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Meister Eckhart and Valentin Weigel

Those with a rudimentary knowledge of Meister Eckhart know him as a mystic, much as those with a superficial knowledge of mysticism think of it as a knowledge that transcends time and space, or a subterranean current of *philosophia perennis* that defies the limits of history and confessional or ideological affiliation. We can evaluate these one-sided notions by considering an author who wrote about his "inner rebirth" and divine knowledge and in doing so explicitly documented his debt to Meister Eckhart. Considering the life and writings of Valentin Weigel should allow us to appreciate that there can be no mystical content without a relevant historical context. In Weigel's relation to Eckhart, esoteric tradition and the mystical outsider take their place in a common world.

Valentin Weigel (1533-1588) was born in the same year as Michel de Montaigne (1533-1591). As a dissenting Lutheran pastor in an age of confessional conflict and consolidation, the German dissenter's posthumously published theoretical treatises sanctioned the authority of the thoughtful private individual for whom his illustrious French contemporary was simultaneously creating an essayistic testimony. Weigel's writings explicitly acknowledge Meister Eckhart. His sermons are cited based on the so-called "Basel Tauler" (*Basler Tauler-Druck*, 1521, 1522)[1] and attributed to "Eccardus" or "D. Eckhart."[2] The recognition accorded by the sixteenth-century author to his medieval precursor, combined with the relative accessibility of Weigel's own life, times, and writings, offers us a rare access to their tradition. Their works represent a current of texts and ideas rather than a recurrent self-generating phenomenon or esoteric cult of mysticism. Recent scholarship has reminded us that the noun or concept of *mysticism* is relatively modern:

To a considerable degree, it reflects the post-Enlightenment understanding of the antithesis of reason and religion.[3] Weigel casts a fuller light on the partial truths of our image of mysticism.

Valentin Weigel is distant but not inaccessible.[4] Despite gaps in our knowledge, we can trace circles of information. These begin with his humble origins in an era and region beset by confessional tensions during the third decade of the Protestant Reformation. Born to plebeian parents in the Saxon town of Großenhain three years after Melanchthon's *Confessio Augustana* established an initial codification of Lutheranism, Weigel was nine years old when his homeland of Albertine Saxony converted to Lutheranism in consequence of a dynastic succession. He was a teenager when the defeat of the German Protestant territories in the Schmalkaldic War by the Catholic Emperor plunged German Lutheranism into a crisis that smoldered for decades. Weigel was a student during the the Gnesio-Lutheran controversies, as Lutheran theologians contended first over the options of resistance or accomodation to the emperor, and subsequently with each other over various related theological issues. Their disputes and positions might strike us now as an abstruse quarrel over the fine points of doctrine and exegesis, but they were motivated by the deeper issues of whether the state, church, or individual should arbitrate beliefs.

If in many German cities and lands the advent of the Lutheran faith was heralded as a liberation and empowerment, Weigel's experience was ambivalent. For the plebeian youth, it meant sponsorship to attend the Fürstenschule of St. Afra in Meissen and later to study theology at the universities of Leipzig and Wittenberg, followed by a lifetime position as the town pastor of the Saxon city of Zschopau. But the Reformation also meant that doctrines were imposed by those in control. Whoever deviated from the serially reformulated standards of faith was harshly disciplined. This included Weigel's esteemed teachers. Early in his pastoral career, Weigel was denounced by a fellow clergyman for doctrinal deviations. He was required to vindicate himself

in writing before church authorities. Though his defense was successful, the dissenting treatises that made his name synonymous with vile heresy beginning in the seventeenth century could be shared only in manuscript with a limited circle in his lifetime. With the exception of one funeral elegy, his writings remained unpublished until twenty years after his death.

Three tendencies define the background of his writing and leave their mark on its content: Lutheranism, doctrinal controversy, and anti-clericalism. Weigel's guiding star was the Lutheran Reformation, despite the fact that his formulations appear to deviate from Lutheran doctrine. He lived and died a Lutheran town pastor. He conformed to the aspect of Lutheranism summarized by the German word *Innerlichkeit*. "Inwardness" is the internalization of faith that shifts it away from works, ceremonies, or perfunctory church authority.

We can assess Weigel's genuine Lutheran spirit and his un-Lutheran doctrinal deviations by considering his official defense of August 22, 1572 (*Vom wahren, seligmachenden Glauben*, "On the True and Saving Faith"). Under challenge, the Zschopau pastor reconfirmed his duty to preach contrition and the forgiving of sins; but he condemned the superficial acceptance of faith as a kind of promissory contract that fails to enter and transform the heart of the believer. More radical still, Weigel contended that the saving faith might dwell more in the hearts of heathens and children than in those who only outwardly professed to be Christians: "From this it follows necessarily that not the name, nor the parents, nor the place, nor the external knowledge and hearing make a Christian, but rather the true faith alone, not in one's mouth, but in the inner ground of one's heart." (*Auß diesem allen folget notwendig, daß nicht der Name noch die Eltern noch der Ortt noch das eusere Wissen vnd Hören einen Christen mache, sondern allein der wahre Glaube einen Christen mache, nicht im Maule, sondern im innern Grunde des Herzens*—ZW 5:55). This deceptively simple formulation rests on the contrasting metaphor of the private

inner ground of faith with a faith that is external, and on the equation of the external with a status inherited either from parentage or residence or from the received knowledge which comes "from hearing." To us, the metaphor of the external is vague and scattershot in its implications; but in Weigel's own time, it effectively contrasted the thoughtful individual whose conscience is ruled by an inner ground of the heart with the temporal authoritarianism of rulers, pastors, or parents who insist on their right to dictate belief. *Inner* and *outer* are thus signifiers of the the struggle of the morally awakened woman or man of conscience against authoritarian institutions.

From the vantage of what came to be known as orthodox Lutheranism, Weigel's defense courts heresy. It questions the need for the dissemination of the saving doctrine by means of the spoken word of the sermon, received by the believer "from hearing" (*ex auditu*). Indeed, those who cannot "hear" it because they are too remote from Christendom or too young to understand are taken into the fold of the faithful by Weigel. This undermines the need for and dissolves the outer confines of the church. The metaphor of the inner therefore correlates with the universal.

