa* as an appendix to his book, in which Bruno repeats arguments from Cusa. See Klaus Düsing, "Absolut Identität und Formen der Endlichkeit: Interpretationen zu Schellings und Hegels erster absoluter Metaphysik," in Schellings und Hegels erste absolute Metaphysik (1801–1802), ed. Klaus Düsing (Köln: Jürgen Dinter, 1988), 114, 151.

33. Quoted in Paola Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jacob Böhme* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), 140.

34. Ibid., 182.

35. Edwin H. Zeydel, *Ludwig Tieck, the German Romanticist: A Critical Study* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1935), 130.

36. Donald Phillip Verene was the first commentator to point out the possible connection between Hegel's "verkehrte Welt" and Tieck's (Verene, *Hegel's Recollection*, 39–48).

37. Roger Paulin, *Ludwig Tieck: A Literary Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 100. Paola Mayer has recently challenged this assessment of Böhme's influence on Tieck and the other Romantics. See Mayer, *Jena Romanticism*.

38. Zeydel, *Ludwig Tieck*, 127.

insight, that in the Absolute everything is the same, against the full body of articulated cognition, which at least seeks and demands such fulfillment, to palm off its Absolute as the night in which, as the saying goes, all cows are black—this is cognition naively reduced to vacuity.⁴¹ Hegel is attacking Schelling here, but he is attacking Schelling as the latest exponent of a type of mysticism which he believes is inadequate: a mysticism that stops short in the face of contradiction and declares that God is inconceivable.⁴² (Hegel, of course, was well aware of Schelling's ties to mysticism and theosophy, and Schelling's willingness to publicly ally himself with these currents.)

In effect, Hegel rejects this kind of mysticism in favor of the theosophy of Böhme. Consider Hegel's remarks about Spinoza's pantheism in his lectures of 1805: "His [Spinoza's] philosophy is only fixed substance, not yet Spirit; in it we do not confront ourselves. God is not Spirit here because he is not the triune. Substance remains rigid and petrified, without Böhme's sources [Quellen]. The particular determinations in the form of thought-determinations are not Böhme's source-spirits which work and unfold in one another."⁴³ Hegel accepts the Schellingian doctrine of the Absolute as the Whole that transcends the distinction between subject and object. He merely contends that without a developmental account of how this Absolute becomes actual—which constitutes, at the same time, a description of its internal moments—"the Absolute" is merely an empty phrase. As far as Hegel and his contemporaries knew, this "developmental" approach was Böhme's innovation—and it is, of course, precisely the respect in which Böhme's brand of "mysticism" is different from that of Cusa, Eckhart, and others.

A couple of paragraphs later in the preface Hegel speaks of Substance becoming Subject, claiming that the Absolute is "the process of its own becoming, the circle that presupposes its end as its goal, having its end also as its beginning; and only by being worked out to its end, is it actual" (Miller, 10; PG, 14). Hegel, in the next passage, then immediately makes the quasi-mystical observation that "the life of God and divine cognition may well be spoken of as a disporting of Love with itself; but this idea sinks into mere edification, and even insipidity, if it lacks the seriousness, the suffering, the patience, and the labour of the negative" (Miller, 10; PG, 4–15). Hegel is saying that thinking which draws inspiration from such mystical metaphors is fine, and much can be learned from it; but it is empty unless supplemented by the careful, painstaking working out of the moments of the "life of God." Hegel ends this passage with the admonition that the Absolute must be conceived in "the whole

wealth of the developed form. Only then is it conceived and expressed as an actuality" (Miller, 11; PG, 15).

The next paragraph provides the key that explains all. It begins: "The true is the whole" (*Das Wahre ist das Ganze*). Recall that Oetinger, developing the ideas of Böhme, held that "The truth is a whole [Die Wahrheit ist ein Ganzes]; when one finally receives this total, synoptic vision of the truth, it matters not whether one begins by considering this part or that."⁴⁴ Oetinger also sometimes spoke of his *Ganze* as equivalent to *Geist* and treated it as an *intensum*: a thing that cannot be divided into literal pieces, only into noetic moments. In an *intensum* such as *Geist*, the whole is immanent in every part. It is this immanence that enables us to progress from one moment to another in the gradual articulation of the whole.⁴⁵ As noted in chapter 2, the theme of the truth as a whole (or the whole) is a perennial theme of Swabian speculative Pietism.⁴⁶

Considering the context of Hegel's "True is the whole" passage—his response to Schelling and to the mystics of the *coincidentia oppositorum* school—it seems that Hegel is rebuking his fellow Swabian by deliberately invoking the authority of Oetinger and Württemberg theosophy. He is *exhorting* Schelling to become *more Böhmean*.⁴⁷ Coupling this with Hegel's approving attitude toward Böhme, we can see that there is a hidden subtext to the preface. Although nothing in it is completely transparent, the surface of the preface involves Hegel opposing himself to all previous philosophy (as, for instance, in his odd critique of philosophical prefaces). The subtext, however, involves a response to all previous mysticism as well.

The reasons why such material would be consigned to the "esoteric" dimension of the text should be clear. We have seen that intolerance against admirers of Oetinger existed in Hegel's time. Also, it must be kept in mind that the *Phenomenology* belongs, in truth, to an older tradition of literary work in which reference to one's predecessors was largely indirect.

Just as Hegel wants philosophers to "lay aside the title 'love of knowing [Wissen],'" and achieve actual knowing, so he wants to raise "mysticism" to the level of *theosophy*, to knowing the wisdom of God. Mysticism is inadequate because it lets mystery remain. Like Aristotle, Hegel wants to remove wonder; he wants to penetrate into the Absolute and let the light of truth shine where before there was darkness, absence, hiddenness. None of this is inconsistent with Hegel's critique of Böhmean-style theosophy. Hegel sees religion in all its forms, and particularly Christianity, as a sort of halfway house to Absolute Knowing, and

41. Miller, 9; PG, 13.

42. In the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* of 1827, Hegel states that "a mystery is called inconceivable, but what appears inconceivable is precisely the Concept itself, the speculative element or the fact that the rational is thought. . . . Now when the Understanding comes to this point it says, 'this is a contradiction,' and stands still at this point. . . . Thus the nature of God is inconceivable [for it]" (LPR 3282–83; WPA 3207–8).

43. LHP 3288; not present in *Werke*, see *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 19, ed. Hermann Glockner (Stuttgart: Frommann, 1928), 377.

44. F. C. Oetinger, *Sämtliche Schriften*, vol. 5, ed. Karl Chr. Eberh. Ehmann (Stuttgart, 1858–64), 45.

45. Schneider, *Geistessehen*, 114.

46. *Ibid.*, 56.

47. Böhme's *Unground*, though itself indeterminate, is supposed to contain all determinations. This sounds, of course, rather like Schelling's "indifference point," which could be the reason why Hegel never mentions Böhme's *Unground*, apparently considering it a dispensable part of Böhme's philosophy.

his own philosophy is animated by religious categories and symbolic forms.

In effect, Hegel is saying that mysticism (including Schellingian "philosophical mysticism") is a clue to the nature of the Absolute. In its highest form, Böhmean-Oetingerite theosophy, mysticism comes strikingly close to the philosophical grasp of the Absolute. In a gesture of philosophical syncretism, Hegel opens the doors of his temple of Absolute Spirit to the Böhmean theosophists, saying, "Your God is my God, but if you wish to go a further step and truly know God, you must submit yourselves to the seriousness, the suffering, the patience, and the labour of my initiation." (We shall shortly see this demonstrated even more clearly in the *Phenomenology's* account of "revealed religion"—Christianity—which is strikingly Böhmean.)

If it seems implausible that Hegel would so closely identify his own philosophical approach with any sort of mysticism at all—consider again the following lines from one of the *Zusätze* to the *Encyclopedia Logic*: "It should . . . be mentioned here that the meaning of the speculative is to be understood as being the same as what used in earlier times to be called 'mystical.'" (EL § 82, Z; Geraets, 133).

c) Böhmean Elements in the *Phenomenology*

David Walsh has argued that Hegel's use in the *Phenomenology* of such terms as *element*, *aether*, *light*, *expansion*, and *contraction* has its roots in his acquaintance with the Böhmean-Oetingerite tradition, as well as with Paracelsus.⁴⁸ (I will discuss Hegel's concept of *aether* much more extensively in chapter 6.) It is in Hegel's section on "Self-Consciousness," however, that the influence of Böhme becomes evident in its most substantive form. In the spirit of the *Hermetica*, Böhme recognized that selfhood develops in opposition to the not-self. (Fichte and Hegel are merely Böhme's followers in this regard, as are Sartre, Piaget, and others.) But Böhme even had the audacity to claim that this must apply to God as well.⁴⁹ In his remarks in the *Lectures* of 1805, Hegel includes the following quote from Böhme: "Nothing can be revealed to itself without opposition [*Widerwärtigkeit*]; For if there is nothing that opposes it, then it always goes out of itself and never returns to itself again. If it does not return into itself, as into that from which it originated, then it knows nothing of its origin."⁵⁰

Hegel's account of selfhood involves the claim that at some level the self relates to its other by willing its *cancellation*. At the root of all the forms of Spirit that unfold in the *Phenomenology* is a primal, demonic

drive for complete possession or mastery of the object, for, in effect, the annihilation of otherness. By implication, this drive is simultaneously a will to remove the divide between subject and object, for by canceling "otherness" it seeks to exalt the self (this implication is crucial for understanding the section on "Self-Consciousness"). This drive, this complete and utter negativity that ultimately issues in a complete and exalted positivity, also has its equivalent in Böhme—but in order to fully explain this I must elaborate further on the nature of this negativity and how it operates in the *Phenomenology*.

In discussing this "primal drive" to annul otherness—which is exhibited at all levels of Spirit—Hegel speaks again of the Eleusinian mysteries, in a passage I have quoted earlier. He writes of how the mysteries cause one to "doubt the being of sensuous things" (Miller, 65; PG, 77). By this, he does not mean what modern philosophers mean when they speak of doubting the "external world." A world of sensible objects really is "out there," but metaphysically speaking, it is made *insubstantial* by the activity of the subject. The aggrandizement of the subject = the "withdrawal" of substance from the world and "into" the subject. The subject becomes substance—that which persists, the unmoving pivot around which the world of objects is set awheel as it is conquered and transformed according to the plans and desires of the subject. When Hegel says that the initiate "brings about" the nihilation of sensible things himself he is stating the principle of his *Idealism*: it is the vocation of mankind, or Spirit, to transform the given world, to make it conform to Idea, to remove the distinction between real and ideal, subject and object.

"Transformation" can mean two things. It can be a literal, noticeable change, whether of trees into dwellings or of children into educated men, or it can be a transformation of the unknown into the known, the grasped. In both cases what is involved is the annihilation of the *resistance* of things, an annihilation of their otherness, their hiddenness. The first sense of transformation is only an approximation to the true unity of subject and object, ideal and real—which is achieved only through the full development of the second kind of transformation: the total, thoughtful grasp of the Whole through a system of Science. For Hegel, it is not enough for Spirit to change the world; it must interpret it. It is ultimately through this urge to cancel or "master" otherness that the true individual, true substance, true self, and true God are simultaneously actualized.

In the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* of 1827, Hegel states, "Ideality means that this being [that is] external (i.e., its spatiality, temporality, materiality, and mutual externality) is sublated. Inasmuch as I know this being, its contents are not represented things, being outside one another; rather they are within me in a simple manner. Though a tree has many parts, it nevertheless is merely simple in my representation. Spirit is knowledge. For it to be knowledge, the content of what it knows must have attained this ideal form, it must have been negated in this manner" (LPR 1:184; VPR 1:92). In the *Encyclopedia Logic*, Hegel

48. Walsh, "The Historical Dialectic of Spirit," 28.

49. David Walsh writes that "At the core of his construction was Böhme's discovery that conflict and opposition were necessary to the self-revelation of God. It was an extrapolation from what is required for the self-realization of man to what is required for the self-realization of God" ("A Mythology of Reason," 153).

50. See Jakob Böhme, *Der Weg zu Christo*, Sixth Book, "Von Göttlicher Beschaulichkeit," in *Sämtliche Schriften*, vol. 4, chap. 1, § 8. Hegel quotes this passage in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* 3:203; *Werke* 20:106.

states that "In cognition what has to be done is all a matter of stripping away the alien character of the objective world that confronts us" (EL § 194 Z-1; Geraets, 273). In the *Philosophy of Spirit* Hegel writes: "All the activities of Spirit are nothing but the various modes in which that which is external is led back into the internality, to what is Spirit itself; and it is only by means of this leading back, this idealizing or assimilation of that which is external, that Spirit becomes and is Spirit" (PS § 381, Z; Petry 1:37). "All the activities of Spirit"—all modes of consciousness—Hegel says, are forms in which we strive to overcome otherness.⁵¹

Furthermore, freedom is only possible through overcoming otherness. "Freedom," Hegel states, "is only present where there is no other for me that is not myself" (EL § 24 Z-2; Geraets, 58). Elsewhere, he writes that "A freedom for which something is genuinely external and alien is no freedom at all; freedom's essence and its formal definition is that nothing is absolutely external."⁵² As I have said, Spirit's triumph over the other is only fully actualized in Science. Hegel states that "the purpose of all true science is just this, that Spirit shall recognize itself in everything in heaven and on earth" (PS § 377, Z; Petry 1:5). At the very end of the *Philosophy of Nature*, Hegel remarks that Spirit "wants to liberate itself by fashioning nature from within itself; this action of Spirit is called philosophy. . . . The aim of these lectures is to convey an image of nature, in order to subdue this Proteus: to find in this externality only the mirror of ourselves, to see in nature a free reflection of Spirit" (PN § 376 Z; Petry 3:213). "Spirit [when contemplating nature] has the certainty which Adam had when he beheld Eve, 'This is flesh of my flesh, this is bone of my bone'" (PN § 247 Z; Petry 1:204).

The will to overcome otherness is seen in all of nature. Faced with the opposition of the external world the animal gobbles it up.⁵³ The difference between man and animal, however, is that man can "master" nature and "absorb" the external without literally annihilating it. In his early *Philosophy of Nature* of 1805–6, Hegel writes, "eating and drinking make inorganic things into what they are in themselves, in truth, it is the unconscious comprehending of them—they become thus sublated thereby, because they are in themselves [this fire essence]."⁵⁴ Eating and drinking annihilate sensible things and reduce them to their elements, to what they are "in-themselves." Thus, eating and drinking prefigure Science,

the true "reduction" of things to their essence, which is their relationship to the Absolute.⁵⁵

"Sense-Certainty"—the initial division of the *Phenomenology*—is the most basic, primitive form in which the urge to cancel or master the other manifests itself in consciousness. Spirit in Sense-Certainty believes—tacitly—that the object in its real, concrete particularity can be adequately "grasped" through bare sensory experience alone. In short, Sense-Certainty believes that intuition can make the object fully present, fully transparent in its concreteness, and thus no longer "other." Sense-Certainty thinks it can grasp the singularity of the object as a "this," in its pure immediacy. But, Hegel writes, "An actual sense-certainty is not merely this pure immediacy, but an instance of it" (Miller, 59; PG, 70). In other words, the gesture or the "this" through which we think we can grasp and thus "master" the particularity of the object is really a *universal*, applicable not just to this "this" but to all "thises." Consciousness had wanted to grasp the other in its individuality (which is really the same thing as annihilating the other's individuality) but it eludes our grasp.

We can now already glimpse the end of the Hegelian philosophy in its beginning. In Absolute Knowing the drive to totally grasp the object, and to annul the subject-object distinction, will be realized. Absolute Knowing will be the total grasp of an individual in its uniqueness. In fact, it will be the total grasp of the only true, unique individual there is: the Absolute—again, the analog to Aristotelian *ousia* is very clear.⁵⁶ However, in Hegel's thought substance has become subject: "what seems to happen outside of [the self], to be an activity directed against it, is really its own doing, and Substance shows itself to be essentially Subject" (Miller, 21; PG, 28). Knowledge of this individual is simultaneously self-knowledge. Otherness still exists, but it is now understood in terms of its place within the Whole, which is the Absolute = Substance = Subject. Substantive otherness, however, has passed away, because what is substantive has become subjective. In short, Absolute Knowing achieves exactly what is desired, covertly, by Sense-Certainty (and the other forms of Spirit).

In introducing "Self-Consciousness," Hegel introduces the term *Desire* (*Begierde*) to describe the primal urge for the cancellation of otherness and the individuation-absolutization of subject.⁵⁷ But Spirit is not just

55. Also in the 1805–6 *Philosophy of Nature*, Hegel states that "The animal organism creates its own internal environment. . . . [The] animal organism feeds all its other functions—all the functions of its 'inner organism'—upon the energy produced by its nutritive system" (quoted in Harris, *Night Thoughts*, 448). Again, there is a close analogy here between the system of Science and the "internal environment" of the animal. Science comprehends ("digests") things by locating them in the system of Science, which is conceived by Hegel as an organic unity.

