

THE RECEPTION OF GERMAN MYSTICISM IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND



Sebastian Franck



Johann Valentine Andreae



Jacob Boehme



Valentin Weigel



John Everard



Benjamin Whichcote



Henry More



Anne Conway

**Third International Conference sponsored by the
The Cambridge Centre for the Study of Platonism
and the McGill School of Religious Studies
Pavillon Birks, McGill University , 24—26 May 2023**



The Cambridge Centre for the Study of Platonism



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PROGRAMME

WEDNESDAY, 24 May 2023

- 18h00** **Vin d'Honneur**
The Foyer, Pavillon Birks, McGill
- 19h30** **First Plenary Lecture—Birks Chapel (2nd Floor)**
Douglas Hedley
Professor of the Philosophy of Religion and Director of the Centre for the Study of Platonism, Cambridge University
Medieval Mysticism and Christian Humanism? Reflections on the Cambridge Platonists and the legacy of Erasmus

THURSDAY, 25 May

- 8h30—9h00** **Morning Coffee & Croissants—Birks Foyer**
- 9h00—11h00** **First Panel—Medieval Antecedents—Birks Room 111**
Chair: Daniel Tolan
Postdoctoral Fellow at The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute
- 9h00—9h30** **Sarah Killam Crosby** (McGill University)
Prophecy and Polemic: Hildegard of Bingen's Reception in the Reformation
- 9h30—10h00** **Laura Moncion** (University of Toronto)
Gelassenheit and God: German Mysticism in Julian of Norwich's Revelations
- 10h00—10h30** **Benjamin Crosby** (McGill University)
Crucifying the "ich": The Way of the Cross in the Theologia Germanica
- 10h30—11h00** **Discussion**
- 11h00—13h00** **Second Panel—Nicholas of Cusa and his Legacy**
Chair: Garth Green
McConnell Professor of the Philosophy of Religion, and Director of the School of Religious Studies, McGill University
- 11h00—11h30** **Joshua Hollmann** (Concordia University, St Paul)
Nicholas of Cusa on the Bible and the Qur'an
- 11h30—12h00** **Francesco Bossoletti** (McGill University)
Cusanus' reception between Italy and France as a Framework for Renaissance Platonism
- 12h00—12h30** **David Quackenbos** (McGill University)
The Reception of Nicholas of Cusa in Early Modern France
- 12h30—13h00** **Discussion**
- 13h15—14h30** **Luncheon**
Thomson House, 3650 McTavish
- 14h30—16h30** **Third Panel—German Mysticism and English Enlightenment**
Chair: Douglas Hedley
Professor of the Philosophy of Religion and Director of the Centre for the Study of Platonism, Cambridge University
- 14h30—15h00** **Vittoria Feola** (University of Padua)
German Mystical texts in Elias Ashmole's collections: the French connection
- 15h00—15h30** **Daniel Tolan** (Van Leer Jerusalem Institute)
John Everard and the Corpus Hermeticum
- 15h30—16h00** **Jan Rohls** (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, München)
Johann Valentine Andreae and the religious foundation of scientific reform in England
- 16h00—16h30** **Jure Zovko** (University of Zadar, Croatia)
Fides Quærens Epistēmē: Newton's Fruitful Dialogue between Faith and Science
- 16h30—17h00** **Discussion**
- 19h00 for 19h45** **Drinks in the Birks Senior Common Room**
- 19h45** **Banquet, Gold Room, McGill Faculty Club, 3450 McTavish Street**

FRIDAY, 26 May

8h30—10h30

Fourth Panel—Jakob Boehme and Cambridge Platonism

Chair: James Bryson, Humboldt Fellow, Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich

8h30—9h00

David Leech (University of Bristol)

Nondiscursive ‘Heart’ Knowing in Cambridge Platonism and in German/Rhenish Mysticism

9h00—9h30

Matthew Nini (Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, Freiburg im Breisgau)

Boehme’s Ungrund and the New Theogony of Modernity

9h30—10h00

Lise Zovko (Institute of Philosophy, Zagreb)

Villifying Spinoza, Redeeming Jacob Boehme: Henry More’s Anti-Spinozism, Sympathy with Boehme, and Influence on Anne Conway

10h00—10h30

Discussion

10h30—11h00

Morning Coffee—Birks Senior Common Room

11h00—11h45

Second Plenary Lecture—Birks Chapel (2nd Floor)

Torrance Kirby

Professor of Ecclesiastical History, McGill University

Justification by Faith: Martin Luther’s Mysticism and the Theology of Richard Hooker

12h00—13h15

Luncheon

Thomson House, 3650 McTavish

13h30—15h30

Fifth Panel—Boehme, Cambridge Platonism, German Idealism

Chair: Torrance Kirby, Professor of Ecclesiastical History, McGill

13h30—14h00

Sean McGrath (Memorial University, Newfoundland & McGill)

Variations in the English Reception of Boehme

14h00—14h30

Scott Brown (Independent Scholar)

Dionysius Andreas Freher’s Alkahest: Symbolic Imagery as a medium and exposition of Jacob Boehme’s Works

14h00—15h00

Adrian Mihai (Research Fellow, Clare Hall, Cambridge University)

Eriugena’s Periphyseon: Its German Reception via England

15h00—15h30

Hadi Fakhoury (Harvard University)

From Cambridge to Isfahan: Henry Corbin and the Constitution of Modern Platonism via German Mysticism

