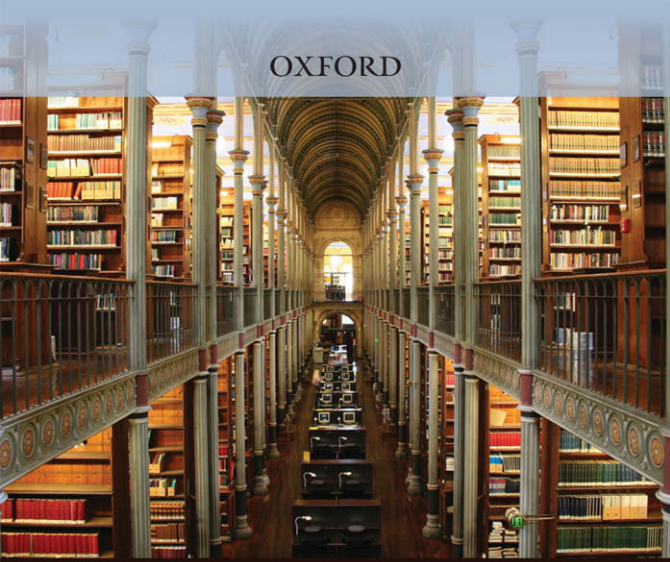


OXFORD



M. J. Inwood

A Commentary on Hegel's  
Philosophy of Mind

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## A COMMENTARY ON HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

Michael Inwood, an eminent scholar of German philosophy, presents a full and detailed new commentary on a classic work of the nineteenth century. *Philosophy of Mind* is the third part of Hegel's Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, in which he summarizes his philosophical system. It is one of the main pillars of his thought. Inwood gives the clear and careful guidance needed for an understanding of this challenging work. In his editorial introduction he offers a philosophically sophisticated evaluation of Hegel's ideas which includes a survey of the whole of his thought and detailed analysis of the terminology he used. This volume is issued simultaneously with a companion volume containing Inwood's translation of the *Philosophy of Mind*.

**Michael Inwood** is Fellow and Tutor in Philosophy at Trinity College, Oxford.

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M. J. INWOOD

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## Abbreviations

- DGS *Dictionary of German Synonyms*, by R. B. Farrell (3rd edn.: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977)
- Enc. Hegel's *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline*. The three parts are usually published separately. The first part ('Enc. I') is translated by William Wallace as *The Logic of Hegel* (2nd edn.: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1892) and by T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting and H. S. Harris as *The Encyclopaedia Logic* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991). The second part ('Enc. II') is translated by A. V. Miller as *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature: Being Part Two of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1830; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970) and by M. Petry as *Philosophy of Nature* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1970). The third part ('Enc. III') is translated by W. Wallace and A. V. Miller as *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971) and in part by M. Petry as *The Berlin Phenomenology* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1981). These works translate the third (1830) edition of Enc., but also translate the *Zusätze*. In my quotations from Enc. I, I have usually followed Wallace's translation
- HP *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, 3 vols., trans. E. S. Haldane and F. H. Simson (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1892–6; repr. London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995)
- ILA *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*, trans. B. Bosanquet, ed. M. Inwood (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1993). This is Hegel's introduction to his lectures. The complete text is translated by T. M. Knox as *Hegel's Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975)
- LPR *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, 3 vols., trans. E. Speirs and J. Sanderson (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1895)
- PH *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover, 1956). This is the only complete translation of Hegel's lectures on 'world history'
- PR *Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957). Also translated by H. Nisbet as *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. A. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). Hegel's major work on ethics and politics. As in the case of the *Encyclopaedia*, Hegel's posthumous editor added *Zusätze* or 'additions' from lectures
- PS *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977)
- SL *Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (London: Allen & Unwin, 1969)

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## *Editor's Introduction*

This book is concerned with *Geist*. *Geist* is both 'mind' and 'spirit'. It is the 'mind' of an individual. It is the 'spirit' of a people. It is art, religion, and philosophy. It is the Holy Spirit. *Geist* is the dominant concept in Hegel's philosophy. It propels his thought onward and upward. *Geist* itself, in Hegel's view, propels humanity onward and upward. If there is any 'secret of Hegel', that secret is *Geist*.<sup>1</sup> But what is *Geist*? Can it bear all the meanings Hegel assigns to it? Can it perform the multitude of tasks that Hegel requires of it? Such are the questions that this Introduction attempts to answer.