56. The Absolute is the individual, which subsumes universals as its particular manifestations. See Richard Dien Winfield, "On Individuality," in *Freedom and Modernity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991).

57. Kojève asks, what is Desire but the will to "transform the contemplated thing by an action, to overcome it in its being that is unrelated to mine and independent of me, to negate it in its independence, and to assimilate it to

51. "An out-and-out other simply does not exist for Spirit" (PS § 377 Z; Petry 1:5).

52. Hegel, *Naturrecht*, in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 4, ed. Harmut Buchner and Otto Pöggeler (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1968), 446.

53. For a treatment similar to that of the *Phenomenology*, see the *Philosophy of Spirit*, 381 Z; Petry 1:13; also see *Philosophy of Nature*, 357 Z; Petry 3:136: "The organism must . . . posit the subjectivity of externality, appropriate it, and identify it with its own self; this constitutes assimilation." And *Philosophy of Nature*, 359 Z; Petry 3:144: "Animal appetite is the idealism of objectivity, whereby this objectivity loses its alien character."

54. Quoted in Harris, *Night Thoughts*, 448. Harris writes that animal nutrition is "the self-intro-reflection of the inorganic."

this desire to absolutize itself. All human desires aim at the same telos, from the base desire simply to negate and destroy otherness, to the more sophisticated forms of "negating" otherness through transformation. This telos is *self-consciousness* (which is not just the topic of this one section, but of the entire work).⁵⁸ Hegel shows that when the subject transforms objects according to its will, or rages at and destroys that which resists its desires, it is really being moved by the desire to confront itself. The desire of the subject to annul the other and absolutize itself is just the same thing as the desire to be confronted by the self *and no other*. But as Böhme said, "No thing can be revealed to itself without opposition." This means that if the goal of consciousness is self-knowledge, it cannot achieve this by annihilating all objectivity, but only by making objectivity reflective, by transforming objects into a mirror of consciousness.

This entire account of the positive role of destructive Desire in the ultimate realization of the self and of the Absolute is Böhmean. For Böhme, what Hegel calls Desire—the urge to annihilate the other and absolutize self—is Evil. Since a true human self is possible only through interaction with otherness, the "self" that this nihilating impulse creates, if left to its own devices, does not raise itself above the animalistic concerns of pleasure, comfort, and satisfaction. This is the "criminal type," the man who stands in opposition to all else, "looking out for number one."⁵⁹ The paradox of this "selfishness" is that it involves no real self at all. Böhme designates this way of being as "the Sour"—an indrawing, a pulling away, a shutting off and negation of all else. He regards it as a necessary moment of the being of God and all creation.⁶⁰ Hegel writes of this doctrine that "Böhme has really here penetrated into the utmost depths of divine essence; evil, matter, or whatever it has been called, is the I = I, the Being-for-self, the true negativity" (LHP 3:206; *Werke* 20:109). Everything good that subsequently comes to be, is only through having overcome this negative moment.

Böhme's position is Hegel's. This negativity in human nature is a "tool" used by the Cunning of Reason to actualize all that is good: religion, morality, society, justice, and ultimately God Himself. This is

myself, to make it mine, to absorb it in and by my I?" (Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, 37–38).

58. Hegel, like Böhme, regards self-knowledge not simply as what *ought* to be achieved, but rather as what all men (and reality itself) are directed toward by a primal will.

59. Just before the "Böhme myth" in the *Phenomenology* (see below), Hegel writes: "Evil [Böse] appears as the primary existence of the inwardly-turned consciousness . . ." (Miller, 468; pg. 504). Hegel writes in the *Philosophy of Spirit* that "evil is nothing else than Spirit which puts its separate individuality before all else" (pg. § 382 Z; Petry 1:51).

60. Speaking of Hegel's account of plant life in the 1805–6 *Philosophy of Nature*, H. S. Harris writes, "Every part of life as the plant displays it for us, is a satanic urge to be the whole kind 'for itself' or on its own account. We have to conceive of life as an absolute tension of imperialism and anarchy in order to comprehend what its most elementary form . . . can do and will do, once planted in the earth" (*Night Thoughts*, 447).

Hegel's transformation of the Christian doctrine of Original Sin. Hegel holds that Spirit is by nature evil. But this evil can be utilized in such a way that it brings good into the world. Robert Schneider states that Oetinger, like Hegel, sees knowledge as developing through the negative force of Desire (*Begierde*). He writes that "the stuff of Concrete Spirit begins in Hegel as in Oetinger with drive [*Trieb*] and Desire [*Begierde*]."⁶¹ During 1804–5, Hegel wrote out and then criticized a "myth" concerning the fall of Lucifer. Hegel portrays nature in its separation from God as evil. He writes,

God, having turned toward nature and expressed Himself in the pomp and dull repetition of its forms, became aware of His expansion . . . and became angry over it. Wrath [*Zorn*] is this formation, this contraction into an empty point. He finds Himself in this way, with His being poured out into the unending, restless infinity, where there is no present but an empty transcendence of limit, which always remains even as it is transcended.⁶²

God's "Wrath" here invites comparison, of course, to Böhme's "sour" (*Herb*), though the parallel is not exact. In his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel employs the term *Zorn* to speak of Böhme's theosophy, identifying the "first *Principium*" of Böhme's thought with *Gott in Zorn* (LHP 3:192; *Werke* 20:95).⁶³

Hegel continues: "The anger of God, here fixed outside Himself in His otherness, the fallen Lucifer, rose up against God and his beauty made him arrogant. Nature, through consciousness of its own form, brought it to completion and flattered itself over it."⁶⁴ God's wrath, then, according to Hegel, becomes the spirit of Lucifer, who is at home with the finite and ephemeral. Again, there is a clear parallel to Böhme's idea that evil or the demonic is a moment of God, a moment "broken off" from the divine life. This is exactly what human Spirit is, before its consummation: a moment broken off from the whole. Self-consciousness "is wrath itself, the ignition [*Entzündung*], of wrath within it which burns itself out and consumes its arrogant pomp."⁶⁵

However, as one might expect, through the finite realm of nature Spirit rises up and can transcend this evil. It does so in this "myth" through understanding and making peace with its own finitude. Hegel writes,

The consumed nature rises up in a newer, more ideal form, like a realm of shadows which has lost its first life, the appearance of its spirit after the death of its life. But this new form [Spirit] is the overcoming of the evil, the enduring of the glowing fire [*Glut*] of pain in the center point, where as purified it leaves all the flakes behind in the crucible [*Tiegel*], a residuum, which is the pure nothing.

61. Robert Schneider, *Geistesabwesen*, 126.

62. Johannes Hoffmeister, ed., *Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung* (Stuttgart: Frommann, 1936), 364–65.

63. See also LHP 3:206; *Werke* 20:109.

64. *Dokumente*, 365.

65. *Ibid.*

ing. It raises itself up as a freer spirit, which sees its radiance only in nature.⁶⁶

(Note the use of the alchemical imagery of "purification.")

Hegel then immediately goes on to criticize this account—which he refers to as "the intuitions of Barbarians" (*die Anschauungen der Barbaren*)—because in it Spirit remains unconscious of the fact that it itself is the source of this process of the divine self-alienation and return. Hegel appears to think that this further, higher realization is necessary to "complete" Böhmean theosophy. Despite his objection to the "barbarism" of the Böhmean conception (which is repeated in the 1805 lectures), Hegel is clearly so close in spirit to Böhme that he can generate Böhmean-style "myths" with ease.

Furthermore, much of the language and spirit of Hegel's "Böhme myth" recur in the "Revealed Religion" section of the *Phenomenology*, and there his attitude toward Böhme is more positive.⁶⁷ David Walsh writes that Hegel's account is "from start to finish identical with the theosophic Christianity of Böhme."⁶⁸ In "Revealed Religion" Hegel presents speculative readings of various Christian dogmas. In his treatment of the fall from paradise the Böhme myth reappears. Paradise for Hegel represents the innocence of immersion in "pure immediacy," such as we find in Sense-Certainty. The withdrawal into "thought" is the loss of innocence. Having turned inward, consciousness now represents "Evil." This is Böhme's "Sour." But, Hegel says, "Evil" requires a "Good," and indeed we find that consciousness has split into "Evil" and "Good." (Hegel is not very clear, however, about what moment of consciousness corresponds to the "Good.")

Hegel then states, "It can therefore be said that it is the very first-born Son of Light [Lucifer] himself who fell because he withdrew into himself or became self-centered, but that in his place another was at once created" (Miller, 468; pg, 504). Just as in the "myth" of 1804–5, Hegel immediately distances himself from this way of conceiving things: "Such a form of expression as 'fallen' which, like the expression 'Son,' belongs to representation [*Vorstellen*; 'picture-thinking'] and not to the Concept, reduces [*herabsetzt*] the moments of the Concept to the level of representation, or carries representation over into the realm of thought" (Miller, 468; pg, 504).

Commentators, again, take Hegel as roundly rejecting Böhme here, but he goes on to pay Böhme indirect tribute two paragraphs later. Still speaking of the "myth" of Lucifer, Hegel remarks that picture-thinking cannot conceive of evil, of the negative, as a "moment" of God: "Representation takes the other aspect, evil, to be a happening alien to the divine being; to grasp it in the divine being as the *wrath of God*, this demands from representation, struggling against its limitations, its

66. *Ibid.*

67. The Böhme-Lucifer issue reappears in the *Philosophy of Nature*, 248 Z; Petry 1321. Böhme's Lucifer doctrine, and the "wrath" of God are explicitly discussed in the Böhme chapter of *LHP* 3:205–6; *Werke* 20:108–10.

68. Walsh, "The Historical Dialectic of Spirit," 28.

supreme and most strenuous effort, an effort which, since it lacks the Concept, remains fruitless" (Miller, 470; pg, 506). Böhme, of course, saw evil as a moment of God, and Hegel knew this. Though Böhme's thought could not ultimately become Absolute Knowing because of its picture-thinking, it comes as close to Absolute Knowing as picture-thinking can.

d) Alchemical Elements

That Hegel was familiar with alchemy and was ready and willing to employ its "thought patterns" is evident from the "Böhme myth" of 1804–5, which states that Spirit "is the overcoming of the evil, the enduring of the glowing fire [*Glut*] of pain in the center point, where as purified it leaves all the flakes behind in the crucible [*Tiegel*], a residuum, which is the pure nothing. It raises itself up as a freer spirit, which sees its radiance only in nature."⁶⁹ Alchemical metaphors were common in the writings of Württemberg Pietists. August Langen writes that alchemical language constitutes one of the most important sources for Pietist writers.⁷⁰ (I will offer a much more extensive discussion of Hegel's knowledge of, and indebtedness to, alchemy in chapter 6.)

The concept of the negative as a moment in the positive is an old Hermetic theme. In alchemy, making gold involves breaking base metals down into their primal elements and then "raising them up" to the perfected metal-form of gold. Each metal was said to contain a "seed of gold" that could be made to sprout and blossom. At the same time, the alchemist was expected to purify himself, or the process would not work. In this we can see an analogy to the function of the *Phenomenology* itself. In the phenomenological crucible, Spirit is separated from its impurities and, literally, perfected. The "seed" of Absolute Spirit is present in every flawed, imperfect form that Spirit takes. The work of this purification has happened, in part, through the historical process. But Hegel provides the final, secret ingredient necessary to synthesize Absolute Spirit. He has placed the historical forms of Spirit into his alembic and, through the fire of dialectic, has caused them to reorganize into a form that reveals the necessity within their apparent contingency.

Hegel closes the *Phenomenology* with the image of Golgotha, of the *Schädelstätte*, the "Place of the Skull."⁷¹ This image is found in some alchemical texts. The crucifixion is an image of the *nigredo*, the initial alchemical stage of putrefaction or death, from which comes (eventually) the philosopher's stone. *Caput mortuum*—"death's head"—was the

69. *Dokumente*, 365.

70. August Langen, *Der Wortschatz des deutschen Pietismus* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1968), 71.

71. Hegel counterposes the *Schädelstätte* to the *Schädellehre*, phrenology. Phrenology enjoyed something of a revival in the eighteenth century due to the writings of Johann Kasper Lavater (1741–1801), a Swiss preacher with mystical tendencies. Aside from this, there is nothing "Hermetic" about phrenology. It is an example of the reductive materialism most Hermeticists vehemently opposed. (Hegel's critique of phrenology occurs in pg, 206–33; Miller, 185–210).

term used by alchemists to denote the substance remaining after purification or purification by fire has taken place, and it was symbolized by a skull. *Caput mortuum* is a term actually employed by Hegel, as I shall discuss in the following chapter. The skull (with crossbones) also figures as an important image in Masonic initiation.

Alchemists like Heinrich Khunrath (1560–1605) identified Christ Himself with the philosopher's stone. In truth, the image of Golgotha at the end of the *Phenomenology* is a continuation of the "Bacchanalian revel" imagery that occurs early on in the text. Aside from the "Bacchanalian revel" passage itself, another passage contains an oblique reference to Dionysus: "the life of Spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself in it. It wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment, it finds itself" (Miller, 19; PG, 26).

In *Faith and Knowledge* (1802) Hegel writes that the "pure Concept" must "re-establish for philosophy the Idea of absolute freedom and along with it the absolute Passion, the speculative Good Friday in place of the historic Good Friday."⁷² Mythically, Christ is equivalent to Dionysus (and Osiris), the God who benefits mankind through being sacrificed. Spirit must die, it must be dismembered, in order to attain Absolute Knowing and become Absolute Spirit. Karin Figala writes that the crucifixion is an "Ursymbol of the alchemical process, of the 'whitening of the nigredo.' A primordial symbol of pre-Christian gnosis for the transformation of *nigredo* into *albedo* is the saga of Osiris's death and resurrection."⁷³

Hegel's *Phenomenology* is a rite of initiation and an alchemical transmutation: the material (mundane mind or spirit) must be broken apart or sacrificed, in order to be transmuted into a higher form.

e) The Foaming Chalice

The final image of the *Phenomenology* is the "foaming chalice." Spirit as displayed in the *Phenomenology*'s "way of despair" constitutes "the recollection and the Golgotha [die Schädelstätte] of Absolute Spirit, the actuality, truth, and certainty of his throne, without which he would be lifeless and alone; only, 'from the chalice of this realm of spirits, foams for Him his own infinity'" (Miller, 493; PG, 531).⁷⁴ Hegel has paraphrased Schiller's poem "Die Freundschaft" ("Friendship"; 1782). The last two lines of which read: "Aus dem Kelch des ganzen Seelenreiches, / Schäumt ihm—die Unendlichkeit." Hegel has revised these lines to read "Aus

72. *Faith and Knowledge*, trans. Walter Cerf and H. S. Harris (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977), 191. German edition: *Gesammelte Werke*, 4:414.

73. See Karin Figala, "Der alchemische Begriff des Caput Mortuum in der symbolischen Terminologie Hegels," in *Stuttgarter Hegel-Tage* 1970, ed. H. G. Gadamer (Bonn: Bouvier, 1974), 143–44. See chapter 5 on *caput mortuum*.

74. The "way of despair" (*Weg der Verzweiflung*) is mentioned at Miller, 49; PG, 60. It is a clear reference to the *via dolorosa*.

dem Kelche dieses Geisterreiches, / schäumt ihm seine Unendlichkeit." To understand the significance of the changes, one must look at the final stanza of Schiller's poem in its entirety:

Freundlos war der grosse Weltenmeister,
Fühlte Mangel—darum schuf er Geister,
Selge Spiegel seiner Seligkeit!—
Fand das höchste Wesen schon kein gleiches,
Aus dem Kelch des ganzen Seelenreiches
Schäumt ihm—die Unendlichkeit.

This might be translated:

Friendless was the great World Master
Felt a lack—thus he created spirits,
Blessed mirrors of his bliss—
Still found the highest being no likeness,
From out of the chalice of the whole realm of the soul
Foams for Him—infinity.⁷⁵

The imagery of the World Master creating "spirits" as a "mirror" calls to mind Böhme's doctrine of God's wisdom, which he depicts as a mirror and analyzes into the seven "source-spirits" (*Quellgeister*). Hegel's claim, as we have seen in connection with the "myth" of 1804–5, is that any developmental account of the "life of God" must understand Spirit as its origin and object. Hegel contends that this is the crucial component missing from Böhmean theosophy. Encountering a similar "myth" in Schiller's *Die Freundschaft*, Hegel thus identifies Schiller's created Geist (or, literally, Geister) with the soul of the World Master: "Seelenreiches" becomes "Geisterreiches."

There is a further irony in Hegel's use of Schiller's poem. Hegel must also reject Schiller's claim that "Still found the highest being no likeness." In a *Zusatz* to the *Encyclopedia Logic* Hegel states that "the original calling of man, to be an image of God, can be realized only through cognition [*Erkennen*]" (EL § 24 Z-3; Geraets, 63). For Hegel, the "world master" must find an adequate likeness.