15h30—16h00

Discussion

16h00—18h00

Sixth Panel—German Mysticism in English Literature

Chair: Adrian Mihai

Research Fellow, Clare Hall, Cambridge University

16h00—16h30

Erika Qian Liang (McGill University)

The “English Jacob Behmen” and Thomas Traherne: between Oxford and Cambridge

16h30—17h00

Eric Parker (McGill University)

“Happieness a mystery”: Traherne and the Coincidence of Opposites

17h00—17h30

Isabelle Lindsay (McGill University)

The Tension of Connection: Coincidentia Oppositorum in the Writings of John Donne

17h30—18h00

Discussion

18h00

Farewell Tea—Birks Senior Common Room

18h30

**Guided Visit—Raymond Klibansky Collection, McLennan Library
Followed by a Pub Crawl and Supper on the Town**



Cornelius Agrippa



Robert Fludd



Ralph Cudworth



John Sparrow

Acknowledgements

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Garth Green, Douglas Hedley, Torrance Kirby

The Reception of German Mysticism in Early Modern England

Research Précis

The project consists in establishing the fundamental influence of German or Rhenish mysticism on English religious thought, chiefly in the 17th-century. The English reception of such German mystical authors as Meister Eckhart (c. 1260-1328), the anonymous author of *Theologia Germanica*, Johannes Tauler (c. 1300-1361), Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464), Sebastian Franck (c. 1499-1542), Hans Denck (1500-1527), Valentin Weigel (1533-1588), and Jakob Boehme (1575-1624), to mention just the most significant representatives of this tradition, has been hitherto little studied, or not studied at all. There are some notable exceptions, particularly the research of Douglas Hedley on the exceptional role of the Cambridge Platonists, especially of Henry More, in the dissemination of German mysticism in England in the seventeenth century. This project will not only reconstruct for the first time the wide-ranging reception of these German thinkers in Early Modern England, but also show that it was through this reception that the influential tradition of 'German mysticism' was first created. For instance, while in 17th-century Germany the writings of the main figure of this tradition, Jakob Boehme, went underground because of accusations of heresy, in England they were keenly translated, commented upon, and considered in relation to other German writers who had also been translated at the same time, specifically Sebastian Franck and Valentin Weigel. Through their work, the English readers thus established a lineage that connected these thinkers, and that at the same time created a philosophical bridge between England and Germany. The project will highlight the international legacy of these authors by adopting the perspective of historico-philosophical engagement with the sources, placing them also in the theological milieu of their time.



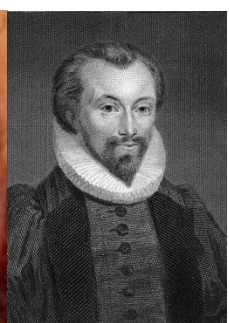
William Law



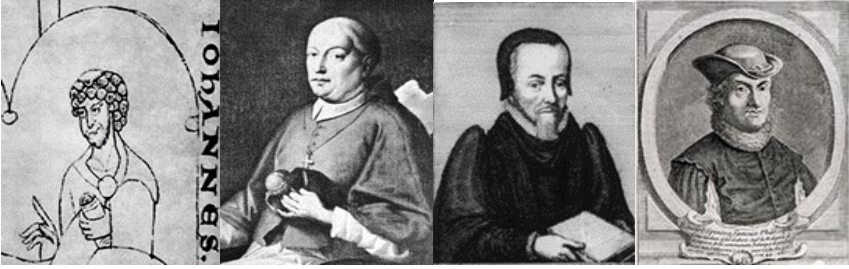
John Pordage



Thomas Traherne



John Donne



John Scotus Eriugena

Nicholas Cusanus

Richard Hooker

Benedict Spinoza

ABSTRACTS

Francesco Bossoletti

Cusanus' reception between Italy and France as a Framework for Renaissance Platonism Abstract –

Considered today with good reason among the most important authors of the fifteenth century, the fortunes of the work of Nichola of Cusa (1401-1464) exhibit an opaque and nonlinear history. As Cassirer already noted, the immediate silence of the Italian Platonists coeval with him problematizes the transmission of his theoretical legacy, which nevertheless explodes in Bruno's admiration for the "divine Cusanus." The undeniable influence that the cardinal's mystical philosophy had on the history of European Platonism, therefore, requires us to study the sinuosity and circularity of this directrix that, as we will suggest, geographically connects Italy and France. Indeed, in this work, we will try to show how the reception of Cusanus's thought is a returning and non-immediate phenomenon in the history of Platonism, the discovery of which passes through the interest addressed to him by French Platonists of the Renaissance. Driving this French interest, however, was a cultural push from an Italian, mainly Ficinian, Platonism, from which the cardinal was intellectually and socially estranged. First, we will therefore try to trace an intellectual profile of Cusano, starting with the personalities who gravitated around him: taking as an example his connection with Valla (1407-1457), Bessarione (1403-1472) and Toscanelli (1397-1482) we will investigate the cardinal's relationship with humanist culture and the Greek language. This will allow us to analyze, in a second step, the reasons for the exclusion of his thought from the Florentine intellectual *milieu* that was headed by Ficino, investigated through the exhibition of the convergences and divergences on the speculative level and the historical-genetic level of the two positions. In a third section, starting from the influence and interest that the Ficinian circle aroused in Platonism we will delve into the French reception that discovered in the group of fifteenth-century Italian Platonists the work of the cardinal. To this end, we will deal with the work of Charles de Bovelles (1479-1567) and his master Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (1450-1536), author of the successful French edition of Cusanus' *opera omnia* in 1514.