### HEGEL

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel was born in Stuttgart in 1770. After leaving the local high school, he enrolled in the philosophy faculty of Tübingen university in 1788, but later transferred to the theological faculty with the aim of becoming a Lutheran pastor. On graduating in 1793, he followed the common practice of serving as a private tutor to the children of a wealthy family, first in Berne and later in Frankfurt. During this period he wrote some essays on Christianity, which in general regret, and attempt to explain, its degeneration into a 'positive' religion, a religion of prescribed dogmas, rules, and rituals, in contrast to the 'folk-religion' of ancient Greece that it supplanted. The most important of these essays, 'The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate', argued that Jesus originally preached a religion of love, but that it had to become a religion of law, a positive religion, in order to convert mankind. Despite the occurrence of the word 'spirit' (*Geist*) in its title, as yet spirit plays only a subordinate role in Hegel's thought. He invests more hope in 'love' as a means of overcoming the alienating oppositions—between simple faith and ecclesiastical authority, between reason and the heart—that he so deplored. As yet, Hegel doubts the capacity of conceptual thought to do justice to the insights of Christianity.<sup>2</sup>

Early in 1801 Hegel moved to Jena to lecture at the university where his younger, but more precocious friend Friedrich Schelling already held a professorship. It was here that *Geist*, along with conceptual thought, secured a more prominent place in Hegel's thought. The upshot of his Jena period was his first major work, the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, that he published in 1807. In this work

<sup>1</sup> *The Secret of Hegel* (London: Longman, 1865), by James Hutchison Stirling, was the first book about Hegel in the English language.

<sup>2</sup> These essays were not published until 1907. Most of them are translated by T. M. Knox in *Hegel's Early Theological Writings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948).



*Geist* has many of the meanings that it is given in the *Encyclopaedia*. (But not all the meanings, since the *Phenomenology* does not contain anything corresponding to the section on 'anthropology' in the *Encyclopaedia* or to the section on 'psychology'.) In a brief advertisement for his book Hegel said that it

conceives the various forms of the spirit as stations on its way into itself, the way by which it becomes pure knowledge or absolute spirit. Thus the main sections of the science . . . consider: consciousness, self-consciousness, observing reason and active reason, spirit itself as ethical spirit, cultured and moral spirit, and finally spirit as religious spirit in its different forms. The wealth of appearances of spirit, which at first sight seems chaotic, is presented in its necessity: imperfect appearances dissolve and pass into higher ones that are their proximate truth. They reach the ultimate truth initially in religion, and then in science, the result of the whole.<sup>3</sup>

By the time the book was published, Hegel had left Jena, because the university was closed after Napoleon's victory at the battle of Jena in 1806. For about a year he edited a Napoleonic newspaper in Bamberg in Bavaria. Then, in 1808, he was appointed headmaster of a gymnasium in Nuremberg. There he gave lectures on various philosophical themes, including phenomenology of spirit and 'philosophical encyclopaedia'.<sup>4</sup> He married Marie von Tucher in 1811 and, between 1812 and 1816, published the *Science of Logic*. This work won him a professorship at Heidelberg, where in 1817 he published his *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline* as a textbook to accompany his lectures. It consisted of three parts: logic (a shorter and modified version of the *Science of Logic*), philosophy of nature, and philosophy of *Geist*. It was divided into consecutively numbered paragraphs, often brief and obscure, but to be expanded and explained in his lectures. To some paragraphs he added 'Remarks', which illustrate the theme of the paragraph in a less formal, less cryptic way and were intended to appeal to a wider readership.