Finally, Schiller writes that out of this "realm of the soul foams for Him—infinity," implying that infinity unfolds before God, as an external show. Hegel revises the last line of the poem to read "foams to him, his infinity [*seine Unendlichkeit*]." Spirit is now to be identified with the infinity. This must be understood in contrast to what Hegel calls "bad infinity" (*Schlechte Unendlichkeit*), which is an infinity that stands opposed to what is finite as something external. Such opposition limits infinity, thus making it not infinite but finite. "Good infinity" *comprehends* finitude.

75. Friedrich Schiller, *Sämtliche Werke*, 4 vols., ed. Gerhard Fricke and Herbert G. Göpfert with Herbert Stubenrauch, 6th ed. (Munich: Hanser, 1974–80), 1193.

76. Translated in Verene, *Hegel's Recollection*, 6.

Thus, Spirit does not face an infinity "foaming" out away from it; it is the infinite. This, its true nature, has revealed itself through the *Geisterreich* that is the *Phenomenology*.⁷⁷

There is a yet another, still more interesting implication to Hegel's use of this passage. Consider the context in which it occurs. Hegel speaks of "the recollection and the Golgotha of Absolute Spirit, the actuality, truth, and certainty of his throne, without which he would be lifeless and alone." The meaning of this imagery seems to be obvious: the way of Spirit to Absolute Knowing is likened to Christ's passion. But Hegel then immediately introduces his paraphrase of Schiller. In this context, the reference to the "Kelch" can only call to mind the image of the Holy Grail, the cup in which Christ's blood was captured during his crucifixion.

The Holy Grail was also the cup of the last supper, from which the disciples drank wine transubstantiated into Christ's blood. The Grail is represented to this day by a communion chalice. Hegel's use of the image of the "Kelch" extends the comparison of his doctrine to Christianity. It also circles back to his discussion of the Eleusinian mysteries, in which he spoke of the Eleusinian "communion": "the secret meaning of the eating of bread and the drinking of wine" (Miller, 65; pg. 77). In drinking from the communion cup we become one with God. Hegel believes that he has actually realized this oneness in his *Phenomenology*. For a philosopher like Hegel, who believes that at the end of time we rend and devour our God like the Titans did Dionysus, the cup of Christ's blood is a useful symbol for a dangerous idea.⁷⁸

The image of the Holy Grail was appropriated by Hermeticists, particularly alchemists. In Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* (c. 1170–1230), the version of the Grail story with which Hegel was most likely familiar, the Grail appears not as a cup but as a stone. In the story, the hermit Trevrizent tells Parzival that the name of the Grail is *Lapsit exilis*.⁷⁹ Although this looks like Latin, it literally means nothing. Most scholars have thought it a mistake on Wolfram's part. It is generally agreed that *lapsit* is supposed to be *lapis*, stone. Julius Evola argues for *lapis elixir*, making an obvious connection with alchemy.⁸⁰ I find Emma Jung's suggestion of "*lapis exilis*" more plausible, however, for the philosopher's stone was explicitly named *lapis exilis* in some works of Arnold of Vilanova, born 1220. The term may be much older.⁸¹ *Exilis* means "poor" or

"mean." Emma Jung notes that traditionally the philosopher's stone is at once priceless, as well as the most common thing there is, "trodden underfoot in the street."⁸² She writes that the philosopher's stone is "a particle of God concealed in nature, an analogy to the God who, in Christ, came down to earth in a human body, subject to suffering. On the other hand, the 'cheapness' of the stone . . . alludes to the fact that every human being is its potential bearer, even its begetter."⁸³

Hegel finished the *Phenomenology* in great haste, according to legend, on the eve of the battle of Jena. When he looked for an image to end the book, what came to him was the crucifixion of Jesus on Golgotha—and then a chalice, the foaming chalice of Schiller. Perhaps Hegel's inspiration to use Schiller's chalice in the context of the image of the crucifixion can only have seemed right to him because of its association with the Holy Grail, perhaps even the *un-Chalice* of Wolfram—the Grail as stone, the *Stein der Weisen*. The *Phenomenology* has been called a *Bildungsroman*, but perhaps a better description would be Grail quest, where the Grail represents what all other philosophers have sought, but none before Hegel has attained: Absolute Knowing.

77. My interpretation of these lines is based in part on that of Verene, Hegel's *Recollection*, 6–7.

78. Oetinger believed that the spilling of Christ's blood in the crucifixion was highly significant. For instance, he seems to have held that our "participation" in the life of Christ through holy communion is emblematic of the "taking up" of the true doctrine, transmitted through Christ, through which we may nurture our spiritual body and so work to actualize the divine spiritual concretization which is God. See Robert Schneider, *Geistesabwesen*, 123.

79. Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*, IX, 469v7.

80. Julius Evola, *The Mystery of the Grail*, trans. Guido Stucco (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1994), 153.

81. *Ibid.*, 149.

82. Emma Jung and Marie-Louise von Franz, *The Grail Legend*, trans. Andrea Dykes (Boston: Sigo Press, 1986), 153.

83. *Ibid.*, 157.

that magic is action of one thing on another that is unmediated (so, for example, the control of the mind over the body is "magical," because there is no third thing acting as intermediary). This is obviously a much thinner conception of magic than what Böhme has explained. Nevertheless, there is a parallelism between Böhme's magic and what I have called the "high magic" of the dialectic itself.

Note that Böhme says that magic "creates itself." As we have seen, the speculative philosopher does not create or invent the dialectic; instead it unfolds itself before him (and this is why there is no distinction between form and content). Further, Böhme claims that in this self-creating magic are "all forms of the Being of all beings," which should remind us of the *Logic*. Böhme also refers to the "first *Magia*" as "God in his triad."¹¹⁶ This is a reference to the initial dialectic of sour-sweet-bitter, of God in Himself. Böhme is treating his own proto-dialectic of the "source-spirits" as a kind of high magic. Finally, and most striking of all, Böhme refers to magic as that "which makes within itself where there is nothing; which makes something out of nothing."¹¹⁷ This comes close to Hegel's treatment of magic as an unmediated act, an act employing no medium or matter or "raw material." The dialectic of the *Logic* is precisely such a creation of something (*Etwas*) out of nothing (*Nichts*). On Böhme's terms, Voegelin's treatment of Hegel as a magician becomes quite plausible.

115. *Six Mystical Points*, Point 5, §§ 1-6.

116. *Ibid.*

117. *Mysterium Panoplicum*, "Der Erste Text," in Nicolescu, 211.

"The Rose in the Cross of the Present"

Hegel's Philosophy of Objective and Absolute Spirit

Between Eternal Birth, Restoration from the Fall and the discovery of the Philosopher's Stone there is no difference.

—Jakob Böhme, *De Signatura Rerum*

1. Introduction

According to Hegel, Objective and Absolute Spirit constitute a made world that stands in opposition to mere nature. In the *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, Hegel states, "After the creation of the natural universe, man appears on the scene as the antithesis of nature; he is the being who raises himself up into a second world" (Nisbet, 44; VII, 50). Objective Spirit is the Absolute Idea as embodied in human history, culture, and social institutions. Absolute Spirit is the Absolute Idea expressed in art, religion, and philosophy. Absolute Spirit is the highest form in which the Idea realizes itself. In Objective Spirit, we seek to approach the Absolute through social institutions and practices, but these are not the proper medium for its embodiment. In art we strive to represent the Idea sensuously, and it attains greater "objective presence" than it does through social practices. In religion we strive to make ourselves at one with the Idea, which is again approached in representational or imagistic form. But these media are not adequate either. For Hegel it is not enough simply to change the world or to change our selves. We must interpret the world, and ourselves. And the proper medium for this interpretation is philosophy. The philosopher recognizes Idea in the world and "returns" it to the pure aether of thought, while all the time remaining a being in the world. Philosophy is the highest form of Absolute Spirit, for in it the self-thinking thought of Absolute Idea (or God) is finally realized in the world.

2. Hegel's Philosophy of Religion: The Influence of Mysticism

Karl Löwith writes that "For an understanding of Hegel's system, his philosophy of religion is even more important than his philosophy of the state. It is not just one component of the whole system, but its spiritual center of gravity."¹ Hegel's theology is essentially Böhmean in its

1. Karl Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche: The Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Thought*, trans. David E. Green (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), 47.

developmental conception of God. The *Logic* represents God "in Himself": God expresses Himself through the forms of nature, but only returns to Himself and achieves self-knowing through Spirit, through human knowing. The philosopher thus serves to "actualize" or "complete" God. Because God *qua* Absolute Idea (God in Himself) is conceived of as abstract and lacking realization in the world, it follows that God's progressive worldly incarnation involves a progressive increase in "concreteness" or "embodiment." In the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Hegel states that "Spirit is in the most concrete sense. The absolute or highest being belongs to it" (LPR 1:142). This aspect of Hegel's thought is strikingly similar to Oetinger's theory of *Geistlichkeit*, discussed in chapter 2. In the *Lectures*, Hegel refers to God as "the absolute substance," but then goes on, just as in the *Phenomenology*, to identify substance with subject (LPR 1:370). What this means is simply that God becomes absolute substance as Spirit. Spirit is the "mystical body" of God on earth.²

In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel states that "The content of religion is absolute truth, and consequently the religious is the most sublime of all dispositions" (Knox, PR § 270; 165–66). Speculative philosophy, Hegel insists, is not hostile to religious belief: "nothing is further from its intention than to overthrow religion, i.e., to assert that the content of religion cannot *for itself* be the truth." In other words, religion on its own, without the "assistance" of philosophy is absolute truth. Hegel states that "religion is precisely the true content but in the form of representation, and philosophy is not the first to offer the substantive truth. Humanity has not had to await philosophy in order to receive for the first time the consciousness or cognition of truth" (LPR 1:251). Humanity, then, can receive the truth through religion alone, without the need for philosophy. "Religion is for everyone," Hegel claims, unlike philosophy which is for the few (LPR 1:180). Philosophy and religion have the same content. Hegel explicitly identifies the moments of the Idea—Being, Essence, Concept—with the Holy Trinity. The fact that religion expresses truth in the form of representation does not mean that Hegel denigrates or rejects it. Nevertheless, Hegel holds that in philosophy the truth is expressed in a more adequate form, the form of pure thought.

Hegel believed that the truth has always been an unconscious possession of mankind. It has expressed itself in different forms, at different times, and through different thinkers. The philosopher "recollects" this unconscious wisdom and expresses it in a fully adequate form. This interpretation is supported by Hegel's remarks in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. Hegel refers to religions as "sprouting up fortuitously, like the flowers and creations of nature, as foreshadowings, images, representations, without [our] knowing where they come from or where they are going to" (LPR 1:196; vpr 1:106). Hegel states that "Religion is a begetting of the divine spirit, not an invention of human beings but an

2. See O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*, 274–75.

effect of the divine at work, of the divine productive process within humanity" (LPR 1:130; vpr 1:46).

Hegel does not, however, regard all religions as equally adequate expressions of eternal truth. He claims that Christianity is the "Absolute Religion" (e.g., LPR 1:112; vpr 1:29). Hegel claims that "God has revealed Himself through the Christian religion; that is, he has granted mankind the possibility of recognizing his nature, so that he is no longer an impenetrable mystery" (Nisbet, 40; vrg, 45). Christianity has penetrated the mystery of God by revealing his nature as *triune*. Hegel takes issue with theologians and clergy who hold that mankind cannot know God, or who consider the attempt to know God as impious or hubristic. Hegel claims not only that such knowledge is possible, but that it is our highest duty to obtain it (Nisbet, 36; vrg, 40; also LPR 1:88). "God does not wish to have narrow-minded and empty-headed children," Hegel states (Nisbet 42; vrg, 47).

For Hegel, knowing God is our highest duty because God only fully exists in the community of worshippers. Hegel holds that "God's Spirit is essentially in his community; God is Spirit only insofar as God is in his community" (LPR 1:164; vpr 1:74). And: "The concept of God is God's idea, [namely,] to become and make Himself objective to himself. This is contained in God as Spirit: God is essentially in His community and has a community; He is objective to Himself, and is such truly only in self-consciousness [so that] God's very own highest determination is self-consciousness." Beforehand, God is "incomplete," Hegel says (LPR 1:186–87; vpr 1:96). He refers to the community of worshippers as the *cultus*. "In the *cultus*," Hegel writes, "the formal consciousness frees itself from the rest of its consciousness and becomes consciousness of its essence; the *cultus* consists in the consciousness that God knows Himself in the human being and the human being knows itself in God" (LPR 1:181; vpr 1:90). Hegel refers to the *cultus* as involving "the mystical attitude, the *unio mystica*" (LPR 1:180; vpr 1:89). He describes the *cultus* in his lecture manuscript as "the eternal relationship, the eternal process [of knowing] in which the subject posits itself as identical with its essence" (LPR 1:193; vpr 1:102).³

Hegel's claim that God is dependent on the *cultus*, and his view of the union of God and man in the *cultus*, are strikingly similar to Meister Eckhart's mysticism. In fact, the only place Hegel quotes Eckhart is in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*: "The eye with which God sees me is the eye with which I see Him; my eye and His eye are one and the same. In righteousness I am weighed in God and He in me. If God did not exist nor would I; if I did not exist nor would He. But there is no need to know this, for there are things that are easily misunderstood (and that can be grasped only in the concept)" (LPR 1:347–48; vpr 1:248). As noted before, this is actually a "quilt quotation" made up of lines from several of Eckhart's sermons (certainly the reference to "the concept" looks suspiciously like an Hegelian interpolation).⁴ In sermon 12—

3. The words "of knowing" were inserted by Hegel in the margin.

4. See O'Regan, "Hegelian Philosophy of Religion and Eckhartian Mysticism."

which seems to be one of the texts Hegel was drawing from—Eckhart remarks that "When all creatures pronounce His name, God comes into being."

In the winter of 1823–24, Hegel was actively discussing Eckhart's ideas with Franz von Baader.⁵ Baader himself has left us a record of what was perhaps the first of the occasions on which they met: "I was often with Hegel in Berlin. Once I read him a passage from Meister Eckhart, who was only a name to him. He was so excited by it that the next day he read me an entire lecture on Eckhart, and at the end said: 'There, indeed, we have what we want!'" [*Da haben wir es ja, was wir wollen*].⁶ In 1823–24, Hegel was, of course, preparing his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, in which the Eckhart reference appears. As I have said, Hegel offers only one quote from Eckhart and discusses him very briefly, so the "entire lecture on Eckhart" mentioned by Baader probably refers to the entire Hegelian discussion of religion in which the Eckhart passage occurs, and which Baader apparently mistook (not surprisingly) for a lecture on Eckhartian mysticism.

As further evidence of the "Eckhartianism" of Hegel's philosophy of religion, consider the following quotations. In the *Encyclopedia* Hegel states that "God is God only insofar as he knows Himself: this self-knowledge is, further, a self-consciousness in man and man's knowledge of God, which becomes man's self-knowledge in God" (PS § 564; Wallace, 298). Elsewhere, Hegel remarks that "Insofar as the individual man is at the same time received into the unity of the divine essence, he is the object of the Christian religion, which is the most tremendous demand that may be made upon him" (PN § 247; Z; Petry 1:205–6). Finally, Rosenkranz quotes a fragment from Hegel's manuscripts (probably written not later than 1804) in which Hegel states that "the history of God is the history of the whole race." Hegel's philosophy of religion is from the beginning indebted to Eckhart's mysticism.

Hegel does not consider his views to be so "mystical" or "speculative" as to be alien to the ordinary believer, however. In fact, he holds that his way of looking at God and religion are much closer to real religion than to what was called in his time "rational theology" (LPR 1:129; VPR 1:45). We have seen that Hegel does not believe religion to be dependent on philosophy, but he does claim the reverse, that philosophy depends on religion. He writes that "It is the distinctive task of philosophy to transmute the content that is in the representation of religion into the form of thought; the content [itself] cannot be distinguished" (LPR 1:333; VPR 1:235). The philosopher first encounters the content of absolute truth in religion. Indeed, Hegel holds that before Christianity arrived on the scene it would have been impossible for philosophy to present absolute truth in a fully adequate or complete form.

5. Ibid., 250.

6. See Nicolai, *Hegel in Berichten seiner Zeitgenossen*, 261. It is, of course, not true that Eckhart was "only a name" to Hegel in 1823–24. According to H. S. Harris, Hegel may have been familiar with Eckhart as early as 1795 (*Toward the Sunlight*, 230).