Present-day Lutherans might look back at Weigel's Spiritualism and declare him outside their church, but it is not factually accurate to ignore the relative diversity of Lutheranism under the less codified conditions of Weigel's early career or to ignore the widespread resistance to the foundational Lutheran Formula of Concord of 1577 by those who regarded it as a violation of evangelical freedom of faith. The confessionalization of the churches shaped Protestantism in ways that could not be rescinded; but in its early stages objections were raised against codifying doctrines and rendering them mandatory. This was regarded as oppressive of spiritual freedom and conducive to sectarian strife and religious war. The dissenters were right. Strictures of faith were dictated or enforced by the external factors of parentage or territorial rule. Doctrinal codification and enforcement created preconditions for religious war.

This brings us to a second tendency that defines the background of Weigel's writing: his awareness of doctrinal controversy. It would have been almost impossible for anyone educated in Lutheran theology in Weigel's time and place not to have been familiar with the many-sided Gnesio-Lutheran controversies which had been catalyzed when Emperor Charles V defeated the Protestant Schmalkaldic League in 1546, forcing Protestants to choose between resistance and compromise. The party of compromise had been led by Luther's Wittenberg colleague Phillip Melanchthon, the party of resistance by Matthias Flacius Illyricus. Melanchthon was willing to accept adjustments of ceremony as non-essential in order to maintain the doctrine of salvation by faith alone. Flacius held that no compromise imposed by force could be inconsequential. This "adiaphoristic" controversy was accompanied by debates over the active agency of the human will in conversion (synergism), the depravity of the fallen human condition, and various related doctrines. From his earliest writings, Weigel refers to such disputes as a disreputable "quarrel" (*Zank*) among theologians. Though he condemns the quarrel, its positions remain generalized. His references are overlaid with an awareness of the increasing tension between Lutherans and Calvinists over the doctrine of predestination. There are parallels between Weigel's views and the controversialists'. He appears Philippist in regarding ceremonies as inessential, Flacian in opposing compulsion in matters of faith; and Lutheran in opposing predestination. Weigel did not take sides. He sought to transcend the premises of the theological quarrels.

A third tendency implicit in the previous two may surprise some readers. Pastor Weigel echoed and magnified the widespread anti-clericalism of the Reformation era. The notion that the Age of Faith was also a period of anticlericalism seems contradictory to us now, but Luther's assertions of salvation by faith alone and of doctrine based solely on Scripture had aggravated an older strain of anticlericalism so that it became pervasive in the sixteenth-century. Only recently

have scholars focused attention on the phenomena of a widespread popular hostility toward religious professionals. Priests, pastors, and theologians were reviled as the greedy, arrogant, and tyrannical purveyors of pernicious and self-serving dogmas.[5]

The positive inverse of this widespread Reformation-era anticlericalism consisted of the championing of the informed lay believer whose conscience and reading of the Bible made the greedy and arrogant clergy superfluous. In popular slogans, anticlericalism was marshalled by all parties to the religious conflicts. Its sentiments were exploited by Lutherans, Catholics, and radicals against their opponents.[6] The Gnesio-Lutheran controversies of Weigel's time led to a particular version of anticlericalism centered in a rejection of the quarreling doctrinalists. From beginning to end, Weigel lambasted theologians as "false" or indeed as "servants of Antichrist," and in the same breath championed the lay folk. These tendencies are linked to his mystically accented Lutheranism. One source of his dissenting "inwardness" was Meister Eckhart.

For us it makes sense to read Eckhart's sermons as expressions of elite culture, couched in puzzles beyond popular understanding. Was he teasing those poor souls to whom he preached by telling that until they became equal to the truth he spoke, they could not comprehend what he was saying? The fact is that we have too little knowledge of who read Eckhart and how. But we do know that his tradition became associated with a new lay self-awareness. Eckhart drew upon a profound knowledge of scholastic theology, but preached in German to nuns and pious lay folk who were not trained theologians. Among them, the devout Beguines were brutally persecuted. Following in Eckhart's footsteps, the message of Tauler was influenced by the Strasbourg circles of the lay "Friends of God." In Tauler's lifetime, the lay people of Strasbourg were abandoned by the Church when their city fell under a papal interdiction and Tauler's Dominican order was forbidden to administer the sacraments, even exiling itself from Strasbourg.[7] Typically, the late

medieval and early modern quarrel between state and church was carried out over the backs of the innocent laity. We can assume that Tauler was aware of their plight. Lay self-assertion was incorporated into the tradition of which he was a part by the time the late medieval *Basel-Tauler* began to influence people in the Reformation era.

This influential volume of the sermons of Tauler and Eckhart, printed in Basel in 1521 and 1522, was prefaced by a peculiar account that was clearly intended to put the authority of the pious laity above that of the clergy. The "History and Life of the Venerable Dr. Johann Tauler" (*Historia vnd Leben des erwürdigen doctors Johannis Tauleri*") is a simplistic didactic account of how the famous Dominican preacher was supposed to have been led to true enlightenment by a nameless layman. Inspired by God in a dream, the layman traveled far to hear the sermons of the famous preacher, begging him to preach a sermon on the attainment of the "highest and best" state of grace. Condescendingly, the preacher obliges. The layman writes everything down and presents it to the preacher. Impressed at this perfect record of his words, the master entreats the layman to remain with him. Now, however, the relationship of master to pupil is inverted. The layman evidently possesses a superior knowledge and conduit to God. He lectures his master on the true humility, the letter that kills, the sweetness of the Holy Spirit, the inadequacy of reason and the senses, and the purification of the believer through suffering.

The tendentious *Historia Tauleri* is ham-fisted; but this only makes its message all the more obvious. It is a message which Weigel, for all his sophistication, would in principle have agreed with. Book learning is not a sufficient path to grace nor even a good point of departure. Without its benefit, the layman of the *Historia Tauleri* has been enlightened by the Holy Spirit. This anticlerical prioritization of the lay above the learned embodies the sense of a central tenet of the *Basel-Tauler*: "the letter kills, but the spirit gives life" (2 Cor 3:6). When Weigel founded

his mystical-speculative edifice on such simple alternatives, he draw them in large measure from the *Basel-Tauler* and from the equally unadorned *Theologia Germanica*, which had powerfully influenced Luther and the radicals of the early Reformation.