Scott Brown

Dionysius Andreas Freher's *Alkhest*: Symbolic Imagery as a medium and exposition of Jacob Boehme's Works.

It is no small feat to discover the web of Jacob Boehme's influence, especially when many who actively read his works hesitated to reveal their debt to him or remained in anonymity themselves. The latter is the case with German writer, draftsman, and alchemist, Dionysius Andreas Freher (1649-1728). Freher's works (which were scarcely published outside of small printings) probably would have been relegated further into obscurity if not for the homage William Blake bestowed upon Freher's diagrams in *The Works of Jacob Behmen* (1764-81). A discussion of Freher should be brief because of the exceptional absence of any published work

about him and the scarcity of his works. Freher's symbolic imagery may represent the first translation of Boehme's words and ideas into a complete visual system of Boehme's ideas as Freher interpreted them.

Freher's interpretation contains a multitude of complex imagery designed to portray Boehme's entire philosophical system of man, his origin, place, and future, as well as Boehme's systemic triad of three worlds interpenetrating each other, apart yet within an eternal nature of seven original forms integrated and generating into a multiplicity of infinite forms; an exceedingly complicated task perhaps fit better for images than words alone. My purpose for examining D.A. Freher's works stems from the neglect they have received despite their catalytic impact upon William Blake and others, and the lack of critical analysis of Freher's imagery and its adherence to or diversion from Boehme's thought. If an image says a thousand words then Freher's images, replete with alchemical, biblical, and sophianical allusions, should be examined for further clues to his understanding (and our own) of Boehme, his influence upon others in seventeenth century England, and his choice of a novel mode to communicate Boehme's ideas into an illustrative system. Philosophy in its literal meaning is the love or search for Sophia, or wisdom. Freher envisioned that this search would take shape under a draftsman's pen. This novel and symbolic interpretation gives us new insights into Boehme's influence.

Benjamin Crosby

Crucifying the "ich": The Way of the Cross in the *Theologia Germanica*

The anonymous fourteenth-century mystical treatise *Theologia Germanica* was one of the central texts in the seventeenth century English reception of German mysticism. Beloved by midcentury religious radicals such as John Everard and Giles Randall, reviled by Laudians and Presbyterians alike, and carefully studied by Cambridge Platonists like Henry More, this "Golden little Book" (in More's words) is key to understanding English Protestant engagement with the Rhineland mystical tradition. In this paper, I will explore the *Theologia's* understanding of how the cross achieves salvation for believers. I will argue that the author is fairly uninterested in Christ's crucifixion as working an objective satisfaction or remission of sins independent of its appropriation by the Christian believer. Rather, the *Theologia* teaches that the import of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection comes from their being made real in the life of each Christian. The cross, and Christ's death upon it, becomes central to the drama of Christian living, understood as an imitation of Christ's dying and rising aimed at eliminating the "I" and allowing God to work freely in the believer's soul. This imitation, the *Theologia* argues, is profoundly unnatural for the believer, making the Christian life a painful way of the cross – yet it is precisely and only Christ's way of the cross, made real in the life of each and every Christian, which can heal the soul and make the believer partake in the divine nature. I will show how this teaching about the cruciform shape of the Christian life was used in its fourteenth-century context to differentiate true from false mysticism and was later drawn upon by seventeenth century English readers to distinguish true life in Christ from merely formal religious affiliation. If we wish to understand why exactly this treatise was so appealing – and so potentially dangerous – in seventeenth century England, it turns out that we need to understand what the *Theologia* teaches about the way of the cross.

Hadi Fakhoury

From Cambridge to Isfahan: Henry Corbin and the Constitution of Modern Platonism via German Mysticism

The work of the influential scholar of Islam, Henry Corbin (1903-1978), contains scattered, but recurring references to the Cambridge Platonists (Henry More, Ralph Cudworth), and the intersecting traditions of German mysticism and Christian theosophy, mediated by figures such as Kaspar Schwenkfeld, Valentin Weigel, Jacob Boehme, Emmanuel Swedenborg, and Friedrich Christoph Oetinger, among others. Corbin noted profound affinities between the Cambridge Platonists and those he famously labeled the "Platonists of Persia," represented by Shihab al-Din

Yahya Suhrawardi and Mulla Sadra, leading him to describe them as “contemporaries.” Despite Corbin’s obvious interest in the Cambridge Platonists, the subject has not received focused scholarly attention. This paper fills the gap by analyzing the significance of this philosophical school for Corbin. Three aspects of this connection will be examined. First, I will address the question of sources, showing how Corbin’s discovery of the Cambridge Platonists was mediated by Ernst Cassirer, author of *The Platonic Renaissance in England* (German original published in 1932), who also inspired Corbin’s central notion of the *mundus imaginalis*. Second, I will analyze Corbin’s most significant references to the Cambridge Platonists, arguing that this school was a model for his conceptualization of the “Platonists of Persia.” Comparing the Cambridge Platonists to their Persian counterparts, Corbin declared that both are engaged on the same side of the “battle for the Soul of the World,” that is, both affirm the existence of an intermediary world which shares aspects of both the world of sensation and the world of intellectual forms, and thus corresponding to the domain of “spiritual corporality.” Third, I will argue that far from being a mere footnote in scholarship, Corbin’s use of the Cambridge Platonists allows him to establish the paradigm of a modern Platonism that cuts across geographical, historical, confessional, and linguistic divides. Thus, through Corbin’s work, German mysticism and Platonism, English and Persian, take on new significance as various expressions of a broad Platonic spiritual lineage containing an “antidote to nihilism.”