7. Rosenkranz, *Hegels Leben*, 138.

The philosopher depends, then, not only on the community but specifically on the religious community. Speculative philosophy cannot be done in a vacuum: it requires a certain social and historical context. All his life Hegel claimed to be a pious Lutheran. The temptation is to take this claim as disingenuous, as the heretical philosopher attempting to cover his tracks to avoid the fate of Fichte and many others. Once it is realized, however, that Hegel's philosophy of religion originates out of the Eckhartian, Böhmean, Oetingerite-influenced Lutheranism of Württemberg, his claim can be seen as sincere. Hegel's brand of Lutheranism would have been nothing unusual to his fellow Swabians.⁸

3. Hegel's Philosophy of History: The Influence of Isaac Luria and Jewish Eschatology

Hegel's philosophy of world history is shaped entirely by his commitment to Christianity. In the last chapter I described how Hegel believes that in studying nature we assume that our object must have an underlying rational structure. Hegel takes the same approach with history. He states that "world history is governed by an ultimate design, that is a rational process—whose rationality is not that of a particular subject, but a divine and absolute reason—this is a proposition whose truth we must assume; its proof lies in the study of world history itself, which is the image and enactment of reason. . . . World history is merely a manifestation of this one original reason; it is one of the particular forms in which reason reveals itself, a reflection of the archetype in a particular element, in the life of nations" (Nisbet, 28; v16, 30). Hegel claims further that we are compelled to ask whether "beneath the superficial din and clamour of history, there is not perhaps a silent and mysterious inner process at work, whereby the energy of all phenomena is conserved" (Nisbet, 33; v16, 36).

In the context of the philosophy of world history, Hegel uses the term *World Spirit* (*Weltgeist*). In the *Encyclopedia Logic* he describes the World Spirit along the lines of Plato's demiurge as a "master workman" constructing *itself* through history (EL § 13; Geraets, 31). He likens the World Spirit elsewhere to the "true Mercury [= Hermes]," who is "the leader of nations" (Nisbet, 31; v16, 33). "The world Spirit," Hegel states, "is the spirit of the world as it reveals itself through the human consciousness; the relationship of men to it is that of single parts to the whole which is their substance. And this World Spirit corresponds to the Divine Spirit, which is the Absolute Spirit. Since God is omnipresent, He is present in everyone and appears in everyone's consciousness; and this is the World Spirit" (Nisbet, 52–53; v16, 60).

Perhaps the most famous concept in Hegel's philosophy of world history is that of the "cunning of reason" (*List der Vernunft*). This is the "mechanism" whereby the World Spirit makes use of the shortsighted

8. To be sure, Hegel held some views that would be "heretical" even by the standards of Swabian speculative Pietism. For instance, he rejected belief in personal immortality and held instead that human beings only achieve a measure of immortality insofar as they achieve wisdom and see into the eternal (see LPR 3304; VPR 3:227–28).

passions and aims of particular men to bring about its universal purposes (see Nisbet, 89; *vfg.* 105). The "cunning of reason" bears some similarity to Smith's "invisible hand," and of course, to the concept of divine providence. Hegel himself draws attention to the latter parallel. "Christians," he says, "are initiated into the mysteries of God, and this also supplies us with the key to world history. For we have here a definite knowledge of providence and its plan" (Nisbet, 41; *vfg.* 46). What can Hegel mean by this claim? How does Christianity supply a key to world history? The answer is surprising, and it involves yet another connection to a heterodox Christian thinker. I will deal with Hegel's debt to this thinker, Joachim de Fiore, in section 3. It is to Joachim that we must trace Hegel's notorious doctrine of the "end of history." There are other influences on Hegel's eschatology, however. In this section I will first look to the influence—direct and indirect—of mystical Judaism.

Oetinger remarks in one of his works that "God is in Himself without space, but in the revelation of his hiddenness, he is Himself the space of all things."⁹ This idea, that somehow in God's "hiddenness" He is the space of all things, is derived from the Kabbalistic speculations of Isaac Luria.

The "new Kabbalah" of Luria, who lived from 1534 to 1572, quickly spread through Europe in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, mostly by word of mouth and through the works of followers (Luria himself wrote little). Scholem writes that "The influence of the Lurianic Kabbalah, which from about 1630 onwards became something like the true *theologia mystica* of Judaism, can hardly be exaggerated."¹⁰ As we will see, there is a strong correspondence between the theosophy of Böhme and Lurianic Kabbalah. Scholem acknowledges this correspondence.¹¹ The writings of Luria's followers circulated in Europe widely between 1572 and 1650. It seems likely that Böhme either obtained some of these works, or was instructed directly by a Lurianic Kabbalist. Luria (sometimes spelled "Loria") was born in Jerusalem, but when still a boy his mother took him to live in Egypt after his father's death. In Safed, Luria studied with the famous Kabbalist Moses Cordovero. After Cordovero's death, Luria gathered a group of disciples around himself.

Then and now, many Jews have attacked Luria for his unorthodox views. The major reason for this seems to be his treatment of *Ein-Sof*, the "infinite," which many Kabbalists identify with God. For Luria, the crucial question is this: How can the world exist at all if we grant the existence of God as *Ein-Sof*? If God is truly infinite, no space is left over for creation. Thus, given that the world exists, it must have come about through God's *self-limitation* of His infinite nature. This self-limitation is called by Luria the *tsimsum* (frequently transliterated by German-speaking scholars as *zimzum*), which means "concentration" or "contraction." Thus, for Luria, God, the infinite, allows the finite to come to be

within himself. (This is, of course, in essence identical to Hegel's view of the infinite and finite: the true [*Wahrhafte*] infinite contains the finite within itself.) Luria's view is radical because it denies that the world comes to be through God's revelation or emanation. Instead, it is precisely through God's limitation and concealment (Oetinger's *Verborgtheit*) that a world comes into being.¹² Scholem describes the *tsimsum* as a "withdrawing into oneself."¹³

Recall from chapter 5 that the *Sephirah* of *Din* is equivalent to a "contracting" force in God. The Kabbalah identifies *Din* with "fire," "wrath," and "severity."¹⁴ *Din* is the opposite of *Hesed*, "mercy" or the "expanding" power. *Din* and *Hesed* balance each other: severity of judgment is balanced by mercy; sharp distinction, cutting-off or closedness are balanced by unity, embrace, or openness. Böhme's word for *Din* is the "Sour"—it is an indrawing, a pulling away, a shutting off and negation of all else. It is significant that Böhme's account of the source-spirits begins with the Sour, with the contracting element. Some followers of Luria describe the *tsimsum* in terms of *Din*. In Scholem's words, "When the primal intention to create came into being, *Ein-Sof* gathered together the roots of *Din*, which had been previously concealed within Him, to one place, from which the power of mercy had departed. In this way the power of *Din* became concentrated."

Scholem describes *tsimsum*, in connection with *Din*, as "an act of judgment and self-limitation."¹⁵ Given that *Din* is the origin of evil, God's contraction is the root of all evil.¹⁶ Luria's follower Israel Sarug, who helped spread the master's ideas in the late sixteenth century, speaks of *Ein-Sof* before the *tsimsum* in a way which is even more strikingly Böhmean. As Scholem puts it, Sarug held that "In the beginning, *Ein-Sof* took pleasure in its own autarkic self-sufficiency, and this 'pleasure' produced a kind of 'shaking' (*ni'anu a*) which was the movement of *Ein-Sof* within itself."¹⁷ Scholem notes that Sarug's influence was felt in Italy, Holland, Poland, and Germany.¹⁸

Luria holds that each new act of creation or manifestation in the world is the result of a simultaneous contraction and expansion.¹⁹ This pair of forces generally goes under the names of *histalkut* ("regression," or contraction) and *hitpashtut* ("egression," or expansion).²⁰ This is, of

12. See Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 129; and *Major Trends*, 261. There are striking analogies between Luria's *tsimsum*, the "clearing" in which beings come to be, and Heidegger's notion of the *Lichtung*, the clearing in which Being itself comes to presence. See Martin Heidegger, "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking," in *On Time and Being*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper and Row, 1972).

13. Scholem, *Major Trends*, 261.

14. *Ibid.*, 237.

15. Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 130; see also *Major Trends*, 263.

16. See Scholem, *Major Trends*, 263.

17. Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 132.

18. Scholem, *Major Trends*, 257.

19. *Ibid.*, 261.

20. Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 131.

9. "Gott ist in sich selbst ohne Raum, aber in der Offenbarung seiner Verborgenheit ist er selbst der Raum aller Dinge" (*Sämtliche Schriften*, vol. 1, 29; see Robert Schneider, *Geistesformen*, 100).

10. Scholem, *Major Trends*, 284.

11. *Ibid.*, 237.

course, very similar to Goethe's theory of expansion and contraction, discussed in chapter 2. In chapters 4 and 5, I also discussed these concepts in connection with Hegel's "Böhmean myth" of the fall of Lucifer. Scholem states that "This double-facedness in the process of emanation is typical of the dialectical tendency of Lurianic Kabbalah."²¹

God's contraction in the *tsimsum* does not create the world by itself, however. Luria and his followers envision the *Ein-Sof* as an infinite sphere, in which a smaller sphere of empty space comes into being through the *tsimsum*; this is the place of creation. Into this space God injects a ray of light (Luria seems to identify the divine substance with the light differentiates itself into the classical ten *Sephiroth*. These are depicted as concentric circles of light, filling the space within God (see figure 8). The circle and the straight line (the line of light entering the spherical space) become key symbolic forms for Lurianic Kabbalah. The circle is a "natural form." The circular form characterizes all of creation (for instance, the orbits of the planets, the endless cycle of the seasons, the menstrual cycle, etc.). The line comes to represent humanity. It is a *willed* form that represents a divergence from the natural. As I have said, the light that comes from *Ein-Sof* first takes the form of a line, before it is "deformed" into spherical states. Thus, in identifying man with the line (a topic to which I shall return to shortly), Luria is linking humanity with the divine nature.

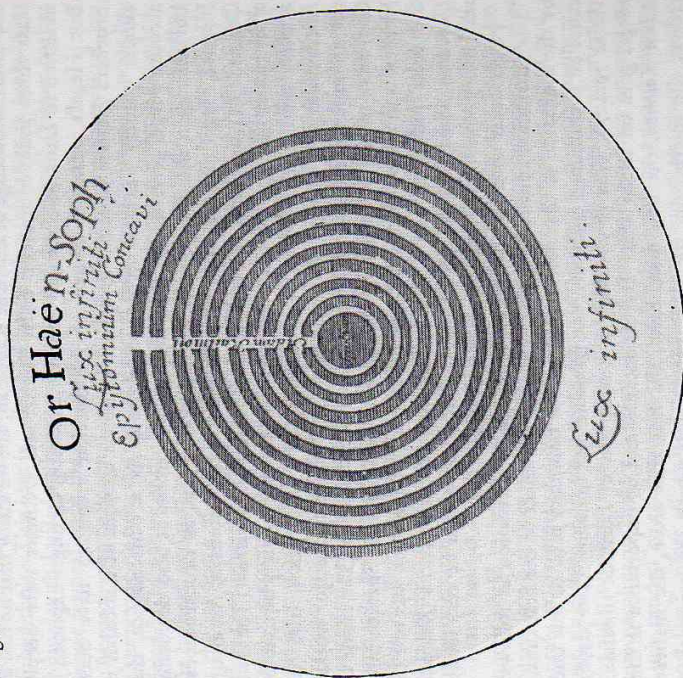
Indeed, the first definite form that appears in the sphere of creation is that of *Adam Kadmon*, primordial man. *Adam Kadmon* exists in a realm above the four worlds of classical Kabbalah: *Atsiluth*, *Beriah*, *Yezirah*, and *Assiah* (see Hegel's discussion of these worlds in chapter 5). *Adam Kadmon* mediates the light of *Ein-Sof* to the four worlds: "From his eyes, mouth, ears and nose, the lights of the *Sephiroth* burst forth."²² Obviously, this account has to be taken in a non-temporal sense. *Adam Kadmon* is an Aristotelian *final cause*: he is logically prior to the rest of creation, and simultaneously the end toward which creation is moving (a point to which I shall return shortly). *Adam Ha-Rishon* is Adam of the Bible, who is the (imperfect) earthly embodiment of *Adam Kadmon*. An analogy can be drawn between this doctrine and Hegel's thought. Lurianic *Ein-Sof* and its *Sephirotic* structure corresponds to the Absolute Idea, which is abstract, withdrawn "into itself." *Adam Kadmon* is Spirit, which in its purest form (Absolute Spirit) participates in the divine nature. *Adam Ha-Rishon* is Spirit as developing in history: from the "fall of man" and the loss of the immediate relationship to God, to the recovery of that relationship in its true form, in thought. (Luria's account of the restoration from the Fall is somewhat different from Hegel's, as I shall explain shortly.)

The light of the *Sephiroth* streaming from *Adam Kadmon* was collected in separate "vessels," but the vessels containing the differentiated light

21. Ibid., 131.

22. Scholem, *Major Trends*, 265.

8. The Lurianic Sephiroth. From Brucker, *Historia Critica Philosophiae*, vol. 2, 1742. Reprinted by permission of the Robert W. Woodruff Library, Special Collections and Archives, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.



from the seven lower *Sephiroth* proved incapable of holding the light and shattered. The shards of these vessels are the source of matter. This cataclysm completely scrambled the divine cosmic structure, resulting in the emergence of an imperfect material order: nothing in nature is how it ought to be, all is imperfect. It is on this point—the account of the "breaking of the vessels"—that Luria's cosmology is particularly obscure. It all sounds like a cosmic accident, but according to Luria it was all predestined. If this is the case, then God's contraction and the subsequent creation of the imperfect universe are events that *had* to occur; in some way God needed them to happen. The picture again looks Böhmean. Indeed, Scholem remarks that "Luria is driven to something very much like a mythos of God giving birth to Himself; indeed, this seems to me to be the focal point of this whole involved and frequently rather obscure and inconsistent description."²³

Before going on to the rest of Luria's doctrine, it would be helpful to

23. Ibid., 271.

consider what Hegel knew about Luria's Kabbalism as described thus far. In chapter 5, I briefly discussed Hegel's treatment of Kabbalism in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. We cannot be sure that Hegel had any direct knowledge of Lurianic Kabbalah, but we know that he had at least three indirect sources. Both Böhme and Oetinger were deeply indebted to Lurianic Kabbalah (Böhme implicitly, Oetinger explicitly). But Hegel's principal source of information seems to have been Brucker's *Historia Critica Philosophiae*. Brucker's account of Kabbalah is almost entirely Lurianic in its orientation. As a consequence, the account Hegel gives of the Kabbalah in his *Lectures* is also decidedly Lurianic, even though Hegel never mentions Luria, as Brucker does. Instead, Hegel mentions one of Brucker's Lurianic sources, Abraham Cohen Irira (sometimes Herrera) and his work *Porta coelorum* (*The Gate of the Heavens*). Hegel cites this text directly, so it may possibly be that he actually read it in addition to reading about it in Brucker. Irira (d. Amsterdam 1635 or 1639) was a Spanish Jew whose two major works, the aforementioned *Gate of the Heavens*, and *Beth Elohim* (*The House of God*) were translated in the late seventeenth century from Spanish into Hebrew and exercised considerable influence. *Porta coelorum* was one of the texts published—in Latin translation—in Rosenroth's *Kabbala Denudata*, which was so well-known in Hegel's time that he very likely read it in preparing his remarks on the Kabbalah.

Hegel deals with the *Ein-Sof* and the origin of creation as follows: "The emanation connected [with *Ein-Sof*] is the effect of the first cause by the limitation of that first infinite whose boundary it is. In this one cause all is contained *eminenter*, not *formaliter* but *causaliter*" (LHP 2:396; *Werke* 19:427). This is obviously a description of Lurianic *tsimtsum*. Hegel goes on to say that "The second element of importance is the *Adam Kadmon*, the first man, *Keter*, 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" (LHP 2:396; *Werke* 19:427). Again, this is Luria's Kabbalah: *Adam Kadmon* as the first and highest created being, as close to the divine nature, and as mediating the divine light to the rest of creation. *Adam Kadmon* was subsequently mentioned by Hegel several times in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* (see LPR 1:382 n. 41; 3:99, 288; VPR 1:278; 3:36, 213). Hegel goes on to mention the ten *Sephiroth* in general (not individually) and discusses the four lower worlds of *Asiluth*, *Beriath*, *Yezirah*, and *Asiah* (for Hegel's treatment of these, see chapter 5).

Scholem notes that whereas Kabbalah before Luria had been concerned mainly with the beginning of time—with creation—Luria, to a great extent, shifted the focus of Kabbalists to the end of time.²⁴ This may seem surprising in light of Luria's highly original account of creation. Recall that Luria's doctrine of the "breaking of the vessels" involves a predestined "scrambling" of the cosmic order: the physical world that results is a flawed and imperfect expression of the divine

24. Ibid., 245.

order. The story cannot end there, of course. Luria insists that the world must be made whole, that the physical world must be completed or brought to perfection. This would "complete" the cosmic process begun in God's *tsimtsum* by making the finite within the infinite a faithful image of the infinite. This idea is called by Luria *Tikkun* (the term is, again, not original with Luria but his use of it is certainly original). *Tikkun* is the cosmic restoration at the end of time.