Weigel deliberately drew on the medieval tradition. He was well aware that it consisted of individual authors rather than an anonymous *philosophia perennis*. His citations of the words of Eckhart and Tauler are clearly seminal. Eckhart is cited at length and verbatim in the earliest surviving writings, the *Two Useful Treatises*, dated 1570, only four years after the new pastor's arrival in Zschopau. Their preface begins thus in setting out Weigel's pastoral objectives:

> In these two booklets, *On Contrition* and *On Poverty of the Spirit*, which I have compiled from the sermons of Tauler, writing a good part of it myself as well, true and thorough instruction on how one should embark and how one should comport oneself in one's conversion or justification. Since this article [of faith] is the foremost, about which there is much dispute, instruction is given here; and the error and mistake revealed with respect to: [1] original sin; [2] free will, [and 3] conversion of the human being…. (Z 3:7)[8]

These are not only questions of sovereign importance but matters of bitter debate. The tract proceeds discursively to a readily intelligible account of human origins, transgression, and rebirth. Weigel is orthodox in preaching contrition, but deviant in ascribing inner faith to those whose age or birthplace would make them unfamiliar with Christian doctrine. Throughout the first of the two treatises the author's own voice prevails; but near the end of the first tract and in the second Eckhart is cited in lengthy quotations which are scarcely integrated. It appears as if the words of the mysterious Dominican who had been dead for 250 years somehow held out the

prospect of a clarification of points unresolved. But only a prospect. For its realization, Weigel would need to interpret Eckhart's undigested paradoxes in his own discursive prose.

Chapter Three of the first of *Two Useful Treatises* (*On Contrition*) focuses on the issue of free will in conversion, an echo of the Gnesio-Lutheran synergistic controversy. He links this issue to the doctrine of predestination espoused by "the false theologians" (ZW 3:16). Weigel does not mention the Calvinists; but the final edition of *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* appeared in 1559. It had confirmed double predestination: God chooses both the elect for grace and the reprobate for damnation. In taking this position, the Calvinists could claim support from Luther's treatise *On the Bondage of the Will* (1525).[9] Weigel's rejection of predestination was Lutheran in spirit, yet general in its formulation. Logically, the Calvinists held the high ground: how could God choose some for salvation without also choosing others for damnation? It was hardly a fluke that the Lutheran dissenter had recourse to mystical tradition. Confronted with the either/or of doctrinal logic, Weigel adopted a language of paradox which harked back to sources that had inspired Luther during the first years of the Reformation. In doing so, he also looked forward in challenging the premises of the destructive Lutheran-Calvinist dilemma by insisting on a language that shifted the crux of conversion to the inner disposition of the believer.

Chapters Nine and Ten dissect the meaning of contrition. Whoever is motivated by fear of Hell or longing for Heaven is not truly contrite. True contrition must be indifferent to rewards and punishments. True contrition must transcend the worldly frame of reference that sustains fears or desires. This nearly unimaginable state was revealed to Weigel by Eckhart's sermon *On True Poverty*.[10] Incorporated verbatim into the *Second Treatise*, the sermon suggests a borrowed solution still in need of re-evaluation and re-interpretation. The process of interpreting Eckhart's paradoxical formulation coincides with the main development of Weigel's thought.

Roughly half of Eckhart's sermon on the text from the Beatitudes ("Blessed are the poor in spirit," Mt 5:3) constitutes Chapter Three of Weigel's *Second Treatise, On True Poverty of the Spirit, or Abandoned Abandonment*. The chapter begins with a more conciliatory version of the paradox that concludes both his chapter and Eckhart's sermon: "But whoever does not resemble this speaking truth, will not understand this speech on the poverty of the spirit" (*Wer aber dieser sprechenden Waarheit nicht gleich ist, der wirdt auch nicht vernehmen diese Rede von Armut des Geistes*).[11] Not doctrine, but the imitation of Christ in accordance with the Sermon on the Mount is the key to salvation. Next comes a passage from Eckhart that recapitulates an impulse of the mendicant orders, which is as such alien to the antimonasticism of the Reformation: "He is poor in spirit who wants nothing" (*Der ist arm im Geiste, der da nichts will*—DW 2:728). Typically for Eckhart's thinking, the condition of wanting nothing is equated with the condition of the soul before it came into existence in creation (*Wann sol der Mensch waarhafftige Armut haben, so mus er seines geschaffenen Willens also ledig sein, als er wahr, da er noch nichts wahr*—ZW 3:62). This is also the condition in which nothing is known: "he is poor [in spirit] who knows nothing" (cf. DW 2:728). For Eckhart the context is monastic: he leaps to the question of whether the greater blessedness is in love or knowledge, whether the Franciscan or Dominican ideal. He concludes neither the one nor the other. There is something in the soul prior to either and from which both flow (DW 2:729): whoever comprehends this knows true bliss. This contemplation of the preexistence of the "spark of the soul" is followed by another thought, one more useful in the pastoral context of Weigel's treatise: "This [i.e., the condition of not knowing] has neither before nor after and it awaits no future thing; for it can neither gain nor lose" (*Diß hat weder vor noch nach vnd es wartet keines zukunfftigen Dinges, denn diß mag weder gewinnen noch verliehren*—*Z* 3:64—DW 2:729). True contrition is only possible if the

soul can remove itself from time by ceasing to anticipate future rewards and punishments. It can only do this to the extent that there is some power in the soul which is outside the world of time. This something is the precondition of knowledge and will. Its power can only be apprehended by abstracting all knowing and wanting: what is left is God. Aside from the mystical aspect of this thought, it has its pragmatic consequence. In the *Two Useful Treatises*, it helps avoid the impasse of divine predestination, even while accounting for the futility of human works and efforts. For as we cease to know and will for ourselves, God knows and wills through us.

Not only is Weigel eager to allow Eckhart to speak on his behalf. He gives full latitude to paradoxes of thought which surely could have been a provocation to his sixteenth-century lay congregation. In pursuit of a total surrender to divine agency within us, Weigel cites Eckhart: "I ask God to make me free of God, for inessential essence is above God and above difference" … "In accordance with my eternal birth, I have been eternally, and am [now] and will continue to be eternally" … "In my birth, all things were born, and I was a thing of myself and of all other things besides" … "If I were not, neither would God be." "When I flowed out [i.e., of the eternal Being], all things spoke: that is God.". (*Darumb so bitte ich Gott, das er mich quit mache Gottes, wann vnwesendtlich Wesen ist vber Gott vnd vber Vnterscheidt … Nach meiner ewigen Geburt Weise so bin ich ewiglich gewesen vnd bin und soll ewiglich bleiben. … Jnn meiner Gebuhrt wurden alle Dinge gebohren, vnd ich war Sache meiner selbst vnd aller Dingen . … Wehre ich nicht, so wehre nicht Gott.*—Z 3:67). Pursuing Eckhart's stream of paradoxes, Weigel concludes his key chapter in the treatise *On True Poverty of the Spirit* with that purest expression of the *unio mystica*: "God is one in the spirit. Whoever wants to understand this chapter, must be like this truth; otherwise it cannot be understood" (*Wer diß Capittel verstehen will, muß dieser Waarheit gleich sein; sonst wirdt es nicht verstannden*—Z 3:68). The whimsical, contradictory,

and teasing qualities of such utterances might attest to Weigel's literary taste and perhaps also to his sense of humor, but the Lutheran pastor did not imitate this style as did Angelus Silesius, but instead chose to interpret Eckhart in developing his own discursive theory of knowledge.