In 1818 he took up a professorship in Berlin, which he held until his death in 1831. In 1821 he published the *Philosophy of Right*, covering roughly the same ground, in greater detail, as the section 'Objective Mind' in the *Encyclopaedia*. In 1827 he published the *Encyclopaedia* in a second edition that was nearly twice as long as the first, mainly as a result of increasing and expanding the Remarks. He published a slightly longer third edition in 1830. The work reached its present form in the 1840s, when it was edited for the collected edition of Hegel's works published by his pupils and friends. The three parts were produced separately, the Logic in 1840 by Leopold von Henning, the Philosophy of Nature in 1842 by

<sup>3</sup> 'Science', in Hegel, often means 'philosophy'. Here it refers, in its first occurrence, to what is presented in the *Phenomenology* itself, and, in its second occurrence, to the philosophy proper (logic, philosophy of nature, and philosophy of mind) to which the *Phenomenology* was originally intended as an introduction.

<sup>4</sup> Hegel's notes for these lectures were published by Karl Rosenkranz in 1844. They are translated by A. V. Miller in *Philosophical Propaedeutic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986).

Karl Ludwig Michelet, and the *Philosophy of Mind* in 1845 by Ludwig Boumann. It was these editors who added the *Zusätze*, ‘Additions’, from Hegel’s lectures on these subjects. Some of his lectures were also published separately: on aesthetics, on the history of philosophy, on philosophy of history, and on philosophy of religion. These too shed light on the corresponding sections of the *Encyclopaedia*, especially on the *Philosophy of Mind*.<sup>5</sup>

#### THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA

The 1830 edition of Hegel’s *Encyclopaedia* has the following overall structure. It begins with the Prefaces to all three editions. The most interesting of these is the second, which discusses the relationship between religion and philosophy and the question whether philosophy is pantheistic.<sup>6</sup> There follows a long introduction, discussing the general nature of philosophy and of logic in particular. Then Hegel supplies a critique of his predecessors—primarily Leibniz and his followers, Kant and F. H. Jacobi<sup>7</sup>—which, he suggests, may be a better introduction to his system than the *Phenomenology of Spirit* was (Enc. I, §25). After a brisk account of the three aspects of the logical method—‘intellect’, ‘dialectic’ or ‘negative reason’, and ‘speculation’ or ‘positive reason’<sup>8</sup>—the Logic proper begins at §84.

Like the *Encyclopaedia* as a whole, the Logic is divided into three parts. The first is the ‘Doctrine of Being’. It begins with ‘pure being’, the simplest of all concepts, without which we cannot begin to conceive the world. But *pure* being, being with no specifications, is equivalent to ‘nothing’ and passes over into nothing. ‘Nothing’, however, is equivalent to being, so it passes back into being. This

<sup>5</sup> Hegel’s posthumous editors published only his lectures on subjects that were not dealt with at length in his published works. More recently his lectures on other subjects, such as logic, nature, and right have been published. Attempts have also been made to distinguish the courses that Hegel gave in different years—his original editors stitched together materials from different years. Especially relevant to *Encyclopaedia* III are his Jena lectures on *Geist*, translated by L. Rauch as *Hegel and the Human Spirit: A Translation of the Jena Lectures on the Philosophy of Spirit (1805–6) with Commentary* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983).

<sup>6</sup> In Wallace’s translation of the first part of the *Encyclopaedia*, *The Logic of Hegel* (2nd edn., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1892), the Prefaces are summarized, but not translated. They are now translated in a more recent version, *The Encyclopaedia Logic* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), trans. T. Geraets, H. Harris and W. Suchting.

<sup>7</sup> Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi (1743–1819) argued that immediate feeling and faith are the basis of all our beliefs, including in particular religious beliefs.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Reason’ translates *Vernunft*, which contrasts with the more rigid and static *Verstand*.