According to Scholem, Luria held that all things are interrelated. In other words, he held the idea of internal relations later made famous by Hegel.²⁵ The nature of the lowest regions of being is intimately linked to the highest, and just as the highest can affect the lowest (as in the tides, or the influence of the stars on the personality) so too the lowest can affect the highest.²⁶ Thus it is possible for created beings to benefit or to harm the cosmic order. Scholem writes that Luria believed that "The process in which God conceives, brings forth and develops Himself does not reach its final conclusion in God. Certain parts of the process of restitution are allotted to man."²⁷ The "cosmic assignment" of men on earth is to perfect themselves, to realize the nature of *Adam Kadmon* in *Adam Ha-Rishon* and thereby to "lift" the fallen, created world up to its pure, initial state of being in the light of God (this is not conceived of literally, of course, as a transformation of matter into light).

Man's task is to perfect himself and to build a social, cultural, and moral world in which material being is used for ends sanctioned by divine law. Scholem writes that "By fulfilling the commandments of the Torah, man restores his own spiritual structure; he carves it out of himself, as it were. And since every part corresponds to a commandment, the solution of the task demands the complete fulfillment of all the 613 commandments."²⁸ As a consequence, of this view, Scholem notes that Luria tended "to extreme conservatism" in his attitudes toward custom and law.²⁹ After all, these laws and customs had their origin in the covenant of the Jewish people with God. What can the real purpose of this covenant have been? Luria thinks that the Law is essentially an instruction manual for the restoration and completion of the divine order.³⁰ Thus if the *Tikkun* is to come to pass it is crucial that the Law must be strictly observed.

For Luria, the appearance of the Messiah is simply the achievement of *Tikkun*. Like the Pietist J. A. Bengel, whom I shall discuss in the next section, Luria even went so far as to give the specific year in which the *Tikkun* would be consummated: 1575. Summing up Luria's position, Scholem states that "it is man who adds the final touch to the divine countenance; it is he who completes the enthronement of God, the King

25. Ibid., 254.

26. Scholem discusses this idea in connection with Kabbalism as a whole (see *Ibid.*, 27, 223).

27. Ibid., 273.

28. Ibid., 279.

29. Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 426–27.

30. See Scholem, *Major Trends*, 268, 275–76.

and the mystical creator of all things, in His own Kingdom of Heaven; it is he who perfects the Maker of all things!"³¹

The similarity of these ideas to Hegel's is clear. Hegel holds that the true infinite (the Absolute Idea) "contains" the finite: nature is a "reflection" or "specification" of the Logos; it is an "other" to Idea yet at the same time is contained within its compass. Nevertheless, nature is an imperfect expression of Absolute Idea; it is the "fallenness" of Idea. In Spirit, a natural being, man, rises above nature and comes, through philosophy, to realize its true, eternal being as one with the Absolute Idea (*Adam Kadmon*). Man is the being who "takes over" nature and transforms it according to the ideal, even bending his own passions and inclinations to conform to the "universal." We "return" to the pure light of Absolute Idea not only through philosophy—through the appropriation of the created world in thought—but through obedience to the edicts of the divine State, which is the guardian of the customs and laws of Ethical Life.

Hegel's doctrine of Objective Spirit is not only similar to Luria's Kabbalah but to Kabbalistic eschatology in general. Specifically, we must look at the Kabbalists' treatment of the tenth and final *Sephirah*, *Malkhut* or *Shekhinah*. *Malkhut* ("Kingdom," sometimes "Glory") is conceived of as feminine—in contrast to the "male" *Tiferet* and *Yesod* (the "organ" of *Tiferet*)—and is often referred to under the alternate name of *Shekhinah* or "Divine Presence." If one looks at a drawing of the Tree of Life, *Malkhut* seems almost like an extension of the Tree, a sort of appendage. This is not accidental, for *Malkhut* represents the divine presence in the world: with *Malkhut* the *Sephiroth* have reached down into the world of space and time. In chapter 5, I discussed how some Kabbalists take the *Ein-Sof* or Infinite to be identical to the *Ayin*, or Nothing. Scholem maintains that *Ayin* is a kind of primal unity that transcends the subject-object distinction.³² Nevertheless, although *Ein-Sof/Ayin* is neither subject nor object, its telos is to develop into a true or absolute subject. According to the Kabbalists, "God willed to see God" to become fully manifest to Himself; to achieve perfect self-knowledge or self-relation.³³ The "I" of God is identified by many Kabbalists with *Malkhut* or "Kingdom."

Let us look more closely at what it means to identify *Malkhut*, God's "I," with *Shekhinah*. *Shekhinah* is the "Divine Presence." Scholem writes that *Shekhinah* is "the personification and hypostasis of God's 'indwelling' or 'presence' in the world. . . . In the literal sense, God's indwelling or *Shekhinah* means His visible or hidden presence in a given place, his immediacy."³⁴ Scholem speculates that *Shekhinah/Malkhut* is feminine because it was thought of as a "vessel" that receives all the other *Sephiroth*.³⁵ Thus, if

the *Sephiroth* are conceived as the aspects or moments of God's being, all the moments are contained within *Shekhinah*. Yet, the *Shekhinah* is conceived of as being in the world. Thus, the final and—perhaps it would not be misleading to say—highest moment of God's being is God's "indwelling" or "presence" in the world of space-time. Scholem writes that "The last *Sephirah* performs a different function from all the other *Sephiroth*: it is one with all the others and yet separate, because it performs a mission on their behalf to the world, like a princess coming from afar."³⁶ The parallel to Hegel is this: *Shekhinah* is like Objective Spirit; it is a "realization" of Absolute Idea in the world; it is "one" with Absolute Idea, yet the Idea, as formal and eternal, is also separate from it.³⁷

"Objective Spirit" for Hegel, of course, refers to the realm of social institutions and practices. So far, however, *Shekhinah* simply sounds like the burning bush. Consider, however, the following lines from Joseph Gikatilla (thirteenth century):

[In the days of the Patriarchs] the *Shekhinah* was in *suspense* [literally, "hanging in the air"], and found no resting place for its feet on earth, as in the beginning of Creation. But then came Moses, of blessed memory, and all of Israel together with him built the Tabernacle and the vessels, and repaired the broken channels, and put the ranks in order, and repaired the ponds, and drew live water into them from the House of Water Drawing, and then brought the *Shekhinah* back to its dwelling among the lower ones—into the Tent, but not upon the ground as in the beginning of Creation. And the hint of this is: "Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them" [Exod. 25:8]. We find that the *Shekhinah* was like a guest, moving from place to place, and of this it is said "and I shall dwell among them" and not "I shall dwell below" but "among them"—i.e., like a lodger. Until David and Solomon came, and placed the *Shekhinah* on solid ground in the Temple of Jerusalem.³⁸

The implication of this passage seems to be that *Shekhinah*—the living presence of God, containing all the attributes of God—came to be in the Temple of Jerusalem, the religious, cultural, and moral center of the people of Abraham.

Scholem quotes a popular Kabbalistic epigram: "Israel forms the limbs of the *Shekhinah*."³⁹ This appears to identify the nation of Israel (meaning the Jewish people, its culture and traditions) with God's presence in the world. In Jewish Gnostic circles in late antiquity the *Shekhinah* became hypostatized, that is, God's presence in the world came to denote a specific historical locus or conjunction of factors. From this arose the identification of *Shekhinah* with the *keneset Yisrael* ("the com-

31. Ibid., 273-74.

32. Ibid., 221.

33. Halevi, *A Kabbalistic Universe*, 7.

34. Gershom Scholem, *On The Mystical Shape of the Godhead: Basic Concepts in the Kabbalah*, ed. Jonathan Chipman and trans. Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Schocken Books, 1991), 141-47.

35. Ibid., 160.

36. Ibid., 168.

37. It is also interesting to note that Böhme, as discussed in chapter 1, viewed "God's Wisdom" as feminine, and saw the highest moment of God's Wisdom, Body (the seventh source-spirit) as a tangible presence. Scholem notes that Philo of Alexandria treated God's Wisdom as feminine in form (ibid., 142).

38. Quoted in ibid., 178.

39. Ibid., 175.

munity of Israel").⁴⁰ These Jewish Gnostics held to a doctrine of the "exile of the *Shekhinah*," according to which God's presence in the world is like the "divine spark" that exists in the terrestrial world and must be helped to ignite and fill the fallen world with divine presence. This is the mission of the *keneset Yisrael*. (Thus it appears that Luria's views about the role of man in redeeming the world were present in germinal form in earlier Kabbalah.) Unlike Christianity, Jewish Kabbalism sees redemption as occurring within time and within the world. As Scholem puts it, "Redemption is expressed as the end of the exile of the *Shekhinah*," the restoration of the Divine unity throughout all areas of existence.⁴¹ Thus, we find in the Kabbalah something very much like Hegel's concept of the "end of history": the "end" of the world and of man is realized in time and on earth through the "presence of God" coming to be in human institutions, in "Objective Spirit."

However, one might object that one crucial "Hegelian" element is missing from this Kabbalist account of "Objective Spirit": no indication has been given thus far that God *needs* to become present in the *keneset Yisrael*. In Hegel, however, Absolute Idea—God "in his eternal essence"—is abstract and formal, lacking full realization or actualization. Thus, God, to be God, must realize Himself in Spirit. Do the Kabbalists maintain something similar? Recall what was said earlier about God's achievement of "self-consciousness" or "ego" ("I") after emerging from the state of *Ein-Sof* = *Ayin*, the Being-Nothing beyond subject and object. This conception (held by some, but by no means all, Kabbalists) clearly implies that God develops and that the final stage of perfection involves self-reflection. As Scholem writes, "the *Zohar* identifies the highest development of God's personality with precisely that stage of His unfolding which is nearest to human experience, indeed which is immanent and mysteriously present in every one of us."⁴² This is the evidence needed to make the Hegelian parallel stick: God, to be God, *does* require his hypostatization in the *keneset Yisrael*.

The influence of these Kabbalistic ideas on Hegel is almost entirely indirect, by way of Böhme and the Swabian Pietist movement. In the next section I will discuss the eschatology that Hegel inherited from his homeland, and its origins not only in Kabbalism but in the Christian mystical tradition.

4. Joachimite Mysticism and the End of History

In an article on the influence of Böhme on Hegel, David Walsh raises an interesting question: Why would Hegel believe that history has to have a structure (let alone an end) in the first place?⁴³ Walsh's answer is to point to the influence of Böhme, though I think he would agree with me in identifying the ultimate source as Joachim de Fiore (1135–1202).

Joachim was born in Calabria, the son of an official in the Sicilian court. As a young man he made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, which led him to decide to devote his life to God. After a brief stint as a hermit on Mt. Etna, Joachim entered the Benedictine monastery of Corazzo, where he soon rose to the rank of abbot. In the 1180s, he fought to have the monastery incorporated into the Cistercian order. This brought Joachim into contact with Pope Lucius III, who suggested to Joachim that he commit his unusual views to writing. By the time the monastery was welcomed into the Cistercian order in 1188, Joachim and a group of followers had already broken off and founded their own house at San Giovanni de Fiore (sometimes written "Flora" or "Floré" or "Floris"). They were promptly repudiated by the Cistercians. By the time of his death, Joachim had become a celebrity, corresponding with and advising the great men of his age.

As Voegelin sees it, Joachim's great innovations were to conceive of history as having an *eidos*, a formal structure, and to "immanentize the eschaton," to hold that the end of time will take place in time.⁴⁴ Joachim held that history was not simply a series of contingent events. History consists of certain definite stages moving toward a final end. Joachim's immanentization of the eschaton is no more paradoxical than Hegel's end of history: time will continue, but there will be no new "ages," the story of man will come to an end, even though men will live on. Both Joachim and Hegel hold that at a certain point all the different forms of human life and society and culture will have revealed themselves, all meaningful struggles will be over. Anything that happens afterward is simply more of the same. Both Joachim and Hegel hold that the final phase of history involves the coming into being of certain "highest" or most perfect ways of life. It is unclear, however, whether they believe that these advances have to endure, or whether certain forms out of the past may reappear, temporarily, from time to time.

Joachim's *eidos* of history is the Christian Trinity. Ernst Benz writes that in Joachim, "Development and progress are not understood in human terms. . . . They are, rather, considered as steps in the progressive self-realization and self-revelation of the divine Trinity in the history of mankind."⁴⁵ Joachim speaks of the "Age of the Father," "Age of the Son," and "Age of the Holy Spirit" (the word he normally uses to refer to each is *status*, although he sometimes employs *tempus* and *aetas*; *regnum* or "Kingdom" was often employed by his followers). Each age is seen as representing an advance in spirituality and in freedom, and each is dominated by a different archetype: the layman, the priest, and the monk. The final stage of history, the final level of human spirituality, is literally an age of monks. One commentator writes that "For Joachim history was the story of the gradual triumph of spirit over flesh, of contemplation over literal-mindedness. This triumph was inseparable

40. Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 31.

41. *Ibid.*, 335. It should be pointed out, as with everything in the Kabbalah, that this position was held by many but not all Kabbalists. There is seldom universal agreement about anything among Kabbalists.

42. Scholem, *Major Trends*, 216–17.

43. Walsh, "The Historical Dialectic of Spirit," 15.

44. Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 119, 120.

45. Ernst Benz, *Evolution and Christian Hope*, trans. Heinz G. Frank (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966), 37.

from the history of monasticism." In the third age, organized religion simply ends—the church "withers away"—and is replaced by a highly individualistic form of worship.⁴⁶ The pious and contemplativeness of the individual are what is important, not the sacraments of the priesthood. Men will no longer be able to lead inauthentic lives and expect salvation: no longer will they be able to sin with abandon and receive absolution.

Joachim made frequent use of images to convey his ideas. Joachim saw the stages of the development of man's spirituality and redemption as unfolding like the growth of a tree, finally bearing fruit in the third age. Some of the other images he employed included circles, eagles, and a ten-stringed psaltery. He used interlocking circles to represent the three ages. Figure 9 shows the Tetragrammaton, the four-letter name of God, interpenetrating the circles of the three ages, perhaps indicating that the being of God or of God's presence is somehow bound up with the ages themselves. Joachim believed that the third age would begin in 1260. (Eschatologists cannot resist calculating the exact date of the end of time; we have already seen this with Luria, and we shall see it again with Bengel and Oetinger.)

Joachim's characterization of the third age as a time of pious, contemplative, monastic "inwardness," and his prediction that the organized Church would dissolve would seem to make him a "proto-Protestant." While Joachim himself was careful to avoid official censure, his followers were anything but cautious. For instance, Gerard of Borgo San Donnino, who published his major work, *Liber introductorius in Evangelium aeternum*, in 1249, declared that Joachim's prophecies were a new Gospel that nullified the authority of the church and Scripture. Another outgrowth of Joachimite prophecy were the notorious Flagellants, who believed that their self-torture was a necessary preliminary to the arrival of the Age of the Holy Spirit.

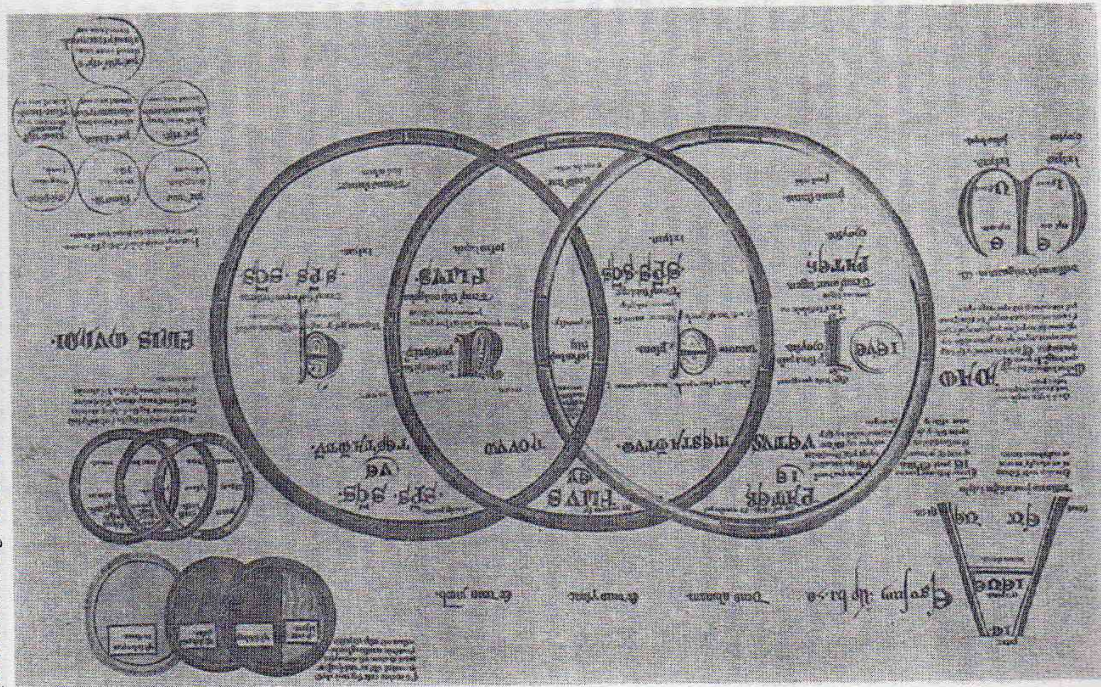
The origins of Joachim's thought are the topic of much speculation. Emma Jung, for example, sees an influence of Catharism and mystical Judaism: "Joachim's idea springs from a conception already extant in Judaism . . . of a kingdom to be established on earth by the Messiah at the end of time."⁴⁷ As to the matter of Joachim and Hegel, the similarity between the two was pointed out to Hegel himself in an 1810 letter from the occultist K. J. H. Windischmann.⁴⁸ Hegel himself never mentions Joachim. Nevertheless, in addition to Voegelin, such contemporary scholars as Clark Butler, Laurence Dickey, Antoine Faivre, Henri de

46. See Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), 151.

47. Emma Jung and von Franz, *Grail Legend*, 318.

48. Hoffmeister #155. The parallel has been developed by O'Regan (*The Herodox Hegel*) and Clark Butler, "Hegelian Panentheism as Joachimite Christianity," in *New Perspectives on Hegel's Philosophy of Religion*, ed. David Kolb (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992).