Another key citation of Eckhart by Weigel is found in the almost equally early *Short Report and Introduction to the German Theology*, a fragmentary draft dedicated to a pastoral colleague, with a preface signed on March 25, 1571. Like the *Two Useful Treatises*, the *Short Report* contains themes and materials that evolve into the mature form of Weigel's thought. It begins by placing the *Theologia Germanica* side by side with the first three chapters of Genesis. Either source is tantamount to the essential admonition that Adam should die and Christ be born within us, a claim that echoes the previous two treatises (Z 3:94). The antithesis at their core is the alternatives of self and God out of which Weigel projects his worldview. God loves himself because his essence is love and there is none beside him; but the creature that would be like God in loving its self falls as Lucifer and emerges as the evil of this world. A source is more essential than its shadow. Turning from God to self means turning to nothingness and falsehood. Weigel asserts that to pursue such a rule of exegesis by interpreting the Bible "in the light of nature" is to reclaim superior "terminos theologiae" (Z 3:114) and reject the "literalist theologians" (Z 3:96), who are responsible for the doctrinal controversies. Thus Weigel mounts his defence of human free will. Thanks in part to Eckhart and his tradition, it leads to an epistomology that can claim to supersede the shallow epistemological terms of the literalist doctrinarians.

Since epistemology is a key element of Weigel's theory, we must consider the fine points of his version of Eckhart's notion of image. Weigel is cited on the right-hand below alongside the *Basel Tauler*. He comes close enough to quoting from his source that the slight differences in his wording signal the outline of his program:

Die ander eygenschafft des bildes söllent ir mercken an der gleycheit des bildes …. das bild ist sein selbs nit/ noch ist in im selber nit. *Zů gleycher weise als das bild das in dem aug empfangen wirt/ das ist des auges nit/ vnd hat kein wesen an dem auge*/ sunder es hat allein ein zůhange vnd anhafften an dem des bild es ist/ haruß ist es sein selbs nit/ vnd ist im selber nit/ sunder es ist eygentlich dem des bild es ist/ vnd ist im allzůmal/ vnd von dem nimpt es sein wesen. ¶ Nun mercken mich recht/ was eigenlich ein bild sey/ das söllent ir mercken an vier stücken oder villicht wirt ir mer. Bild ist sein selbst nit/ noch ist im selber nit. Es ist allein dem/ des bild es ist/ denn ist es nitt. Bild nimpt allein sein wesen on mittel/ an dem des bild es ist/ vnd hat ein wesen mit im/ vnd ist dz Bild wesen. *Diß ist nit gesprochen von den dingen die man sol reden in der schůl / sonder man mag sy wol sprechen vff dem Stůl zů einer lere.* (*Basel-Tauler*, 299)

Dann betrachte die Eygenschafft der Bildnus / so wirstu sehen/ was eine jede vernünfftige Creatur Gott schuldig sey auff Erden vnd im Himmel/ nemblich ein jedes Bild hat solche Art vnd Eygenschafft/ daß es nicht von ihm selber ist. *Item daß es nicht sein selbst eigen Bilde ist/ vnd daß es allezeit zu dem zeige/ leite vnd führe/ deß Bildnus es treget* / vnd ist nicht ihme selber / es kan auch nicht ohne den bestehn/ von deme es sein Wesen hat/ wie ein Schatten ohne seinen Baum nicht mag Schatten bleiben. Noch viel weniger mag Creatur leben / stehen vnd gehen ohne Gott. *Diese Lehre von dem Bildnus gehöret nicht allein in die Schule / sondern auch auff die Cantzel für das Volck / denn auß der Betrachtung lernen wir was der Wille Gottes gegen vns in Zeit vnd in Ewigkeit/ nemblich wir werden vnterweiset Christum zu kennen/ wie wir vns halten sollen gegen Gott alhier in der Zeit vnd hernach in der Ewigkeit.* (Z 3:107).

You should note the other characteristic of the image, the equality of the image …. the image is not its own, nor does it exist in itself. *Just as the image that is received in the eye does not belong to the eye and has no substance in the eye*, but instead has an inclination and attachment to that of which it is an image: from this it follows that it is not its own and does not exist in itself, but rather [pertains] to that of which it is the image and is indeed for this, and takes its being from it. ¶ Now take careful note: as to what an image is, you should understand this from four things, or perhaps more. Image is not its own, and not in itself. It is only for the one of which it is an image; for it is nothing [in itself]. The image receives its substance immediately, from the one of which it is the image; and has its being with it; and is the image-substance. *This is not said about things to be discussed in the school, but rather should be stated from the pulpit.*

For consider the characteristic of the image: you will recognize [from this] what it is that every rational creature owes to God on earth and in heaven. That is to say: every image has its nature and property [in the fact] that it is not of itself. *Namely, that it is not its own image; and that it always leads and conducts [us] to the one whose image it bears*; and is not for itself; nor can it subsist without the one from whom it has its being. Just as a shadow without the tree cannot go on being a shadow, so much the less can the creature stand and move about without God. *This teaching belongs not only in the school, but also in the pulpit before the people. For out of such contemplation we learn what the will of God is with regard to us in time and eternity: in particular, we are instructed as to how we will know Christ,* [and] *how we should relate to God both in time and afterward in eternity.*

There are noticeable differences in emphasis and formulation. Eckhart's sermon on the text *Quasi vas auri solidum ornatum omni lapide pretioso*, Eccl 50:10 (cf. DW 1:492ff.) has a sentence (italicized in the above) which states that the image received by the eye does not belong to the eye but rather to the thing that it sees. This is missing in Weigel, who will soon theorize that all knowledge is indeed within the knower. At the end of the two passages (again italicized in the citation), "All of this" (*Diß*) or "the doctrine of the image" (*Diese Lehre von dem Bildnus*) is said to have its proper place not in the school (i.e., the university or seminary), but rather in the preacher's pulpit, to which Weigel adds, even more emphatically: "before the people" (*auff die Cantzel für das Volck*). He then goes on to detail three benefits of the doctrine of the image. It can teach what the will of God is with respect to us. It can impart to us a knowledge of Christ. And it can tell us how we should relate to God in time and eternity.