Translators of Kant and Hegel usually render *Verstand* as ‘understanding’. I depart from tradition, preferring ‘intellect’ for three reasons: (1) ‘Intellect’ generates an adjective, ‘intellectual’ (*verständlich*)—and also others from the same stem such as ‘intelligent’ and ‘intelligible’—that is not easily confused with the noun. (2) ‘Intellect’ conveys the ideas of separation and clarity, which Hegel associates with *Verstand*, better than ‘understanding’ does. An intellect may be ‘sharp’, ‘penetrating’, or ‘piercing’, whereas ‘understanding’ suggests agreement and sympathy. (3) The medieval ancestor of Hegel’s (and Kant’s) distinction between *Verstand* and *Vernunft* was the distinction between *intellectus* and *ratio*.

oscillation between the two amounts to 'becoming'. But becoming subsides and congeals into *Dasein*, 'determinate being', a fusion of being and nothing.<sup>9</sup> An entity has a definite nature or quality (its 'being') that excludes a range of other natures or qualities (its non-being or 'nothing'). From the categories of quality we proceed to those of quantity (magnitude, number, etc.), and finally to 'measure', where quality and quantity intertwine. (A human being, for example, necessarily changes its shape as it increases in size.)

The second division of Logic is the 'Doctrine of Essence'. It considers concepts that capture, more obviously than those in the first division, the relationships between entities, and the inner nature underlying their outer appearance. Thus these concepts come in correlated pairs, such as essence–appearance, identity–difference, thing–properties, substance–accidents, and cause–effect.

The third and final division of the Logic is the 'Doctrine of the Concept'.<sup>10</sup> Like the preceding divisions, this contains three sections. The first deals with the 'subjective concept'. It considers the subject matter of traditional logic, the varieties of concepts, judgements, and inferences or syllogisms. (Despite his use of the word 'subjective' Hegel tends to regard concepts, judgements, and syllogisms as objective in a way that traditional logic does not. A concept is, for him, not simply a mental or a linguistic entity, but is embedded in things and determines their structure and their growth. Judgements and syllogisms are similarly implanted in the nature of things and not simply our ways of representing the nature of things.) The second section deals with the 'object'. There are three main types of object. The lowest type is mechanical. An example of this is the solar system, though higher types of entity, such as the mind, are often regarded as mechanical—in Hegel's view, inappropriately. Next comes the chemical object—for example, the compounding of an acid and an alkali to form a salt. Finally, there is 'teleology', in which an agent exploits the mechanical and chemical properties of an object to impose its purpose on it. With this unification of a purpose (i.e. the agent's concept) and an object, we reach the third section: the 'Idea', the unity of the concept and the object.<sup>11</sup> The first case of this is life or the living organism, which cannot, in Hegel's view, be explained mechanically or chemically, but

<sup>9</sup> Heidegger has since adopted the word '*Dasein*' to refer specifically to human being(s) and sometimes stresses its literal meaning: 'being [*sein*] there [*da*]'. Hegel's use of the word is different. He applies it to anything that has a definite character. In Enc. III, it usually contrasts with the 'concept' of something, and I have generally translated it as 'reality' or 'embodiment'.

<sup>10</sup> Hegel's word for 'concept', *Begriff*, is often translated (by, for example, Wallace and A. V. Miller) as 'Notion', in part because Kant used '*notio*' as its Latin equivalent. I prefer to translate it as 'concept', a word that has a more secure position in English philosophical discourse.

<sup>11</sup> The initial capital in 'Idea' is intended to distinguish Hegel's word *Idee* from the word *Vorstellung*, which I usually translate as 'representation', but, when this becomes unbearable, as 'idea'. A *Vorstellung* is roughly an idea in the ordinary sense of the word 'idea', whereas an *Idee* is more like a Platonic idea. In Hegel's usage an *Idee* is the unity of a *Begriff* and its *Objekt*, though he often uses other words, such as *Realität* ('reality') or *Dasein* ('reality, embodiment') in place of *Objekt*.

only in terms of the concept that it embodies. A more advanced case is ‘cognition’ and the ‘will’, which, in their different ways, unify a concept or concepts with objects. The final case, and the climax of the Logic as a whole, is the ‘absolute Idea’. This represents Hegel’s own Logic, which, as thought about thought, is a perfect match between the object, the thought that is thought about, and the concept, the thought that thinks about it. The Logic thus in a way returns to its beginning, to pure being.