Vittoria Feola

German Mystical texts in Elias Ashmole’s collections: the French connection

On January, 2nd, 1686, the antiquary Elias Ashmole (1617-92) gave his bookseller a heap of loose sheets to bind for him in a volume, with his coat of arms engraven on it—a costly privilege for the texts which solely mattered to him the most. Among them were the lives of Queen Elizabeth I, Gaspard Coligny, Thomas Hobbes, and ‘Dr Thauler’. Ashmole had spent his life celebrating the intellectual feats of his fellow countrymen through the publication of three alchemical editions, as well as the definitive work on English heraldry. Yet, Ashmole’s pride in being English did not prevent him from acknowledging the importance of Johannes Tauler in the history of knowledge, as we would presently call it. The German mystic’s presence in Ashmole’s biographical collection did not happen randomly.

The aim of the paper is twofold. First, I wish to assess the relative importance of German mystical texts in Ashmole’s collections. They include works by Tauler, Johann Valentin Andreae, Valentine Weigel, Jakob Boehme, Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa, and John Everard. As a case study I will consider Ashmole’s choice to publish the alchemical tract *The Way To Bliss* (1658) on the basis of John Everard’s annotated copy. Secondly, I wish to analyse the transmission channels through which Ashmole managed to acquire some significant mystical works in English translation. Ashmole never travelled abroad, had no German language, and did not have any correspondent in German-speaking areas. I will show that, while John Everard’s manuscripts in Ashmole’s collection have been noted, their French connection has yet to be explored. Indeed, I will be arguing that Ashmole’s French connection was essential in the acquisition of German mystical material. Thus my paper will contribute to our discussion about the reception of German mysticism in early modern England by pointing to the importance of, first, Calais in the sixteenth century, and, secondly, the English embassy in Paris in the seventeenth century, as relays for German mystical manuscripts and printed works into England.

Douglas Hedley

Medieval Mysticism and Christian Humanism? Reflections on the Cambridge Platonists and the legacy of Erasmus

What is the link between the Teutonic contemplatives of the Dark Ages and the literary humanism of the great Renaissance man of letters Erasmus? The Cambridge Platonists are the inheritors of both the medieval mystical tradition and Erasmus. The resolute rejection of arid

scholasticism and a mystical interpretation of the writings of both Paul and John constitutes a key aspect of the theology of the Cambridge Platonists.

Joshua Hollmann

Nicholas of Cusa on the Bible and the Qur'an

The German cardinal, ecclesial reformer, philosopher, and theologian Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464) was shaped by his understanding of the Bible. His theological and philosophical treatises, dialogues, and sermons exhibit a perpetual search for wisdom, the knowledge of all things human and divine, as revealed primarily in the Christian Scriptures, and also in ancient and medieval philosophy, the Qur'an, and the wonders of universe. For Cusanus, the Bible is the sacred text of God's wisdom as ultimately manifested in the person and work of Jesus Christ, which connects to all aspects of human wisdom. As his writings attest, Cusanus never tired of investigating the intricate reflection of divine wisdom as attained in the cosmos and affirmed in the Bible. While Cusanus's philosophy and theology continue to be examined, scant scholarly attention has been paid to his use and application of the Bible. This short paper will overview Cusanus's understanding of the Bible, and focus on his Christocentric application of the Christian Scriptures in his engagement with Islam as unique in Christian history and thought. In *De pace fidei* (1453) and *Cribratio Alkorani* (1460-61), Cusanus searches for concordance between the Bible and the Qur'an, and seeks and finds the gospel of Christ in the Qur'an. As a humanist theologian, Cusanus closely read the Qur'an in Latin translation (Cod. Cus. 108), and as a Christian and mystical theologian he frequently employed Biblical passages in his writings on Islam as evident in his markings in his personal Bible (Cod. Cus. 4). At the Cusanusstift in Kues, Cusanus's heart is buried near his library and personal Bible (Cod. Cus. 4), the Word of God, which for Nicholas is the source of wisdom and religious dialogue.

Sarah Killam Crosby

Prophecy and Polemic: Hildegard of Bingen's Reception in the Reformation

I propose to examine the use of German mystic Hildegard of Bingen's theological and prophetic writings and saintly status as a polemic both for and against the Protestant Reformation by figures such as Thomas More, Matthias Flacius Illyricus, Andreas Osiander, Hieronymus Gebwiler, and others. Whilst More (albeit briefly) claimed Hildegard as an opponent of Luther and Tyndale in his *The Supplication of Souls*, Illyricus – one of Luther's most prominent 16th century theological inheritors – viewed Hildegard as a sort of proto-Luther. This paper aims to further illuminate the ways in which Hildegard's mystical visions and strictures against clerical corruption were variously taken up by both the Reformers, those espousing a more moderate reformed Catholicism that did not break with the Church of Rome, and apologists of the papacy within the period of the Reformation and counter-Reformation. The Reformation retrieval of German mystical thought, among both Protestants and their opponents, was a significant precursor to the seventeenth century English reception upon which our conference focuses. This study aims to shed light on an understudied aspect of this retrieval.