Where before Weigel quoted verbatim, he now begins to choose and edit, taking up the concept of the image, but not in the form suggested by Eckhart's sermon. He takes it instead as the core of a teaching which should contain *in nuce* all the essential teachings of religion, just as the individual human being or the seed in nature can be said to contain everything in microcosm. Creation projects an image of the Creator. Insofar as the creature Adam is free, he is a complete image of God. But in using his freedom for self-love rather than obedience, Adam follows the selfish path of Lucifer. The human creature can become the new Adam by following Christ, the perfect divine image, but this requires transcending all fear of punishment and hope of reward by negating human will and knowledge. The teaching of the image is supposed to simplify or unite all of Scripture. To do this, the terms of theology, creation, Creator, creature, will, knowledge, and grace must be reinterpreted. To this end, Weigel draws on sources that include the Christian nature philosophy of Paracelsus. The concepts of microcosm and macrocosm project a reality in

which all things are in all. This could be a universe of grace, if only the human creature would yield to God's will instead of opposing it, as do the evil human beings, or trying to gainsay and force it, as do the "false theologians." "For God wants to take the human being to himself and to be all in all, yet not without the human being: the human being can accomplish nothing without God; and God does does not want to [do so] without the human being. Therefore, God behaves actively and the human being [should] behave passively" (*Dann Gott will den Menschen gar an sich nehmen vnd alles in allem sein / doch nicht ohne den Menschen / der Mensch vermag nichts ohne Gott / vnd Gott will nicht ohne den Menschen / drumb helt sich Gott wirklich vnd der Mensch leidlich* – ZW 3:112). It is evident from Weigel's use of his sources that he expects his doctrine of the image to unite a diverse set of dissenters ranging from Eckhart and Tauler to the deviants or heretics of the Reformation era. Their mysticism promises a true reformation for the awakened and conscient lay person.

No less than Eckhart, Weigel preaches an ethic of perfect inner obedience to God which for either author paradoxically annuls the authority of institutions and doctrines without openly defying them. For Eckhart, this meant outer obedience to the church, from which the freed spirit is inwardly emancipated. For Weigel, in his very different times, there was no longer *the* church to be obedient to. Instead, an array of confessions and doctrines pressed competing demands for obedience. Doctrines were altered without consulting the laity, in violation of the conscience of the individual. The Formula of Concord (1577) burdened consciences even more harshly, when pastors and teachers were required to sign and subscribe not only to its codification of Lutheran teachings, but to its condemnation of other believers, among whom were the sorely persecuted Anabaptists.

In the post-Reformation world, the individual believer was supposed to retain a recourse: according to Luther's early Reformation teachings, the lay person who read the Bible was a "lay priest" whose authority was equal or superior to that of the Church. But what if individuals and churches read the same Bible, only to arrive at diverse competing doctrines? In order to resolve this quandary, Weigel needed something more than his "doctrine of the image," understood as the coherent core teaching in the Bible, the spirit behind its letter, contained in it like the nut in its outer shell. He needed a new episteomology which could appeal to the common sense of the lay person, and at the same time account for differing impressions or for differences between the impressions and things in themselves. Rooted in the likeness of the spirit and its object, the new epistemology secured the objectivity of the living spirit beneath the dead external letter. Mindful of the variants of mystical or devotional inwardeness inherited from Eckhart or the Reformation, Weigel was compelled to go beyond them in formulating something which appears to anticipate the inner truth-bearing authority of Kantian Idealism.

In quick succession, Weigel produced a series of writings that subordinated his doctrinal quandaries and mystical sources to a new epistemology. The lay mind can distinguish between the letter and spirit of Scripture because the human being is dual and complex, an image of God on the one hand and of the world on the other. The human creature is a micrcososm, bearing all spheres of being within; and it is trichotomous, consisting of body, spirit, and the soul, which is the life-giving breath inspired by God. Moreover, the mind is complex. Following the twelfth-century churchman Hugo of St. Victor, Weigel writes of a threefold eye. The eye of the flesh or *oculus carnis* sees only this world. The *oculus rationis* empowers the practical intelligence of human arts. The *oculus mentis seu intellectus* intuits God and the angelic world. The first sees only what is present. The second, as imagination, can call to mind what is absent. The third is

capable of transcending the limits of the senses in finite space and time, moving by way of the paradoxes of infinite divine being to an apprehension of the higher unity in God. Equipped with this conceptual armory, Weigel stakes out his theological epistemology. Just as our perceptions of objects depend upon perspective, one and the same object of perception can yield conflicting understandings: "from this it follows that knowledge comes from the eye itself and not from the *object*" (*darauß volget, daß die erkentnus herkomme vom auge selber, vnd nicht vom Obiecto*—PW 3:79 *Gnothi seauton*). Without hesitiation, he moves from the theory of perception to the purpose behind it. The Bible is an object that remains constant yet gives rise to variant readings; for just "as the eye is, so is the knowledge" (*wie das auge ist, also ist auch die Erkhentnus*): "if your heart or understanding is pure and clear, then everything you do or abstain from doing will also be just" (*so dein Herz oder verstandt rein vnnd lauter ist, so wirdt auch all dein Thuen vnnd lassen rechtschaffen sein*). Given the way this applies to exegesis and theology, the problem in religion becomes not so much that the false theologians engage in false reasoning. The problem is that their hearts and minds are false. Though this may strike us now as an *ad hominem* attack, Weigel at least does not assail his rivals in the manner of the time, as literal agents of Satan.

Looking back from Weigel to Eckhart, it is striking how the Lutheran's formulation ("if your heart or understanding is pure and clear, then everything you do or abstain from doing will be just") approximates the dictum of the Dominican's fourth "Speech of Instruction" (*Rede der Unterweisung*), according to which we should worry less about what we do or do not, and more about what we *are*. If we are good, so are our works. We cannot know for certain that Weigel knew Eckhart's Speeches of Instruction: the similarity of their formulations suggests the degree to which the Protestant pastor recapitulated the spirit of his high medieval Dominican precursor even while formulating a theory of knowledge that is closer to modernity.