9. The Three Ages of Joachim de Fiore. From his *Book of Figures* (*Liber figurarum*, twelfth century). Reprinted by permission of the President and Fellows of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, MS 255A, fol. 7 verso.



Lubac, Michael Murray, and Cyril O'Regan have argued for a Joachimite influence on Hegel.⁴⁹

The Joachimite influence is most apparent in Hegel's treatment of the Trinity. In his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Hegel deals in detail with the Trinity as constituting the "moments" of God (universality, disempowerment, and reconciliation).⁵⁰ In the 1831 version of the lectures, Hegel introduces a new twist: he begins calling Father, Son and Holy Spirit the "Kingdom (Reich) of the Father," "Kingdom of the Son," and "Kingdom of the Spirit." This use of "Kingdom" for the persons of the Trinity was employed widely by followers of Joachim. This alone, of course, does not necessarily prove a Joachimite influence. However, Hegel's treatment of the Trinity is, like Joachim's, temporal: he holds that the reconciliation of the disempowerment in God takes time; only at a certain point in human history is this accomplished. In the *Encyclopedia Logic* Hegel notes that "What underlies divine Providence at the level of thought will soon prove to be the Concept" (*EL* § 147; *Z*; *Geraets*, 222). Once it is realized that the Concept, as the crowning conception of the Logic, contains three moments which correspond to the Christian Trinity, the similarity to Joachim is striking: both Hegel and Joachim see the hand of God, Providence, playing out in history according to the pattern of the Trinity. Hegel does not repeat Joachim's treatment of the Age of the Father or of the Son, but there is a striking correspondence between Hegel's Kingdom of the Spirit and Joachim's.

There is a strong similarity between Joachim's conception of spirituality in the third age and the Pietist movement that arose in Germany centuries later. Both involve a rejection of the church as an intermediary between ordinary men and God and the claim that the lay community of worshippers can achieve salvation and knowledge of God unaided. Hegel explicitly identifies his Kingdom of the Spirit with the community of worshippers (*LPR* 3:371; *vpr* 3:287). He refers to the community as "existing Spirit" and refers to Spirit as "God existing as community" (*LPR* 3:331; *vpr* 3:254). Both men conceive the third stage as one of reconciliation, of higher spirituality or fully adequate knowledge, and of the actualization of human freedom. Further, as O'Regan notes, both Hegel and Joachim make the unusual move of locating the eschaton in time, Joachim believing that it is at hand, Hegel believing that it has already happened. Both Hegel and Joachim have Christ play a crucial role on the way to the achievement of the third age, Hegel insisting that the universality of human freedom (realized fully in the third age) was first revealed through Christianity.

Hegel's "Joachimite" treatment of the Trinity in the *Lectures* dovetails with his Böhmeism. This is the case specifically with respect to the Kingdom of the Father. Not only is there a Trinity of Father-Son-Spirit,

there is also a secondary Trinity immanent within the Father. Hegel identifies the Kingdom of the Father with the pure, *eidetic* realm of the Logic, thus the "Trinity of the Father" corresponds to the three divisions of the Logic.⁵¹ In the 1831 *Lectures* Hegel speaks of the "Trinity of the father" (or, as O'Regan calls it, the "immanent Trinity") as involving, "the element of pure ideality and universality, in the silent abode of the thinking spirit." He goes on to say that in this abode, "God is immediately present to Himself through His differentiation, which, however, is not yet externalized at this stage. It is by virtue of this [inner] movement that God is spirit. Thus the doctrine of the Trinity pertains to this sphere, although it is preferentially termed the Kingdom of the Father" (*LPR* 3:362; *vpr* 3:281). Thus, in the "immanent Trinity" God is closed within Himself ("not yet externalized"). Hegel uses this language explicitly: in the 1824 lectures he states that "God is the true God, Spirit, because He is not merely Father, and hence closed up within Himself" (*LPR* 3:219; *vpr* 3:150). In the *Philosophy of Spirit* Hegel states that "God the Father is for Himself, shut up within Himself, abstract, and consequently not yet the God of Spirit and of truth" (*PS* § 384; *Z*; *Petry* 1:63). Hegel also refers to God in this sphere as "loving Himself" (*LPR* 1:124–25; 41). Thus, there is a clear parallel to Böhme's "immanent Trinity" of God "in Himself," the Sour, Sweet, and Bitter (see chapter 1).⁵² In *Six Mystical Points*, Böhme refers to "God in his triad" as "the first Magic."⁵³

The "immanent Trinity" is not an innovation of the *Lectures*; it is to be found in the Jena Triangle fragment in which the "triangle of triangles" represents the process of God's coming to consciousness of Himself. There are three triangles in all, with the triangle of triangles being the figure made up by the set of the three. The first triangle is described by Hegel as follows: "In this First, which is at the same time only One side of the absolutely unique Triangle, there is only the Godhead in reciprocal intuition and cognition with Himself." This is even more strikingly Böhmean than what Hegel says in the *Lectures*. David Walsh writes: "Hegel suggested, as Böhme also did, that the first Trinity of God in himself is not sufficient for the divine self-revelation."⁵⁴ Therefore a second triangle appears, "God the Son." Hegel writes: "In the Son, God is cognizant of Himself as God. He says to Himself: I am God. The within-itself ceases to be a negative."

The separated moment of that which stands opposed to the Godhead must be "transfigured" and brought into unity within God. Hegel writes that "the Son must go right through the Earth, must overcome Evil, and in that he steps over to one side as the victor, must awaken the other, the self-cognition of God, as a new cognition that is one with God, or as the Spirit of God: whereby the middle becomes a beautiful, free, divine

51. See O'Regan, *Heterodox Hegel*, 91, 108, 111. Hodgson speaks of it as a "pre-worldly Trinity," thus calling to mind the eternal character of the Logic. Hodgson, introduction to *LPR* 3:50.

52. O'Regan also recognizes the parallel to Böhme (*Heterodox Hegel*, 109, 130–31).

53. Nicolae, *Science, Meaning and Evolution*, 229.

54. Walsh, *Boehme and Hegel*, 321.

49. See Butler, "Hegelian Pantheism"; Dickey, *Hegel*; Antoine Faivre, "Ancient and Medieval Sources of Modern Esoteric Movements," *Modern Esoteric Spirituality*; Henri de Lubac, *La Spiritualité de Joachim de Fiore* (Paris: Sycamore, 1979–81), vol. 2, 359–77; Michael Murray, *Modern Philosophy of History* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1970), 89–113; O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*.

50. See Peter C. Hodgson, introduction to *Hegel: Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), vol. 3, 50.

middle, the Universe of God." This heralds the arrival of a new triangle, of the Holy Spirit. As we saw in chapter 3, this fragment is the "blue-print" for Hegel's system. The nature of his Logic is expressed here very clearly: the first "triad" of the system (in the later Logic, Being-Essence-Concept) is the "Idea of God." This Idea is expressed (made real) in the triads of the Son (Philosophy of Nature: Mechanics, Physics, Organics) and Spirit (Subjective, Objective, and Absolute Spirit). I noted in chapter 3 that this fragment seems to be influenced by Böhme, Baader, Oetinger, and Eckhart. I can now add Joachim to the list. In the *Lectures* Hegel speaks only of a Trinity immanent within the Father, but we know from the *Philosophies of Nature and Spirit* that the Son and Spirit must be triadically structured as well.

If we ask how Hegel could have encountered the ideas of the Calabrian monk, the answer is that, like so much else, those ideas were a part of the Württemberg cultural milieu to which he, Schelling, and other Swabian intellectuals were exposed. Joachim enjoyed a revival during the Reformation, when his ideas were used as a weapon against the papacy by the followers of Luther. As we have seen, Joachimism is remarkably "Protestant" in spirit. Ernest Renan marveled that the Reformation did not begin with Joachim in the thirteenth century.⁵⁵ Joachimite enthusiasm was very strong in the insular culture of Württemberg, where it became intertwined with indigenous mystical and Hermetic currents. Joachim's thought is not itself "Hermetic"—and it is even questionable whether it should be termed "mystical"—but it was co-opted by Hermeticists like Böhme, Andreae, Baader, and Oetinger.

As Laurence Dickey notes, Old Württemberg belonged to the tradition of what Gethard Ladner has called "Christian reform." Dickey writes: "This tradition . . . took ethical and eschatological elements from widely divergent sources in the history of Christian thought and formed from them an anthropology of fallen and restored man that allowed for—indeed, demanded—man's participation in civil life as well as in his own salvation. The thrust of the tradition was to show that through ethical activism man could transform the world in accordance with God's wishes and, by doing so, make significant 'progress' not only toward transcending his own fallen nature, but toward establishing the Kingdom of God on earth as well."⁵⁶ Dickey argues that Joachimism was one of the influences on Württemberg "Christian reform."⁵⁷ He notes that the Württembergers viewed themselves as a "millennial people," chosen by God to realize the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.⁵⁸

Dickey writes further that the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries in Württemberg "constituted an age of apocalyptic expectation."⁵⁹ Nowhere was this more evident than among the Pietists. Ernst Benz writes of the atmosphere of Württemberg Pietism: "From all sides,

55. See Dickey, *Hegel*, 45.

56. *Ibid.*, 12.

57. *Ibid.*, 34.

58. *Ibid.*, 36.

59. *Ibid.*, 44.

one watches for the 'signs of the times,' one attempts to perceive in the great historical events the fulfillment of New Testament prophecies. . . . At the same time, the image of the 'Golden age,' the realization of the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of a Thousand Years, the completion of the final phase of world history . . . appears more and more strongly in the spiritual considerations of the community."⁶⁰

The Joachimism of the Pietists appears to have been influenced by the Rosicrucian movement. The influence of Joachim on the Rosicrucian manifestos has been discussed by a number of scholars, and J. V. Andreae himself actually mentions Joachim.⁶¹ J. Montgomery has called Andreae "the single most important influence on the church history of the Württemberg territory for over two hundred years."⁶² Phillip Jakob Spener (1635–1705), sometimes called the "father of German Pietism," explicitly acknowledged his intellectual debt to Andreae.⁶³ Spener divided the history of Christianity into three ages, corresponding to the Trinity, and claimed that the third age would involve the "Divine Light" penetrating and dispelling darkness.⁶⁴

Perhaps the most striking example of Joachim's influence on Pietism, however, is that of J. A. Bengel (1687–1752). Robert Schneider has characterized Bengel as "the philosopher of history who anticipated the work of Schelling and Hegel."⁶⁵ Bengel's maternal great-grandfather was Matthias Hafenreffer (1561–1619), chancellor of the University of Tübingen and one of Andreae's teachers. Having lived through the wars of Louis XIV as a young boy, Bengel had seen much violence and grew up hoping for a time of perpetual peace. Unlike many such hopefuls, however, Bengel did not look for signs of progress. Instead he prophesied that corruption, violence, and blasphemy would only increase until the forces of the Antichrist burned themselves out. Bengel held that world history is an organic unity, in which revelation is playing itself out by degrees. As Ernst Benz puts it, for Bengel

history is a series of alliances between God and the elect saved from the fall. This history of salvation is realized in a spiritual evolution through these alliances, until the final battle between the Kingdom of Light and the Kingdom of Darkness. In Bengel, these suggestions become even stronger as he also wishes to see a chronological conformity between the periods. His book *Weltalter*, a title that one finds again, significantly enough, in Schelling, represents an attempt

60. Benz, *Mystical Sources*, 34.

61. See J. V. Andreae, *Turris Babel sive Judicium de Fraternitate Rosaceae Crucis Chaos* (Argentorati: Sumptibus haeredum Lazari Zetzneri, 1619), 14–15. For scholars who have noted the Joachim-Rosicrucian connection see for example, Dickey, *Hegel*, 63–65; Roland Edighoffer, "Rosicrucianism from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Centuries," *Modern Esoteric Spirituality*; J. Montgomery, *The Cross and the Crucible*, 57, 173, 198–99.

62. Dickey, *Hegel*, 61; J. Montgomery, *The Cross and the Crucible*, ix.

63. On the relationship of Andreae to Pietism, see Robert Schneider, *Geistesleben*, 36–37.

64. Hanratty, "Hegel and the Gnostic Tradition: II," 319.

65. Robert Schneider, *Geistesleben*, 38.

at a chronological fixation of the divine plan of redemptive history, with the aid of the varied numerical data from Old and New Testament prophetic books.⁶⁶

Through a complex and eccentric interpretation of the Book of Revelation, Bengel determined that the Millennium would begin in the year 1836. 1809 would mark the return of Christ and the inception of the "Kingdom of a Thousand Years" (*Tausend-jahre Reich*). Benz notes that Hegel's "cunning of reason" is clearly anticipated by Bengel in his account of how this Kingdom shall come into being:

Viewed from outside, history is the place of the expansion of the private egotism of individuals and groups. Those with power act as they intend; each one wishes to attain his objective by his own action. But from the moment an act has taken place, the actor ceases to be the master of his actions. The act not only produces the repercussions its instigator desired, but also has boundless and unforeseen consequences, leading to unimaginable and often completely unexpected primary and secondary results. . . . [In Bengel, this idea] is contained in a theological interpretation of history in its totality, which sees in every event, in the last analysis, an element of the divine plan of redemption.⁶⁷

Bengel and his followers, who called themselves "The Free" (*Die Freien*), proclaimed the perennial ideal of the "invisible church," a conception which is similar to Joachim's informal "community of the faithful," which was supposed to characterize the third age.⁶⁸ As discussed earlier, the invisible church is a perennial theme of German mysticism, and also an important concept for both the Freemasons and the Rosicrucians (who also spoke of an "invisible college"). In a letter from Hegel to Schelling of January 1795, Hegel writes: "Reason and Freedom remain our watchword, and our rallying point the Invisible Church."⁶⁹ Robert Schneider holds that Hegel's use of the term *invisible church*, as well as the phrase "Kingdom of God" (see the following section) is evidence of the influence of Pietist theology.⁷⁰ As we have seen, Dickey argues that the "Protestant civil piety" of Old Württemberg involved, among other things, the goal of establishing the kingdom of God on earth through a transformation of ethics. Robert Schneider, in fact, refers to the "kingdom of God" (*Das Königreich Gottes*) as the "consummate idea" of Swabian Pietism.⁷¹ In addition to Bengel, P. M. Hahn also preached a doctrine of the invisible church.

66. Benz, *Mystical Sources*, 35.

67. *Ibid.*, 37.

68. See Hanratty, "Hegel and the Gnostic Tradition: II," 313.

69. Butler, 32; Hoffmeister #8. Harris writes: "It seems to me virtually certain that for Hegel, at any rate, the 'invisible Church' originally referred to the cosmopolitan ideal of Freemasonry as envisaged by Lessing in *Ernst und Falk*" (*Toward the Sunlight*, 105). Harris also seems to suggest that the "invisible church" should be understood as equivalent to Objective Spirit (*Night Thoughts*, 411).

70. Robert Schneider, *Geistesahnen*, 41.

71. *Ibid.*, 146.