David Leech

Nondiscursive 'Heart' Knowing in Cambridge Platonism and in German/Rhenish Mysticism

Henry More said of Boehme, that he was 'pulled upwards into paradise [not] by his head, but rather by his heart...which is the source from which those most divine and delicate sensations of which the human soul is capable spring forth' (*Philosophiae Teutonicae Censura*, 1679). Both More and Cudworth recognised a 'true enthusiasm', by which they meant (at least) that there is a legitimate epistemic power in humans which is distinct from discursive understanding. In this paper I will examine Cambridge Platonist formulations of nondiscursive ('vital', 'heart') as opposed to discursive ('notional', 'brain') understanding, in particular, the formulation of heart knowing as 'inward self-moving principle', 'divine life' and 'superintellectual instinct' (Cudworth);

'inward sensation' and 'divine spiritual sense' (Smith); 'sensible feeling', 'inward sense', 'boniform faculty' and 'real sense of God' (More), as well as their common Platonic nondiscursive concept of 'reason'. I will then propose some functional similarities with, and candidates for influence by, formulations of nondiscursive understanding in German and Rhenish mysticism, including inward sight in the *Theologia Germanica*; Franck's inner divine image; Weigel's mental eye; and Boehme's appeal to love and will. In particular, I will highlight respects in which the Cambridge Platonist formulations may move beyond the idea of experiential knowing as a Puritan commonplace and exhibit more specific parallels with German or Rhenish mystics. I approach this topic via the lens of the 'heart', although I will not restrict my analysis only to those passages in which these authors discuss the nondiscursive mode of knowing explicitly in terms of heart. For the Cambridge Platonists, my focus will be on More, Cudworth and Smith, but I will also note parallels to these formulations in Conway, Rust, Glanvill, Ingelo and Hallywell.

Erika Qian Liang

The "English Jacob Behmen" and Thomas Traherne: between Oxford and Cambridge

Thomas Traherne's writings can be located within broader currents of thought circulating in seventeenth-century England, and in particular within the spread of German mysticism with its emphasis on Neoplatonic authors and spiritual contemplation. Because the main figure of this tradition is Jakob Boehme (1575–1624), whose works were keenly translated and commented upon in England at that time, the following question becomes clearly inevitable: did Traherne (1633–1674) read Boehme? Although Boehme remains at present unidentified in the Trahernian *corpus*, a muted impact from the "English Jacob Behmen" on Traherne's works cannot be overlooked. In other words, I argue that Traherne's texts contain sufficient engagement with certain Behmenist teachings circulating during Traherne's time.

This essay examines how Boehme possibly entered Traherne's purview. I commence with Traherne's correspondence with Cambridge Platonists Henry More and Peter Sterry, and then turn to: Traherne's education in Oxford under Puritan Tutors; his personal and intellectual relationship with More and Sterry, who played significant roles in the redaction, adaptation, and recreation of the "English Jacob Behmen"; and the diffusion and reconstruction of Boehme's texts in English and Welsh from the east to the west of England. As described by Eric Parker, Sterry's positive remarks about Boehme likely reinforced the Welsh Puritan minister Morgan Llywd's decision to translate John Sparrow's English translations of Boehme into Welsh and publish a selection of the latter's writings in 1657. This essay considers Traherne's citations and indirect references to Boehme in his *Christian Ethicks*, the Dobell MS (including his *Commonplace Book*), and the *Church's YearBook* and concludes with a consideration of Traherne's own approach to key Behmenist ideas and the Behmenist tendencies of More and Sterry.

I thus argue that the absence of Traherne's direct citation of Boehme in the latter's German, Latin, English, and Welsh versions does not necessarily imply unawareness of Behmenism in Traherne's thought. Rather, while Traherne was penning his own works, he was probably acquainted with the "English Behmen" through the Cambridge Platonists' commentaries. In addition, it is likely that Traherne's reaction to Behmenist thought ranges from conscious discernment to critical correction and from critique to outright rejection, the latter of which is indebted to Henry More's approach to Boehme. This speculation on the influences on Traherne's thinking is significant because it underscores the profound influence of Boehme and German mysticism in shaping the mystical aspect of Anglican spirituality.

Isabelle Lindsay

The Tension of Connection: *Coincidentia Oppositorum* in the Writings of John Donne

The purpose of this paper is to position the writings of John Donne relative to the concept of *coincidentia oppositorum* as it is elaborated by Nicholas of Cusa. While Donne's sources are notoriously difficult to pin down, as he kept no journals through which one can track his intellectual development, and he seems to have downplayed intellectual influences in general, it is widely acknowledged that Donne could hardly have evaded the intellectual currents of his time. It is unlikely that Donne ever read any of Cusa's works, but he certainly encountered continental Neoplatonism—a philosophical movement in which Cusa played an integral part. Donne's relationship with Neoplatonism is a complicated one. Donne has a reputation for being a very carnal and sensual poet; however, he can hardly be reduced to his carnality. Indeed, Donne's poetry often invokes a tension between the carnal and the spiritual in order to amplify their relationship. Donne's spirituality, I will argue, has a Neoplatonic valence. Where Donne engages with Neoplatonism, he does so by invoking the Cusan doctrine of *coincidentia oppositorum*. By demonstrating the unique nature of Cusa's doctrine, especially with reference to the principle of *analogia entis*, the coincidence of opposites will be shown to play an important part in Donne's poetic style.

Sean J. McGrath

Variations in the English Reception of Boehme

Boehme's contributions to theology can be classified under three headings: the spirituality of *Gottesgebürt*; millenarian illuminism; and the metaphysics of life. In the English reception of Boehme, which began with the 1645 translations by Sparrow and Ellistone, different emphases emerge. In this paper, I offer some reflections on the writings of Sparrow, Ellistone, Pordage, and Lead, to characterize to what degree these three Bohemian themes enter into English Protestantism. I will conclude by reflecting on the 18th-century figure, William Law, who, more than any of his predecessors, developed Boehme's most important contribution, the speculative theology of God as the archetype of life.