Though Weigel soon moved beyond citing him verbatim, he still assumed that Eckhart's intricate medieval readings of Scripture, remote as they were from Lutheran exegesis, harbored profound truths that anticipated his own insights. Weigel's *Gnothi seauton* of 1571 paraphrases at length Eckhart's allegorical reading of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman (cf. Jn 4:7-30).[12] Quoting explicitly ("D. Eckhart sprach…"), Weigel follows him in recounting how Jesus asked the Samaritan woman for a drink; how he offered her the "living water"; and how he told her she had had five men and that the one she had now was not her husband. This is followed by Jesus' more doctrinally pointed words about worshipping God neither on the mountain nor in the temple but in spirit and truth. Faithfully, Weigel retails Eckhart's allegorical interpretation of the five men, understood as the five senses, and the last man who is not hers, as her free will which is captive to mortal sin. None of this is left out by Weigel, though it follows a pattern of exegesis that he does not adopt for his own use, and though he has already stated the main point without allegory at the beginning: "the highest good or kingdom of God is close to you; for it is within you" (*daß höchste guedt oder Reich Gottes ist eüch nahe, dann Es ist in Eüch*—PW 3:116).[13] This inwardness is correlated by the Lutheran pastor with the universalism which is intrinsic to the scriptural encounter of Jew with Samaritan.

In an apparent quest for a suprahistorical agreement, Weigel compares the sermon with Paracelsus' *De Fundamento Scientiarum Sapientiaeque,* citing it by author and title. Paracelsus had extolled human beings as universally equal inheritors of a wisdom from God: "for so great and so noble is the human being that he bears God's image and is an heir of the kingdom of heaven" (*dan so groß und so edel ist der mensch, das er gottes biltnus tregt und ein erb ist des reichs gottes*).[14] Drawing on the Bible, Eckhart, and Paracelsus, Weigel's inward turn was not only learned but clearly also egalitarian in its antiauthoritarian thrust.

Weigel's mystical-devotional treatise *On Prayer* (*Vom Gebet*) illustrates for us how the seemingly contradictory sources and impulses of his thought are united in a scheme that is both hierarchical and egalitarian and in which references to Meister Eckhart are the paradoxical apex of a conceptual framework. Though hard to date, *On Prayer* consists of materials and concepts that summarize and extend Weigel's early devotional and theoretical work. The psychology of sixteenth-century religious belief is incorporated into a hierarchical construct borrowed from a tradition that includes Pseudo-Dionysius, Tauler, and the *Theologia Germanica*. There are the spiritual beginners who fear the punishments of Hell and the spiritual intermediate ones who are not only mindful of the eternal darkness but also pray for eternal reward in heaven; finally, there are the complete and practiced Christians who serve God, not out of fear of punishment or hope of reward, but simply out of love for the eternal Good. Forgetting about their own souls, they then find in Christ eternal life (ZW 4:125). In its development, *On Prayer* incorporates allusions to sources ranging from Plato and Proclus to Paracelsus. Both Luther and the medieval Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides contribute to an antiauthoritarian notion of the ubiquity of God which is also an egalitarian notion of the kingdom of heaven within. Eckhart is a key source for the account of the complete ones who are no longer mindful of punishment or reward but love justice in the way the living love life, without asking why or wherefore (ZW 4:168). Weigel's crowning Eckhartian concept of the soul that abandons all for the sake of God and is thereupon filled with God (ZW 4:172-83) certainly matches many traditional expectations of how a mystic should write or speak. But before the treatise ends, its conclusions are fully integrated into two non-mystical spheres of concern. On the one hand, *On Prayer* is truly about prayer. It remains a devotional tract addressed to common Lutheran practices of piety. On the other hand, it presents itself as the synthesis and answer to the historical thesis and antithesis of Protestant theology, the

dispute over whether human free will contributes something or nothing to conversion and grace: "both sects have something right to which they adhere, [but] the rest is false and lies with which they garnish and mix the truth; [and] because they are blinded by the letter [of Scripture], they can never become one" (*beede Secten haben etwas rechtes daran sie hangen, das ander ist falsch vnd lugen, damit sie die warheit spicken vnd vermischen, darumb weil sie auch von dem todten Buchstaben verblendet sein, mogen sie nimmer eins werden*—ZW 4:220). We can imagine the German lay folk, terrorized by the threats of Hell that were evoked by the rival doctrinal parties that became dominant with successive princes. Against this terrorization of souls, Pastor Weigel advises his troubled people to seek consolation within by rising above both fear and longing in order to contemplate the good *as good in itself*, just as life is good in itself. What appears to us as esoterically mystical, nourished by sources going back beyond Meister Eckhart to Pseudo-Dionysius, was for the pastor and his followers with ears to hear nothing less than the advice of a Bible-braced common sense, telling them to relax and judge matters for themselves.

To be sure, this voice had been confirmed on the highest authority by the Apostle Paul's rapture—as Weigel says—by "this divine darkness" (*dieser göttlichen finsternuß*), of which "as Paul said, 'I did not know whether I was conscious in body, [for only] God knew this'" (*da er sprach, ob ich im leib wache oder nit So weiß ich nit, gott weiß es*—PW 4:213). Weigel referred here to what had been the locus classicus of mystical psychology at least since Saint Augustine: Paul's "rapture" into a "third heaven" (2 Cor 12:2) understood as attainment of an intellectual or angelic knowledge that transcends human sensory and rational knowledge. We cannot recover the psychological content of Weigel's experiences, but we can ascertain that he was interpreting the Pauline locus classicus following the sense accorded it by Eckhart: "in this [state] the spirit has drawn all [its] powers into itself, so that it forgets life completely; in it neither memory nor

understanding are active, nor the senses, nor [other] powers; and thereupon [Paul] was in the third heaven" (*da hat der geist alle Creffte in sich gezogen, das er des lebens gantz vergeß, da würckete weder gedechtnus noch verstandnus, noch die Sinne noch Creffte, vnd da war er im 3ten himel.*—PW 4:213-14). Following Eckhart's sense of it, this condition becomes for Weigel the determination of the human being: "The human creature should soar up like an eagle, above all creatures and transcend time and place, and immerse itself in the unknown and unfathomable darkness and unfamiliarity of God" (*Der mentsch sol sich aufschwingen, wie Ein Adler über alle geschöpf vnd überhupfen Zeit vnd orth vnd sich versencken in die vnbekandte grundtlose finsternus der vnbekantheit gottes*—ZW 4:214).