It is through Böhme and Oetinger that Joachimism and millenarianism in general are incorporated into the Hermetic tradition, and significantly, it is Böhme and Oetinger who are probably the chief sources of Hegel's Joachimism. F. Ernest Stoeffler makes reference to Oetinger's "rampant chiliasm," which "surpassed even that of Bengel."⁷² While Bengel had put great stress on how we can know that the millennium is approaching (e.g., through his theories of biblical exegesis), Oetinger took Bengel's calculations for granted and focused instead on precisely what the end of time would bring. The picture that Oetinger paints of the "Golden Age" at the end of time is essentially indistinguishable from utopian socialism:

In any kingdom, true happiness has three conditions [all of which will be satisfied in the millennium]: first, that despite all multiplicity, which is not against order, and despite all differences of rank, the subjects have equality among each other, as we have learned from the distribution of Israel where the equal share of land reminded everybody not to pride himself above others. Everybody is to find his happiness in the happiness of his neighbor, his joy in the joy of all the other people, and by that everybody is to be a free lord among others; secondly, that they have a community of goods and not take delight in goods because they are a property; thirdly, that they demand nothing from each other as an obligation. Because, if everything would be available in abundance, there would be no need of government, property, and of no liabilities forced and extorted by government.⁷³

Of course, such a utopian conception is completely antithetical to the spirit of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* (in the preface to which Hegel explicitly rejects utopianism).⁷⁴ Nevertheless, it must be remembered that in his youth, Hegel, like so many others of his generation, was infatuated with the utopian ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity proclaimed by the French revolutionaries. As Hegel himself discusses, it is natural for young people to be idealistic and to dream of remaking the world. It is generally assumed that Hegel's youthful idealism was awakened by the revolution, but Ernst Benz suggests a different hypothesis: "German democratic ideas do not rest solely on the ideology of the French Revolution, but find roots in the Christian conscience of Swabian Pietism."⁷⁵ Benz is suggesting that the source of Hegel's idealism is the dream of the "Golden Age of freedom and equality that he encountered in Bengelian, Oetingerite, Hahnian, and other Pietist 'schools.'" It would have been hard to have avoided encountering these currents in late eighteenth-century Stuttgart. Hegel—and Schelling and Hölderlin—may have responded so quickly and enthusias-

72. Stoeffler, *German Pietism*, 117.

73. Quoted in Vondung, "Millenarianism, Hermeticism, and the Search for a Universal Science," 122.

74. It should be mentioned that Oetinger was in no way a revolutionary. He believed that his Golden Age would be brought about by God, not man.

Until that time, he advocated obedience to authority and viewed existing social institutions positively. See Hayden-Roy, "A Foretaste of Heaven," 52–53.

75. Benz, *Mystical Sources*, 44.

tically to the French Revolution because they saw in it the imminent fulfillment of ideals to which they were already committed, ideals transmitted to them by Swabian Pietism.⁷⁶

Oetinger believed that at the end of time, not only would all men live in perfect harmony but science would be transformed. No longer would there be a multitude of disconnected sciences; a new "superscience" would arise that would unify all knowledge. Oetinger's New Science, as we might call it, is a version of *panosophia*. Benz describes Oetinger's science as it will exist in his utopia: "The coming together of these gifts of the spirit occurs in a central vision exalting the faith of the Kingdom's subjects to the level of knowledge, of an intellectual intuition. They will participate in a central knowledge. The description of this knowledge of the future already constitutes a direct foreshadowing of the idealistic idea of knowledge such as we find in different forms in Schelling, Hegel, and Baader."⁷⁷ Oetinger describes his New Science in the following rap-turous language:

It will be very easy to understand: God will present all things in an intuitive form; and we will see his reckonings in an architectural vision, in detail and in its totality, in the physical as in the moral; but above all we will have a very clear knowledge of the history of nations. What the Holy Revelation only outlined, will be recounted in all detail, drawn out of the abyss, set beside every kind of state or constitution and seen under the righteous enlightenment of the knowledge of God, of the soul, and of the human body. There will be no more than one basic wisdom. Jurisprudence and medicine will be inseparable from theology; history will be the public theatre of God's ways and of providence, of all the phrases of Solomon. . . . It will be the source of all knowledge. The law will come from theology, and medicine will be no more than an emblematic theology. We will see in souls and in bodies the imprint of the being from whom all things have come forth.⁷⁸

Aside from the claim that this knowledge will be had in "intuitive form," this passage seems almost like a prophecy of Hegel's system. As we have noted, Hegel's philosophical project aims at a perfected form of life that will transform all aspects of man and his world: religious life, art, our understanding of history, of science, of government. Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* can be seen as an attempt to make good on Oetinger's prediction that the New Science would include a theodicy, an attempt to show that "history [is] the public theatre of God's ways and of all providence." For Hegel as for Oetinger, science and philosophy become identical with theology. Hegel takes up "what the Holy Revela-

76. Hayden-Roy, in her study of the influence of Württemberg Pietism on Hölderlin, writes that "Chilastic excitement was widespread among all ranks of the Württemberg Pietists at the time Hölderlin was studying at the Stift, and the French Revolution added to their conviction that they were drawing near to the fullness of time" ("A Foretaste of Heaven," 216).

77. Benz, *Mystical Sources*, 40.

78. Oetinger, *Sämtliche Schriften*, vol. 6, 47.

tion only outlined," the triune structure of the divine; he "recounts it in all detail" and "sets [it] beside every kind of state or constitution," in order that we may "see in souls and in bodies the imprint of the being from whom all things have come forth."

While the influence of Bengel and Oetinger on Hegel's thought is highly probable, in the case of Schelling it is certain. Schelling describes history as a "successively developing revelation of God."⁷⁹ In *Die Weltalter* Schelling states that "The peace of the Golden Age [*das Goldne Zeitalter*] will be made known first through the harmonious unification of all sciences."⁸⁰ In his *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800), Schelling sets forth what he calls "the only true interpretation of history":

History as a whole is a progressive, gradually self-disclosing revelation of the absolute. Hence one can never point out in history the particular places where the mark of providence, or God Himself, is as it were visible. For God never exists, if the existent is that which presents itself in the objective world; if *He existed* thus, then *we* should not; but *He continually reveals Himself*. Man, through history, provides a continuous demonstration of God's presence, a demonstration, however, which only the whole of history can render complete.⁸¹

In the same work, Schelling, like Joachim and his followers, divides history into three epochs, maintaining that in the third epoch God is finally "actualized."

5. Hegel and Prussian Rosicrucianism

The major difference between Hegel and the Swabian millennialists is that Hegel believes the end of time has already arrived. Indeed if it were not already finished we could not know it. To be sure, Hegel's theory of history is similar to Joachim's in being Trinitarian, but unlike Joachim, Hegel does not employ the Trinity as a device for making predictions about the future; he merely uses it to make sense of the past (Marx, not Hegel, is the true modern disciple of Joachim).

It was in Berlin that Hegel lectured on his philosophy of history, and in Berlin that he published his *Philosophy of Right*. Hegel came to Berlin in 1818, after having taught for just two years at Heidelberg. This was the crowning moment of his career, and he remained in Berlin until his death on November 14, 1831. The call to Berlin was a recognition of Hegel's importance as a thinker. In Berlin Hegel was a celebrity and enjoyed considerable influence. His lectures were attended by hundreds of people from all walks of life: "veterinary surgeons, insurance brokers, civil servants, operatic tenors and commercial clerks were rushing to his

79. Schelling, "Philosophie und Religion" (1804), *Werke*, vol. 4, 47.

80. Schelling, *Die Weltalter* (1813), *Werke*, vol. 4, 582. This and the preceding line from Schelling's "Philosophie und Religion" are quoted and discussed in Vondung, "Millenarianism, Hermeticism, and the Search for a Universal Science," 124.

81. Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, 211.

lectures."⁸² If we look at Hegel's interests during the Berlin period it is clear that he viewed his new post as a pulpit from which to proclaim the nature of the legitimate state (the *Philosophy of Right*), the actualization of God in the world (the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*), and the climax of the story of mankind (the *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*). Hegel was no Oetinger; he was not the herald of a new age and of utopia; he was Minerva's wise old owl proclaiming that the Kingdom of God is already spread upon the earth, and men need only see it.⁸³

In the preface to the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel attacks utopianism, at one point employing a now-famous metaphor: "To recognize reason as the rose in the cross of the present and thereby to enjoy the present, this is the rational insight which reconciles us to the actual . . ." (Knox, 12; *pr*, 27). In the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* of 1824, Hegel employs the same metaphor, stating that "in order to pluck reason, the rose in the cross of the present, one must take up the cross itself" (*LPR* 2:248n45).

Such commentators as Knox, Löwith, Lasson, Hodgson, and Wood agree in attributing Hegel's metaphor to the Rosicrucians.⁸⁴ Oddly, however, none of them shows how this connection throws any light on Hegel's teaching. Löwith suggests that Hegel not only refers to the Rosicrucians but also to a device originated by Luther.⁸⁵ The problem with this suggestion is that Luther's device is a cross in a heart in a white rose, not a rose in a cross.⁸⁶ Furthermore, in a review essay published in 1829, Hegel himself identifies the reference as being to the Rosicrucians and suggests that only "ignorance" (*Unwissenheit*) could explain someone's failure to recognize the allusion.⁸⁷ He says nothing about Luther.

Earlier in the preface, Hegel draws an interesting contrast between people's attitude toward nature and their attitude toward the ethical world. "So far as nature is concerned people grant that it is nature as it is which philosophy has to bring within its ken, that the philosopher's stone [der Stein der Weisen] lies concealed somewhere within nature itself, that nature is inherently rational, and that what knowledge has to investigate and grasp in concepts is this actual reason present in it . . . in the sense of the law and essence immanent within it" (Knox, 4; *pr*, 16). The rose represents reason. Since Hegel uses the philosopher's stone to represent the reason inherent in nature and society, the philosopher's stone is

equivalent to the rose in the cross. Given the reputation of the Rosicrucians as alchemists, the equivalency of these two metaphors cannot have escaped Hegel.⁸⁸ Thus there is an alchemical-Rosicrucian metaphorical subtext to the preface. Hegel is again playing the role of "world-historical alchemist": having isolated the philosopher's stone (reason) in the realm of nature, he now turns to the ethical world and proposes to carry out a similar operation there, to find the philosopher's stone in what is.

Why does Hegel place a clear and publicly acknowledged reference to the Rosicrucians in the preface to the *Philosophy of Right*? Hegel seems an unlikely Rosicrucian. The Rosicrucian manifestos announced the aim of a "General Reformation of the Entire World." Hegel's aims, however, were not so grandiose, and by the time he arrived in Berlin his political philosophy had become distinctly conservative.

There is more to the Rosicrucian saga than has been discussed so far, however. Some time in the latter half of the eighteenth century the Rosicrucian movement was revived in Germany. There is disagreement about exactly when this took place—some say 1757, some 1777, others give a different date entirely. By the late eighteenth century, however, the Rosicrucians were anything but reformers. The new incarnation of the Rosicrucian brotherhood, christened the "Gold and Rosy-Cross" (*Gold- und Rosenkreuzer*) was a conservative organization, dedicated to combating the influence of the liberal Freemasons and Illuminati.⁸⁹ The Rosicrucian revival in the eighteenth century appears to have been sparked initially by Samuel Richter's *Die wahrhafte und volkommene Bereitung des philosophischen Steins der Brüderschaft aus dem Orden des Golden und Rosenkreuzes* (1710).⁹⁰ Richter (who wrote under the name Sincerus Renatus) was a Silesian Pietist pastor who preached Paracelsism and Böhmeanism from the pulpit. The order of the Gold and Rosy-Cross was probably founded by Hermann Fichtuld, who was in correspondence with Oetinger.⁹¹

The order was opposed to the rationalism and mechanistic materialism so much in vogue in the France and England of the Enlightenment. It was dedicated to combating rationalist attempts to "reform" religion, to "re-educate" the people, and to reshape or overthrow the state. The new Rosicrucians saw themselves as defenders of the faith and of public order, as the following quote from one of their number clearly indicates: "It is one of our foremost duties to serve the state into which we have been placed by Providence—to serve it with all our power and capacity. We must be obedient and loyal to the higher powers ordained by God,

88. Christopher MacIntosh argues that the members of the eighteenth-century Gold- und Rosenkreuzer were deeply involved in alchemy. Each of the order's lodges had its own alchemical laboratory, for the use of members. MacIntosh, *The Rose Cross*, 75; 84.

89. Epstein, *Genesis of German Conservatism*, 105; see also Heinrich Schneider, *The Quest for Mysteries*, 76–77. Epstein includes a long list of secondary sources for the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer (105).

90. MacIntosh, *The Rose Cross*, 30.

91. *Ibid.*, 46–48.

82. Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, trans. Esward Osers (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 259.

83. My allusion is to the Gospel of Thomas, 114. See *The Other Bible*, ed.

Willis Barnstone (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984), 307.

84. Knox, 303 n34; Löwith, *Hegel to Nietzsche*, 18; Hodgson, *LPR* 2:248 n45;

Allen Wood, editorial note in Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed.

Allen W. Wood and trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 391, n27.

85. Löwith, *Hegel to Nietzsche*, 18–19.

86. One is tempted to think that this implausible hypothesis has suggested

itself to scholars simply because they are on more familiar territory dealing

with Luther.

87. "Über die Hegelsche Lehre oder absolutes Wissen und moderner Panthe-

ismus.—Über Philosophie überhaupt und Hegels Enzyklopädie der philosophis-

chen Wissenschaften insbesondere," (1829), in *Werke* 11:466.

and help to promote the public good even when it violates our private egotism.⁹² The Gold and Rosy-Cross gained considerable influence throughout Germany, including Hegel's native Swabia. Its members included many prominent politicians, writers, and scientists, including the physiologist Samuel Thomas von Sömmering, whom Hegel cites in his *Philosophy of Nature* (*Werke* 9:451).

By far the most dramatic example of their influence was during the reign of Frederick William II of Prussia (1786–97). Frederick William was the nephew and successor of Frederick the Great. Whereas his uncle was an "enlightened" despot, interested in science, unmoved by superstition, and open to using the power of the state to effect limited reforms, Frederick William was a mystic and an opponent of Enlightenment. He was reputed to have visions, hear ghostly voices, and hold the occasional séance.⁹³ Frederick the Great had been a Mason, initiated into the order as a young man. During his reign the number of lodges in Berlin increased to thirteen. Frederick himself was Grand Master of a lodge called "At the Sign of the Three Globes."⁹⁴ Like his uncle, Frederick William had also been a Mason, but the order's emphasis on rationalism and its merely decorative mystification did not satisfy him.

During the War of Bavarian Succession in 1778–79, Frederick William encountered an officer in his uncle's army by the name of Johann Rudolf von Bischoffswerder (1741–1803). Bischoffswerder, a Saxon by birth, had also flirted with Masonry, but his burning desire was to be initiated into the secrets of alchemy, a desire the Masons could not satisfy. On Christmas Eve 1779 he was initiated into a Rosicrucian lodge, where he apparently found what he was looking for. Bischoffswerder is known to have been conversant with Kabbalistic and alchemical writings.⁹⁵ In 1780, learning of Bischoffswerder's friendship with the prince, Duke Friedrich August of Braunschweig-Öls, the chief of the Berlin Gold and Rosy-Cross, ordered him to entice Frederick William into joining their ranks. In the meantime, the prince had suffered an illness and Bischoffswerder had nursed him back to health, apparently using a mysterious elixir originating with the Rosicrucian brotherhood.⁹⁶ Grateful to Bischoffswerder and full of mystical enthusiasm, Frederick Wilhelm entered the Rosicrucian order on August 8, 1781, and was given the secret name Brother Ormesus Magnus.

Presiding at the prince's initiation ceremony was the lodge's founder, Johann Christoph Wöllner (1732–1800). Klaus Epstein has described Wöllner and Bischoffswerder, who were close allies, as "the first self-consciously Conservative politicians in German history, politicians in

the honorable sense of the term—men eager for power for the sake of implementing their principles."⁹⁷ That is to say, they were the first German politicians whose policies involved a conscious commitment to rolling back the forces of liberalism. Wöllner, the son of a Lutheran pastor, had married into the Prussian nobility over the objections of Frederick the Great, who refused to grant him a title. He became a Mason in 1765 and rose quickly in the ranks to become a Knight of the Strict Observance (a rank associated with the alleged link between the Masons and the Knights Templar) in 1776. Like Bischoffswerder, however, he became disillusioned with the Masons and joined the Rosicrucians in 1779, where he also attained a position of considerable authority, serving as *Oberhauptdirektor* over twenty-six *Zirkel*.⁹⁸ In the years leading up to Frederick William's coronation in 1786, Wöllner and Bischoffswerder worked hard to win the prince over to their mystical philosophy and conservative politics, which was not difficult.

Wöllner's ambition was to succeed the famous Karl Abraham Zedlitz, the Prussian minister of culture. He succeeded in this on July 3, 1788, when Frederick William, who had ascended the throne in the summer of 1786, appointed him *Staats- und Justiz-Minister* and *Chef des Geistlichen Departements* (minister of ecclesiastical affairs). While Wöllner's economic policy may have been progressive, he was a zealous defender of the traditional faith against rationalism. On July 9, 1788, just six days after acquiring his post, Wöllner persuaded the king to enact the "Edict Concerning Religion," which commanded orthodoxy of the clergy. The "Edict of Censorship" of December 19, 1788, suppressed writings considered to be atheistic or otherwise impious. In 1792, Wöllner's office published the *Landeskatechismus*, which defined the tenets of religious orthodoxy and proscribed all rationalist approaches to "reforming" religious practice or to "interpreting" scripture. Wöllner is famous for his censorship of Kant's *Religion Within the Bounds of Reason Alone* (1793). Despite this, Wöllner's "Edict Concerning Religion" granted the different religious sects of Prussia full freedom of worship, so long as they did not proselytize. Jews, for instance, enjoyed full religious toleration under the terms of the edict.