Adrian Mihai

'Eriugena's *Periphyseon*: Its German Reception via England'

The present paper will look at the reception and legacy of Eriugena's *Periphyseon* (c. 866) in German thought, from Thomas Gale's first printed edition (Oxford, 1681), until the first Modern edition, published in Münster in 1838 by Christoph Bernard Schlüter. The first part of the paper will look at the reception of Eriugena's *magnum opus* during the Pantheismustreit, from 1783 up to its height in 1786. Many, if not all, the authors that took part in this controversy were directly or indirectly influenced not only by Spinoza, as is traditionally asserted, but also by the Cambridge Platonists, especially by Henry More and Ralph Cudworth. The second part will examine Eriugena's role in the formation and development of German Idealism until 1838 and the reasons and intentions of Schlüter's publication of a new edition of the *Periphyseon*. Schlüter had already published a study on Spinoza, and, in the Preface to his new edition of the *Periphyseon* describes Eriugena as a precursor of German Idealism.

Laura Moncion

Gelassenheit and God: German Mysticism in Julian of Norwich's *Revelations*

This paper will examine the concept of *Gelassenheit* as developed by the German theologian, philosopher, scholar, and preacher Meister Eckhart (c. 1260–1329) and explore its potential influence on Julian of Norwich's *Revelations of Divine Love* (final version c. 1416; first printed 1670), a mystical text written several years after the author's near-death experience and enclosure as a recluse in the church of St Julian, Norwich, and often cited as the first prose work written by a woman in the English language.

In Eckhart's writings and sermons, *Gelassenheit* (*gelâzenheit* in Middle High German)—a letting go which allows the soul to be present to its own unity with God, as part of a devotional and mystical journey towards the divine—is a key mystical concept and practice. Julian's book, the *Revelations*, reflects similar ideas in a later, English mystical and theological context. Her striking vision of Christ as mother, for example, emphasizes the ontological unity of the soul and God and presents the human as a humble infant who must rely on the wisdom of an all-encompassing divinity. Julian's famous phrase, "all shall be well, and all things shall be well", is, at its core, a call for the reader to let go and trust in God. This paper will first discuss Eckhart's treatment of *Gelassenheit*, followed by an analysis of Julian's English writings. It will also address the historical contexts of each writer, including the later seventeenth-century transmission of Julian's *Revelations*.

Matthew Nini

Boehme's *Ungrund* and the New Theogony of Modernity

This paper will offer an interpretation of *Grund* and *Ungrund* in Boehme, focusing on the mature works *Psychologia Vera* (1620) and *Mysterium Magnum* (1623). It does so with an eye to what may be important for Boehme's English reception by Jane Lead, Anne Conway, John Pordage, and (albeit critically) Henry More. Ultimately, Boehme's *Ungrund* belongs to a tradition going back at least to Eckart of separating God *in se*, the *Deitas* or *Gottheit* from the Creator-God. The move has Plotinian strains, but its innovation is to place the *Deitas* within *Deus*, since the One God is He whose essence and existence are inseparable. This then creates what Eckart would name the "*stille wüste der Gottheit*," the desert within God, the nothing that is the pure Absolute. In a Protestant context, Sebastian Franck, Valentine Weigel, and the *Theologica Germanica* all take up this distinction, often speaking of God as he is *for us*, the God who is revealed to the limited human intellect, and God *as he is*, ungraspable by mortal intelligence. Aware of the genealogy of these concepts, Boehme adopts the key distinction while raising a crucial objection: is the God of the theologians a living God, or a conceptualized projection, albeit an apophatic one? Boehme therefore returns to the foundational distinction of God and Godhood in order ensure that the source of Creation is God's personality. What ensues is the dialectic of *Grund* and *Ungrund*: how God gives birth to himself, and then to the world of the finite.

Mutatis mutandis, the same problem would arise in 19th century German philosophy, which had to come to grips with Spinoza's "dead God"—in other words, how does one establish a post-pantheist philosophical theology? The 19th century answer would be a return to Boehme—not only through Franz von Baader, "*Boehme redivivus*," but through a pietist sources such as F.C. Oetinger who were in turn influenced by the Philadelphians (Jane Lead, John Pordage, and others) and the Cambridge Platonists. All roads lead back to Boehme, and this, I claim, because he offers a dynamic, personalist conception of God that addresses the concerns of early modernity, a new theogony for a new age.

Eric Parker

"Happieness a mistery": Traherne and the Coincidence of Opposites

The mystical vision of Thomas Traherne has been the subject of numerous studies since the discovery of his *Centuries of Meditations* at the turn of the 20th century. Authors such as Carol Marks and, more recently, Sarah Hutton have noted Traherne's unique form of Christian Platonism, drawing a direct link to his reading of the Cambridge Platonists. Marks refers to Traherne's citations of Henry More as well as "striking similarities" between Traherne and Peter Sterry. The discovery of his notes on Ficino confirms a scholarly consensus that Traherne was influenced by Florentine Platonism. The possible connection to German mysticism has been unexplored. Recent studies have shown the presence of Nicholas Cusanus in the writings of Peter Sterry as well as Thomas Jackson, both of whom Traherne read. Traherne's writings reveal an author who delighted in paradox, combining opposing images of circumference and center, line

and point, infinite and finite (etc.) to describe God's nature as well as the *imago Dei* in the human person. This paper aims to explore the similarities between Traherne and Cusanus, in particular their Christocentric blending of metaphysics and ethics, wherein Christ's union of humanity and divinity is a coincidence of opposites at the center of the universe and the highest good of humanity. To what extent does Traherne utilize the coincidence of opposites as a method for unifying the various modes of human knowledge with the soul's natural desire for the infinite? Is his exposition of virtue in *Christian Ethicks* and other writings, with his elevation of man as co-creator with God, akin to the intuitive vision of the "living image" of God (as a "self-moving number") articulated by Cusanus? These questions will be explored with respect to the writings of German mystics being read by Traherne's contemporaries in 17th century England.