We should not leap to the conclusion that Weigel was describing his own practices of transcendental meditation. Every word or turn of phrase in these passages was transported to him by currents of a tradition which he knew as such. Its sources were thoroughly and explicitly familiar to him as literature. At the same time, we also need to remind ourselves that as readers we know that our own experience of reading literature results in our ecstatic experiencing of the thoughts and feelings of others which have been carried to us across great distances of time by repetition and re-statement. There is a frame of mind in which we forget ourselves in reading. When we see our own image in what we read, commonplaces take on a life of their own.

Even prior to the 1577 Lutheran Formula of Concord, Weigel's sources had been fully integrated and his main ideas clearly articulated. By signing the Formula, however reluctantly, Weigel helped establish the place of his work on the wrong side of the watershed separating the relatively free-spirited earlier Reformation from a conformist age of confessionalism. The latter should not be treated predjudicially or in a one-sided fashion; but among other and better things, the period of confessionalization was a great age of dogmatic intolerance and religious war. Two

of Weigel's most articulate treatises of the pre- and post-Formula watershed period are *On the Place of the World* (1576) and *The Golden Grasp* (1578). They are available in translation in my volume of *Valentin Weigel's Selected Spiritual Writings.* They offer a well-rounded synthesis of Weigel's ideas as they matured and congealed around the outer pole of his vision of the cosmos and the inner of his theory of the faculty of knowing.

As it happens, the fuller synthesis and interpretation of sources in those later works make it difficult to separate out the influence of Meister Eckhart. However, his impact should not be judged any less because its seeds had by then shed their verbatim husks and come to fruition in a new conceptual context. Weigel's original thinking is informed by Eckhart and yet at the same time, distinct and original. Eckhart's work had its own strong epistemological bent, associated with the scriptural and philosophical concept of image. Weigel shares this episteomological bent and the preoccupation with the image, but he presents the activity of knowing more deliberately and with greater emphasis on a subjectivism which stresses that, notwithstanding the essential role of the object, seeing is in the eye and knowing in the mind.

Medieval and Renaissance Neoplatonic thought developed a hierarchy of the elements, the astral or angelic intelligences, and the divine Being. Weigel took advantage of tendencies inherent in this hierarchy in order to reconfigure the ascending hierarchy. The uppermost is re-conceived primarily as innermost. Historians of philosophy must draw their finer distinctions, but in the grand panorama of the history of ideas, Weigel's inward turn points in the direction of Kant. As a philosopher's philosopher, Kant may be too remote from the dissenting theoretician to offer more than the most general points of comparison. Their inwardness in either case shifted authority to the individual.

Several subsequent figures are closer to Weigel in the panorama that extends from him down to us. His synthesis of Paracelsian nature theory and Renaissance cosmology was echoed and in some measure also shared by the mystical philosophy or philosophical mysticism of Jacob Boehme (1575-1624). However, Boehme's work is such a rich reservoir of received ideas that it is impossible to distinguish all the currents and sources, especially when it is not merely a matter of tracing Weigel but the Eckhartism in Weigel. The same can be said of Angelus Silesius. We could present several of his paradoxical couplets as reformulations of Weigel's words: "For God wants to take the human being to himself and to be all in all, yet not without the human being: the human being can accomplish nothing without God; and God does does not want to [do so] without the human being. Therefore God behaves actively and the human being [should] behave passively" (*Dann Gott will den Menschen gar an sich nehmen vnd alles in allem sein / doch nicht ohne den Menschen / der Mensch vermag nichts ohne Gott / vnd Gott will nicht ohne den Menschen / drumb helt sich Gott wirklich vnd der Mensch leidlich* – ZW 3:112) We can compare this for example with Silesius' famous couplet, "God does not live without me":

I know that without me God cannot live an instant,
If I come to naught, he must for want give up the ghost.

Gott lebt nicht ohne mich.
Jch weiß, daß ohne mich Gott nicht ein Nun kan leben /
Werd' ich zu nicht Er muß von Noth den Geist aufgeben.

If the formulations of Weigel and Silesius are compatible, Silesius' mystical gems were extracted from deeper and broader currents of tradition and polished to a degree that rendered their proximate sources irrelevant. Eckhart's contribution to the tradition out of which Boehme and Silesius drew their literary materials was undoubtedly extensive, but it was also derivative of more ancient sources and mediated by more varied tributary currents.

Since the mystical tradition is a tradition of literature and ideas, we need to recognize that Weigel and those who preceded and followed him were drawing on common sources in order to come to terms with similar conflicts and quandaries. The materials of Christian tradition and its philosophical accoutrements contained elements both universal and exclusive. Confronted with the irreconcilable contradictions between contending doctrines and confessions, Weigel carried the universalist and internalist elements to an extreme in order to transcend the contradictions in the temporal world. He countered violent exclusivism with irenic universalism. He shifted the authority of faith radically inward, thereby rendering historical distinctions moot and eliminating the literalist regime of rewards and punishments which bolstered all the doctrinal allegiances.

The greatest literary mind of the German Enlightenment was Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781). He was a graduate of Weigel's princely St. Afra's School in Meissen, as well as the universities in Leipzig and Wittenberg attended by Weigel. Like his precursor, Lessing was trained in theology, to which he likewise took a critical approach, quarreling bitterly and openly with literalist opponents among the orthodox Lutherans of his time. Like Weigel, Lessing also left behind a moral testament. In his *On the Education of the Human Race* (*Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts*, 1780), Lessing foretold the advent of an ethical Christianity or Christian Enlightenment of the Spirit in which human beings would do good not out of fear of punishment or hope for rewards, but out of love of the good for its own sake. No less than Weigel, Lessing

understood this transformation as the oblique fulfillment of the medieval Joachite prophesies of the coming final age which had stirred intellectual ferment in the epoch of Dante and Meister Eckhart. The conceptualization of a coming moral condition in which human beings would rise above their creatural selves by doing what is good irrespective of rewards and punishments is essential to the long and multi-faceted tradition of Eckhart, Weigel, and Lessing. We should be able to understand why this message had to be encased in puzzling paradoxes and labyrinthine theoretical explications. We are no more capable now than were people in the day of Eckhart or Weigel of asserting an ethic of the good as a self-evident feature of our common morality.[15]

Notes

[1] *Joannis Tauleri des seligen lerers Predigt/ fast fruchtbar zů eim recht christlichen leben* (Basel: Adam Petri, 1522). Cited henceforth as BT.