In 1797, the plans of Wöllner and Bischoffswerder were abruptly crushed by the death of the king and the ascension to the throne of his son, Frederick William III. The son had none of the father's mystical fervor or Rosicrucian connections. He was no rationalist either, but, by all accounts, merely a dullard without any convictions of his own. He reigned for forty-three years. The rationalists who had laid low during Frederick William II's reign saw their chance: they filled up the vacuum that was Frederick William III, persuaded him to purge the Rosicrucians from the cabinet and to cancel many of the measures enacted by Wöllner and company. Wöllner and Bischoffswerder retired into private life and died in obscurity.

97. Epstein, *Genesis of German Conservatism*, 354.

98. *Ibid.*, 357.

92. Quoted in Epstein, *Genesis of German Conservatism*, 110.

93. See Henri Brunschwig, *Enlightenment and Romanticism in Eighteenth-Century Prussia*, trans. Frank Jellinek (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 165; cf. Epstein, *Genesis of German Conservatism*, 353.

94. Brunschwig, *Enlightenment and Romanticism*, 185.

95. Epstein, *Genesis of German Conservatism*, 354.

96. Gilbert Stanhope, *A Mystic on the Prussian Throne* (London: Mills and Boon, 1912), 124.

This is the historical context required to understand what a reference to the "rose in the cross of the present" would have meant to readers—including censors—in 1821. Some Hegel scholars recognize this, but their treatment of the historical materials has, in some cases, been rather inadequate. For instance, Kenneth Westphal thinks that Hegel's reference to the "rose in the cross of the present" is a message to "the superstitious and reactionary king, Frederick William III." Westphal informs us that "The king belonged to the Rosicrucians, an anti-scientific cabalistic Christian sect devoted to the occult."⁹⁹ Thus, Hegel is denouncing the "other-worldliness" of the Rosicrucian king, telling him he must recognize the rose in the cross of the present.¹⁰⁰ The only problem with this, of course, is that Westphal has his Frederick Williams wrong: when Hegel published the *Philosophy of Right* in 1821, Frederick William II had been dead and the Rosicrucians out of power for twenty-four years! Westphal would make Hegel a liberal Don Quixote, dueling with nonexistent Rosicrucian villains, much like the American religious fundamentalists who see the Illuminati lurking under every bed. A further problem with Westphal's thesis is that with respect to their *political views*, the Rosicrucians were not "other-worldly": in fact, they espoused the very sort of anti-utopianism Hegel articulates in his preface.

The same blurring of historical fact occurs in a monograph on the preface by Adriaan Peperzak. Referring to the "rose in the cross of the present," Peperzak writes:

In a veiled manner . . . Hegel could be understood here to be directing himself to the king and his reactionary advisers with the message that true philosophy . . . does precisely what they wish: it legitimizes the reconciliation and satisfaction with the existing political reality by showing that it is as beautiful as a rose—in spite of its painful aspects. The fact that Hegel is not on their side, however, but on the side of the modern, post-Napoleonic legal state . . . choosing in favor of enlightened ministers such as Herdenberg and Altenstein, is clear from the main text of the *Philosophy of Right*, but not from the *Preface*. This lack of clarity and the *appearance of agreement with the Rosicrucians among the politicians* are tricks employed in Hegel's rhetoric.¹⁰¹

But again, the Rosicrucians were simply not a political force in Prussia in 1821. Thus Hegel would have gained nothing by the "rhetorical trick" of "appearing to agree with the Rosicrucians"—far from it, in fact, since it was the reigning king who had long ago purged his government of Rosicrucian influence. Further, as I have shown, the Rosicrucians were not "paleo-conservatives," blindly reacting to all change and opposing all reform. Christopher MacIntosh writes that "Wöllner was in many ways

99. Westphal, "Context and Structure of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*," 238.

100. *Ibid.*, 239.

101. Adriaan Th. Peperzak, *Philosophy and Politics: A Commentary on the Preface to Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987), 109; my italics.

a product of the Aufklärung."¹⁰² He contributed articles to Friedrich Nicolai's *Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek*, the chief organ of the German Enlightenment, and wrote essays on agriculture and land reform. Moreover, many of the "reactionary" views of the Rosicrucians were shared by Hegel. For instance, Hegel opposed forces that would undermine traditional religion, particularly irreligious philosophies; he held that all citizens ought to be required to subscribe to a religion; he held that it is the "supreme duty" of citizens to belong to the state, etc. To be sure, Hegel is more liberal than Wöllner et al: he believes in greater freedom of religion and advocates greater freedom of expression than did the Rosicrucians, but his sentiments are decidedly paternalistic, pro-Christian, pro-tradition, and anti-individualistic. (The claim that conservatism means opposition to all reforms, including conservative ones, is simply a caricature and a canard.)

Peperzak claims that Hegel only "appears" to agree with the Rosicrucians in their opposition to utopianism and their advocacy of the conservative view that society as it is,warts and all, is at bottom "rational" and cannot and should not be otherwise. Given that Hegel had nothing to gain from merely appearing to agree with the Rosicrucians, we must consider the possibility that he *really does agree with them*. Thus, Hegel's metaphor of the "rose in the cross of the present" is hardly a bone thrown to the king's censors, but rather a *daring* move: an expression of sympathy with the discredited advisors of the previous monarch. My conclusion is that when, in 1821, Hegel set down his mature views on political philosophy, prefacing them with an attack on utopianism and political rationalism, he considered the place in which he was then working, Berlin, and found himself feeling some sympathy with the conservative Rosicrucians who had dominated the court of the previous king.

As we have seen, in Berlin Hegel allied himself with Franz von Baader, the reactionary occultist and opponent of Enlightenment. Baader was reputed to have been a member of the Gold and Rosy-Cross. This would certainly be a strange friendship for Hegel to publicly cultivate if he wanted to distance himself from the forces of "reaction" that were still alive in Prussia. Despite significant differences between Hegel's philosophy and Baader's, Hegel wrote to Baader in 1824, concerning the latter's *Fermenta Cognitionis*, "I think we are in agreement on the main issue. A few misgivings concerning a small number of points which you cite from my work probably would easily be removed." He closes by saying, "Please spare me an evening sometime soon. Let me know which evening this week you are free and could grant me the kindness of a visit. Most respectfully, Hegel."¹⁰³

102. MacIntosh, *The Rose Cross*, 180.

103. Butler, 572-73; Hoffmeister #466a. In 1822, Baader and Baron Boris von Uxküll, a former Hegel student, set out for St. Petersburg to try and found an Academy for Religious Science. Baader invited Hegel along, but he declined (a good thing, since Baader and Uxküll were unceremoniously expelled from Russia; see Butler, 568-69).

As d'Hondt has discussed extensively, Hegel's early life was marked by numerous associations with Freemasonry. There is no evidence that Hegel ever actually became a Mason, but he was friends with many well-known Masons and, as we have seen in chapters 2 and 4, he employed some Masonic imagery in his writing. Hegel's correspondence with Schelling and Hölderlin contains Masonic allusions. Recall Hegel's January 1795 letter to Schelling: "May the Kingdom of God come, and our hands not be idle!" The last line before Hegel's signature reads, "Reason and Freedom remain our watchword, and our rallying point the Invisible Church."¹⁰⁴ In later years, however, Hegel realized that the Kingdom of God *had already come*. There was thus no need for busy hands, or for a rallying point. If we juxtapose these remarks from 1795 with Hegel's "rose in the cross of the present" of 1821, it is apparent that Hegel has, in effect, switched allegiances from the ideals of the radical, reforming Masons to those of the conservative Rosicrucians.¹⁰⁵

The possibility that Hegel might actually have belonged to the Rosicrucians, or some other mystical sect, is tantalizing but, at present, devoid of proof. Nevertheless, in the sense in which Yates uses the term, Hegel is a Rosicrucian. Yates writes that "I should like to try to persuade sensible people and sensible historians to use the word 'Rosicrucian' . . . The word could, I suggest, be used of a certain style of thinking which is historically recognizable without raising the question of whether a Rosicrucian style of thinker belonged to a secret society."¹⁰⁶

In his *Enlightenment and Romanticism in Eighteenth-Century Prussia*, Henri Brunschwig discusses a certain character type prevalent in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Germany: men who hunger after wisdom, particularly esoteric wisdom or forbidden ideas, and who are consequently attracted to "secret societies" like the Masons. They are disillusioned, inevitably, by the Masons, whose "mysteries" prove nonexistent. Brunschwig writes that such men

believe that even if the lodges do not possess the secrets, that is no proof that the mystery does not exist. So they set to work in isolation. They read Jakob Böhme or Franz von Baader; they listen to Baron Eckhartshausen and Jung-Stilling in his old age, high priests who wrangle over each other's followers. They canvass such

104. Butler, 32; Hoffmeister #8.

105. In his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* of 1805, Hegel bitterly dismisses Freemasonry: "Just as the Freemasons have symbols which are esteemed for their depth of wisdom—depth as a brook is deep when one cannot see the bottom—that which is hidden very easily seems to men deep, or as if the depth were concealed beneath. But when it is hidden, it may possibly prove to be the case that there is nothing behind." This is so in Freemasonry, in which everything is concealed to those outside and also to many people within, and where nothing remarkable is possessed in learning or in science, and least of all in philosophy" (LHP 1:89; *Werke* 18:110).

106. Frances A. Yates, "The Hermetic Tradition in Renaissance Science," in *Art, Science, and History in the Renaissance*, ed. Charles S. Singleton (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), 263.

recent scientific discoveries as electricity, magnetism, and oxygen and combine experiments with them with the ideas of the ancient mystics in new systems based on a popularization of theosophy.¹⁰⁷ This is a description of the sort of men who identified themselves as "Rosicrucians," and—aside from the interest in Eckartshausen and Jung-Stilling—it is a very apt description of Hegel.

I have argued that Hegel is a Hermetic thinker. I have offered three kinds of evidence. First I have argued that Hegel displays the essential characteristic of Hermeticism: the doctrine that God alone is not complete, that He lacks self-knowledge, and that He therefore creates the world as the mirror in which He recognizes Himself, specifically through the speculative activity of the Hermetic adept, who by knowing God, allows God to know Himself. Hegel claims to be such an adept, having replaced the love of wisdom with the possession of wisdom, philosophy with theosophy. Second, I have argued that Hegel was interested in and influenced by strands of thought associated with most, if not all, Hermetic thinkers, such as alchemy, Kabbalism, mesmerism, extrasensory perception, spiritualism, dowsing, eschatology, *prisca theologia*, *philosophia perennis*, Lullism, Paracelsism, Joachimism, Rosicrucianism, Freemasonry, Eckhartian mysticism, and doctrines of occult "correspondences" and "cosmic sympathies." Third, by presenting ample evidence of Hegel's contacts with the Hermetic tradition throughout his intellectual career, I have shown that the parallels between Hegel and the Hermetic tradition are not accidental.

Have I proven my case? This question leads to another question: What are reasonable standards of evidence for asserting that a thinker belongs to or is influenced by an intellectual tradition? I ask the reader to evaluate the persuasiveness of my evidence by the standard used in a court case: proof beyond a "reasonable" doubt, as opposed to the unreasonable "paper" doubts philosophy professors are so facile in conjuring up. Imagine that Hermeticism is a crime and Hegel is on trial for it. This study could serve as a brief for the prosecution. Let the following serve as my final summation.

Hegel's writings contain numerous, and mostly approving references to Hermeticism: to leading Hermetic figures such as Eckhart, Paracelsus, Bruno, and Böhme, and to Hermetic movements or schools of thought such as alchemy, Kabbalism, Freemasonry, and Rosicrucianism. His library included Hermetic writings by Agrippa, Böhme, Bruno, and Paracelsus. He relied on histories of thought that discussed Hermes Trismegistus, Pico della Mirandola, Robert Fludd, Knorr von Rosenroth, and the Kabbalah alongside canonical figures like Plato and Descartes. He read widely on mesmerism, psychic phenomena, dowsing, precognition, and sorcery. He believed in an "Earth Spirit." He corresponded with colleagues about the nature of magic. He explicitly and

107. Brunschwig, *Enlightenment and Romanticism*, 187.

publicly aligned himself with the latter-day Rosicrucians and with the well-known occultist Franz von Baader.

Hegel was, furthermore, exposed to Hermetic ideas and influences throughout his career. Hegel was likely first exposed to Hermeticism during his boyhood in Stuttgart, from 1770-88. His homeland, the Grand Duchy of Württemberg, was a center of Hermetic activity and interest. In Württemberg, moreover, Hermeticism was not confined merely to secret societies. Such figures as Oetinger, Bengel, and Hahn injected the ideas of Joachim, Eckhart, Böhme, and Swedenborg, and of such traditions as Kabbalism, alchemy, and Rosicrucianism, into the Pietist movement, thereby influencing the society at large. The influence of Württemberg's speculative Pietism on Hegel's friends Schelling and Hölderlin is well-documented, and considering the parallels between some of Hegel's ideas and those of the speculative Pietists, it is reasonable to conclude that Hegel too felt their influence.

Rosenkranz calls the years 1793 to 1801, when Hegel worked as a private tutor in Berne and Frankfurt, the "theosophical phase" of his development. During this time, Hegel studied Böhme, Eckhart, and Tauler and associated with many known Freemasons. In Jena, from 1801-7, Hegel lectured at length, and approvingly, on Böhme and Bruno. He composed several works, preserved only in fragmentary form, employing Hermetic language and symbolism, including the "Böhme Myth," the Triangle fragment, and the triangle diagram, with its alchemical and astrological symbolism. His lectures on the Philosophy of Nature also display a knowledge of alchemy. It is also likely that Schelling introduced Hegel to his Jena associates, many of whom were heavily interested in Hermeticism.

During Hegel's years in Berlin, from 1818 until his death in 1831, his interest in Hermeticism became more intense and more explicit. It was during these years that Hegel developed his relationship with Baader. In the winter of 1823-24 Hegel studied Eckhart with Baader and subsequently produced a lecture on religion that Baader took to be a statement of Eckhartian mysticism. During these years, Hegel also began to acknowledge his Hermetic interests more explicitly in his writings. The image of the rose in the cross of the present in the preface to the 1821 *Philosophy of Right* publicly aligned him with the Rosicrucians, a fact that he made even more explicit in a review essay in 1829. The preface to the 1827 edition of the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline* makes prominent mention of Böhme and Baader. The 1827 *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* introduce a doctrine of the "immanent Trinity" clearly inspired by Böhme's initial triad of "source-spirits." The 1831 *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* employ Joachimite terminology to speak of the Trinity. In the section on *Qualität* in the posthumous 1832 revised edition of the first part of the *Science of Logic*, Hegel makes an explicit reference to Böhme where the first edition has merely an allusion. In sum, all the evidence indicates that Hegel's Hermeticism was no mere folly of youth, abandoned with maturity. It was a lifelong interest, which grew deeper and richer with the passing years.

Finally, Hegel's system itself is Hermetic in both form and content. In addition to presenting the essential Hermetic doctrines concerning creation and man's role in it, Hegel also endorses the Hermetic ideas of the *prisca theologia* and the *philosophia perennis*. He structures his system using the Hermetic symbolic forms of the circle, triangle, and square. He also states more than once that the term *speculative* means the same thing as "mystical." I have shown that the *Phenomenology of Spirit* serves as a kind of initiation ritual, an initial stage of purification that raises the mind above the sensory and the mundane and prepares it for the reception of wisdom. It is a Hermetic ascent to the Absolute—which is set forth in Hegel's *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. I have also displayed a Böhmean subtext to the *Phenomenology's* famous preface. The structure of Hegel's *Encyclopedia* describes the Hermetic circle of creation and also shows the influences of Lullism and pansophism. I have amply documented the explicitly ontological nature of Hegel's *Logic*, as well as its traces of Kabbalism, Böhmeanism, and Lullism. The *Logic* seeks to lay bare the mind of God before creation. As a Hermeticist, however, Hegel regards God before creation as incomplete. To complete himself, God must know himself, and the immediate self-cognition God possesses before creation is not self-knowledge. Self-knowledge requires mediated re-cognition. It requires that the self see itself reflected in another and recognize itself there. The *Philosophy of Nature* portrays the spatio-temporal world as a mirror of God. I have demonstrated its debts to alchemy, Paracelsus in particular. Hegel shows us how the world of Nature is shot through with intelligible anticipations of Spirit, how the very stones "cry out" for Spirit. The *Philosophy of Spirit* and related texts, *The Philosophy of Right*, *The Philosophy of World History*, and the lecture courses on the three moments of Absolute Spirit, art, religion, and philosophy, set forth the "return" of creation to the Divine by means of *man*, who brings about the actualization of God through progressively more adequate embodiments, first in the form of concrete institutions and practices, then in the realm of culture, particularly art and religion, and finally, and most adequately, in Hegel's system of speculative philosophy, which is the Word made flesh, the divine logos spiritually embodied in the pure aether of thought. With this, the Hermetic circle reaches closure. And here too the "prosecution" rests.