David Quackenbos

The Reception of Nicholas of Cusa in Early Modern France

Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (1455-1536) spent much of his early career (1492-1509) publishing the works Aristotle as he sought to reform the arts programme at the University of Paris. His ideal educational programme began with Aristotelian philosophy, continued through the early church Fathers, and ended in the contemplation of God alongside Christian mystics and the Scriptures. Chief among the mystics that Lefèvre held in high esteem were Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, Ramon Lull, and Nicholas of Cusa.

In the preface to his publication of the *Corpus Dionysiacum* in 1499, Lefèvre warned his reader against those who assert that Pseudo-Dionysius was a Platonist. Lefèvre specifically mentions Nicholas of Cusa as one who was deceived into such thinking. Yet, Lefèvre goes out of his way to assert that Dionysius is not a "Platonist, Aristotelian, Stoic, or Epicurean" but a true Christian teacher. Lefèvre would hold Dionysius in high esteem throughout his life. It is of note then, that in 1514, in his preface to the publication of Nicholas of Cusa's *Opera Omnia*, Lefèvre quotes a panegyric calling Cusanus a keen Aristotelian and true teacher of Christianity.

This essay will analyze Lefèvre's publication of Cusanus' works in order to understand the reception of Cusanus in early modern France. It will argue that, despite the commonly held understanding of both Pseudo-Dionysius and Cusanus as Neo-Platonists, Lefèvre admired both men as supremely *Christian* contemplators of God. Therefore, this essay will demonstrate the importance of Lefèvre's career path to his understanding of Cusanus. As Lefèvre began to turn away from Aristotle and philosophy, and concentrated on biblical commentaries (he published a commentary on the Psalms in 1509 and on Paul's letters in 1512), the timing of his publication of Cusanus' *Opera* (1514) serves as a hinge on which to view Lefèvre's reforming ideas. Lefèvre viewed the German Cardinal as one who had passed through the teachings of Aristotle and proceeded on to the pure contemplation of God (*via* Pseudo-Dionysius). Specifically, Lefèvre's fascination with the notions of the '*idiot*' and of 'learned ignorance' will be examined as they helped him combat medieval scholasticism. Finally, this essay will demonstrate the impact of Cusanus (and Pseudo-Dionysius) on the shape of French reform through the Cercle de Meaux, and their battles with the University of Paris.

Jan Rohls

Johann Valentine Andreae and the religious foundation of scientific reform in England

The Lutheran spiritualistic theologian Johann Valentine Andreae, one of the founders of Rosicrucianism, was engaged in the reform of education and science. In his utopian treatise "Christianopolis" (1619) he developed a program of an ideal Christian society in which science played a central role in combination with faith. This program together with other approaches like that of the Calvinist Johann Heinrich Alsted and Johann Amos Comenius became highly influential in England, especially under Cromwell during the Commonwealth. One of the main mediators of these ideas was the German-Polish Samuel Hartlib who moved from Poland to England. The encyclopedic programs of scientific reform based on religious ideas formed among other things

the background of the foundation of the Royal Society. In my paper I shall concentrate on Andreae and the German influences on the scientific reform in England.

Daniel J. Tolan

John Everard and the *Corpus Hermeticum*

This presentation lays out some potential motivations for Everard's translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum*. John Everard (1584?–1640/41) is a key figure in the dissemination of classic texts of both ancient and medieval mysticism in early modern England. This, in no small part, is due to his work as a translator. In addition to his translation of the *Theologia Germanica*, Everard also produced a translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum*. In order to assess some likely motivations for Everard's translation of this *Corpus*, this presentation bears a tripartite structure. First, we will consider some of the dominant metaphysical themes found throughout the *Corpus*, most notably the *Corpus'* discussions of the bipolarity between divine transcendence and divine immanence. Secondly, the transmission of the *Corpus* and its status as a most ancient and authoritative text will be reviewed; of note, here, is Isaac Casaubon's challenge to this text's antiquity on linguistic grounds. Thirdly, we will consider the context in which Everard was translating these texts; of particular value are some of Everard's autobiographical notes, which denote his repugnance at the *ad litteram* and anthropomorphic teachings of those whom he notes to be 'litteral divines'. From this, it becomes clear that, for Everard, the *Corpus Hermeticum* stands as an ancient authority that allows him to introduce the notions of divine transcendence and immanence into the theological conversations of his day; the former enables Everard to overcome anthropomorphism, the latter allows him to channel ancient cosmic piety and to assert the presence of the divine in creation.