[2] Valentin Weigel, *Sämtliche Schriften (Neue Edition)* vol. 3, ed. Horst Pfefferl (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1996), 116. References to the Pfefferl edition will be cited by volume and page to PW, while references to the earlier, incomplete edition of Valentin Weigel, *Sämtliche Schriften*, ed. Will-Erich Peuckert, Winfried Zeller, Alfred Ehrentreich, and Horst Pfefferl (Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt: Frommann Verlag, 1962f.) are cited as ZW by volume and page.

[3] See Bernard McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism: Origins to the Fifth Century, Volume One* of *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism* (New York: Crossroad, 2000), 266-67 ("'Mysticism' as a noun is a fairly recent creation, the product of early seventeenth-century France, as the researches of Michel de Certeau have shown."); cf. Michel de Certeau, "'Mystique' au XVIIe siècle: Le problème du langage 'mystique,'" in *L'Homme devant Dieu: Mélanges offertes au Père Henri du Lubac*," (Paris: Aubier, 1964), vol. 2, 267-91.

[4] His life, times, and writings are summarized in Andrew Weeks, *Valentin Weigel (1533-1588): German Religious Dissenter, Speculative Theorist, and Advocate of Tolerance* (New York: SUNY Press, 2000), and in briefer form in Valentin Weigel, *Selected Spiritual Writings*, trans. and intro. Andrew Weeks, pref. R. Emmet McGlaughlin (New York: Paulist Press, 2003), 9-49.

[5] See Peter A. Dykema and Heiko A. Oberman (Eds.), *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, *Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought* 51 (Leiden: Brill, 1993).

[6] See Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation: A History* (New York: Viking, 2003), on the deeply rooted and widespread phenomenon of Reformation era anti-clericalism: "it is important to realize that the anticlerical rhetoric that became an integral part of the Reformation was actually the product of long-standing disputes among the clergy, rather than sponteous lay criticism of their faults" (32); however, this certainly did not prevent it from coming into popular currency. Opposition to tithes, "merged with heated rhetoric against clergy generally, which Luther would find difficult to repudiate since he has supplied most of it in and after 1520; clergy were accused of *Totenfresserei*, feeding on the dead…" (149); moreover, "rebel clergy gave voice to much of this anticlericalism" (149). In the end,

both the Protestant Spiritualists and the Jesuits channeled Reformation-era anticlericalism (218). In the former case, anti-clericalism was linked to a kind of anti-intellectualism put forth by the Spiritualist intellectuals themselves.

[7] Luise Gnädinger, *Johannes Tauler. Lebenswelt und mystische Lehre* (Munich: Beck, 1993), 32.

[8] The opening address to the reader goes on to list five additional points of contention on page 8. Thus, in full, the opening words of the treatises read: "Günstiger Leser! [Favorable Reader!] Inn diesen Büchlein von der Bußе vnd Armut des Geistes, welches ist aus den Predigten Tauleri von mir zusammengezogen vnd auch ein gutt Theil von mir selber geschrieben, wirdt furgehaltten ein waarer grundlicher Vnterricht, wie sich ein Mensch schicken vnd haltten soll vnd muß inn seiner Bekehrung oder Rechtferttigung. Dieweil nun solcher Articul der furnehmbste ist, vnd darinne man sehr zancket, so wirdt Vnterricht gegeben vnd auch der Fehl vnd darinne man sehr zancket, so wirdt Vntterichт gegeben vnd auch der Fehl vnd Irrtumb angezeiget, als nemblich

von der Erbsundee,
vom freyen Willen,
von der Bekehrung des Menschen /8/
von der waaren neuen Gebuhrt,
von der Wassertaufe, vom Priester gevubet
von Natur vnd Eigenschafft der Kinderlein der Christen vnd Heiden,
von Adams Fall und seiner Besserung,
von der Vergebung der Sunden."

[9] Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, 4 (*Reformation of Church Dogma, 1300-1700*) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 218.

[10] The definitive version is found in Meister Eckhart, *Beati pauperes spiritu,* in *Deutsche Werke*, ed. Josef Quint (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1958f.), vol. 2, pp. 478ff. Citations of Eckhart's sermons will refer to the title of the sermon and the volume and page in Quint's edition (DW 2:478ff.).

[11] The modern German translation in DW 2:731 reads: " Wer diese Rede nicht versteht, der bekümmere sein Herz nicht damit. Denn solange der Mensch dieser Wahrheit nicht gleicht, solange wird er diese Rede nicht verstehen; denn dies ist eine unverhüllte Wahrheit, die da gekommen ist aus dem Herzen Gottes unmittelbar."

[12] DW 3:104-125.

[13] BT Vff.

[14] Paracelsus, *Sämtliche Werke, Abteilung 1(Medizinische, naturwissenschaftliche und philosophische Schriften)*, vol. 13, ed. Karl Sudhoff (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1931), 296.

[15] Of value in pursuing the contexts of Eckhart and Weigel in the tradition of German intellectual history are G. Baring, "Valentin Weigel und die *Deutsche Theologie*." *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 55:1 (1964): 5-17; Gabriele Bosch, *Reformatorisches Denken und frühneuzeitliches Philosophieren. Eine vergleichende Studie zu Martin Luther und Valentin Weigel*. Dissertation. University of Giessen, 1998; Siegfried Wollgast, *Philosophie in Deutschland zwischen Reformation und Aufklärung, 1550-1650* (ch. 9, "Valentin Weigel). Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1988; Winfried Zeller, "Eckhartiana V. Meister Eckhart bei Valentin Weigel. Eine Untersuchung zur Bedeutung Meister Eckharts für die mystische Renaissance des sechszehnten Jahrhunderts." *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 3 Folge 8, 57: Heft 3 / 4 (1938): 309-55; Nikolaus Largier, *Bibliographie zu Meister Eckhart*, *Dokimion. Freuburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 9 (Freiburg/Schweiz: Universitätsverlag, 1989); and Freia Odermatt, *Der Himmel in uns: Das Selbstverständnis des Seelsorgers Valentin Weigel (1533-1588)*. In *Deutsche Literatur von den Anfängen bis 1700*, ed. Alois M. Haas et al. (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2008).