Jure Zovko

***Fides Quaerens Epistēmē* Newton's Fruitful Dialogue between Faith and Science**

In my paper, I would like to examine the significance of Newton's *Scholium Generale* for the philosophy of science; it is one of the most brilliant and concise texts on philosophical and scientific method in the history of ideas. The text appeared as an appendix to the second edition of the *Principia* (1713). The *Scholium Generale* is a successful example of how science, philosophy, and theology can complement each other and enter into a fruitful dialogue. In my presentation, I would like to analyze Newton's thesis against the mechanistic conception of God, namely, that the main business of natural philosophy is "to argue from phaenomena without feigning hypotheses, and to deduce causes from effects, till we come to the very first cause, which certainly is not mechanical". (*Opticks*, 369)

Marie-Élise Zovko

Villifying Spinoza, Redeeming Jacob Boehme: Henry More's Anti-Spinozist Stance, his Sympathy with Boehme, and their Influence on Anne Conway

From the publication of his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* onwards, Spinoza's advocacy for the truth of reason and a historical and critical approach to interpretation of the Bible and religious tradition, his rejection of revelation and miracles, of the concept of a *creatio ex nihilo*, and conventional views of divine and human freedom aroused stark opposition from traditional theists of diverse religious affiliations. Henry More was at the forefront of this opposition, branding Spinoza as an atheist, determinist, and fatalist well in advance of encyclopaedist Pierre Bayle's damning account in his *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (1697, 1702). The latter would serve as catalyst for the characteristic reactions of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries and paved the way for the irreconcilable divisions in Spinoza scholarship throughout the 20th century and well into the 21st. More's lenient and sympathetic stance toward Jacob Boehme's equally unorthodox account of the *Ungrund*, the unfathomable eternal Will and its original desire for comprehensibility, the birth of the *Grund* from the *Ungrund*, his concept of Eternal Nature and

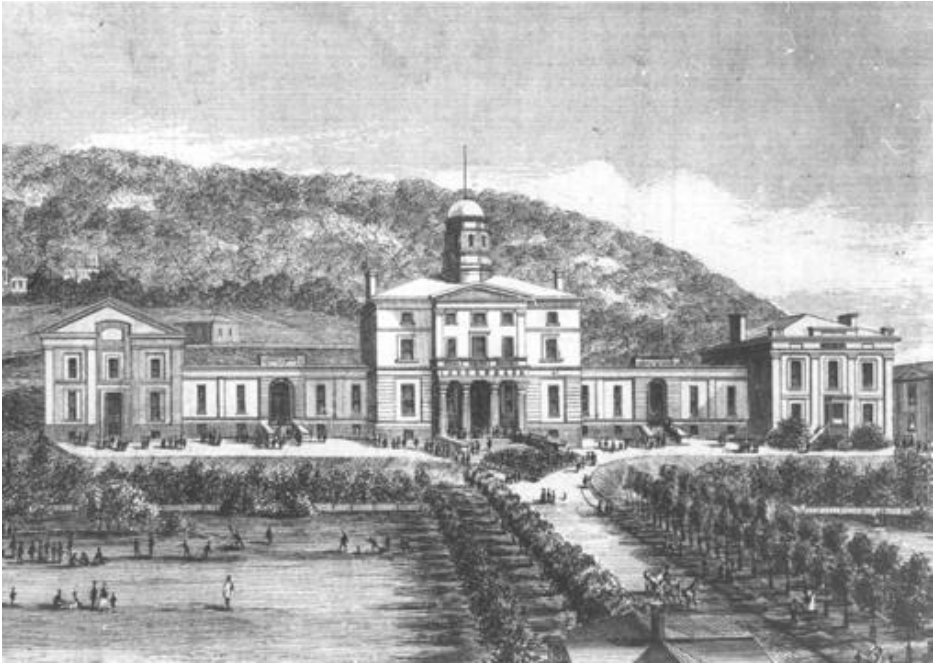
Centrum Naturæ, the fall of Lucifer, of the creation and fall of humankind, may have been nourished by Boehme's adherence to an ostensibly Christian terminology. Yet Boehme's and Spinoza's positions do not differ as widely as More's critical stance seems to imply. Spinoza's radical rejection of rationally indefensible elements of religious doctrine was neither materialist nor pantheist, determinist nor fatalist, but grounded in a Platonic account of concepts of divine transcendence and immanence, and of divine and human freedom which he shared in fundamental respects with Jacob Boehme. Nevertheless, Spinoza's criticism of the clergy for their hypocrisy and nurturing of superstition, his criticism of believers for their want of charity in opposition to the principles of their faith, his critique of the Bible as an imperfect, historical document, rather than the eternal word of God, his denial of freedom of choice to God and humans, and of the possibility of a *creatio ex nihilo*, of the Resurrection, and the assertion that Jesus is Son of God, constituted in Rosalie Colie's words "a major secular assault upon the seat of all orthodoxy" (Colie 1963, 185) For these reasons, More's "*perception of shared Platonism*" in Boehme (Hedley), did not extend to include Spinoza, despite Spinoza's and Boehme's demonstrable kinship in this regard.

What Conway extracts from this discussion is her own derivative rejection of Spinoza and Boehme, in favour of her own form of spiritology. Conway opposes concepts of nature that would reduce the natural to matter, since matter, in her view lacks a principle of active, productive causality, of autonomous or *vital action*. The question remains whether More's and Conway's vitalist conception of nature, their so-called "spiritology," can succeed in making modern science intelligible and providing a paradigm for adequate integration of scientific and theological interpretation of the natural and spiritual realms. In my paper, I detail Henry More's historically decisive role in vilifying Spinoza, and the reasons for his milder criticism of Boehme's "enthusiasm." I consider furthermore how More's position on these topics played into Conway's formulation of her philosophical treatise. To conclude, I reflect on the curious association of Spinoza with the Quakers, with whom Conway allied herself ever more closely in her final years.

NOTES

Montreal—Centre Ville





The Arts Building, McGill University (1873)