There is another way in which the Logic returns to its beginning. The absolute Idea represents not only the Logic itself, but also the way in which logical categories or thoughts inform and structure the world. The convergence, within logic, between the concept and the object prefigures and explains the convergence between logic (or the ‘logical Idea’) and the world outside logic. Thus at the end of the Logic we turn to Philosophy of Nature and this begins with an account of space, which embodies (though only approximately) the first category of logic, pure being. In this part of the *Encyclopaedia* Hegel ranges through the science of his day, considering such topics as time, motion, the solar system, crystals, electricity, plants, and animals. He concludes with the death of an animal and this provides him with a (somewhat fanciful) transition to *Geist*, the theme of the third part of the *Encyclopaedia*.

Mind, like nature, embodies the logical Idea and is structured by it. In particular, the Philosophy of Mind follows the path prescribed in the third division of the Logic. It begins with the *concept* of mind: the mind is essentially something that strives to know itself. This essential characteristic of mind generates (Hegel assures us) its whole development: its emergence from its ‘soulful’ state in the womb and in infancy, its drive to comprehend the world, its capacity for perception, thought, and will, its conquest of the natural world and its formation of families, societies, and states. Eventually, it rises above the secular world to find itself as ‘mind as such’, mind freed from the confines of nature. It does this in religion, especially the Christian religion, which displays in a pictorial form the tripartite structure of reality that Hegel’s philosophy presents in a prosaic form. So finally mind turns to philosophy. Now mind not only becomes fully aware of the concept of *mind*. It also gains knowledge of the concept as such, of the logical Idea that underlies both nature and mind. For philosophy begins with logic, and this takes us right back to the beginning of the *Encyclopaedia*. The *Encyclopaedia* circles back on itself, and in doing this (Hegel believes) it reflects the circular structure of reality.

#### SUBJECTIVE MIND

The *Encyclopaedia* presents, then, an ordered system that returns to its own beginning, a circular system. The driving force behind this movement is the mind itself. For mind (Hegel believes) is implicit even in nature and accounts for its hierarchical structure. In nature, however, mind is only implicit. Nature is not

conscious. The mind in it is no more than the thoughts or categories embedded in it. Mind emerges explicitly only in human beings. And this is the theme of the third part of the *Encyclopaedia*.

But what is the mind? Hegel's word is *Geist*, which does not exactly correspond to the English word 'mind', which has in fact no single equivalent in the English language. The most common translations are 'mind' and 'spirit', one or other of which is usually appropriate for Hegel's use of the term. But within this broad range *Geist* takes on a bewildering variety of apparently distinct senses. In its most general sense, 'mind' contrasts with 'nature' and with such terms as 'matter'. Nature and matter are the concern of the Philosophy of Nature. This deals with space, time, plants, animals, and so on. (Animals do not, in Hegel's view, have minds nor are they in his sense 'conscious'. But this does not imply that they do not, for example, feel pain.) Philosophy of Mind, by contrast, deals with what is specifically human, including for example the state, art, and religion—topics that do not usually fall within the range of what we call 'philosophy of mind'. 'Mind' also contrasts with 'logic'. It does so in at least two respects. First, logic is 'abstract'. It deals with concepts of great generality, the concept of 'substance' for example, which apply equally readily to both nature and mind. Secondly, although logic governs our thought and is something that we think about, Hegel's Logic is not, officially at least, concerned with our *thinking* about, or in terms of, logic. It is concerned only with logical concepts and forms themselves, and these do not fall within the scope of the human or therefore of the philosophy of mind.

There is, secondly, a more restricted sense of *Geist* in which it contrasts with *Seele*, 'soul'. Philosophers before Hegel often regarded the 'soul' as a spiritual substance distinct from, though temporarily lodged in, the human body. In Hegel's preferred sense, '*Seele*' is closer in meaning to Aristotle's word '*psuche*', which is what makes something *alive*. Aristotle concluded that plants and animals, as well as men, have souls simply because they are alive, though he did not believe that their souls were immortal. Hegel discusses plants and animals in his Philosophy of Nature, but he hardly raises the question whether they have souls or not. In fact, Hegel is less inclined than Aristotle is to regard human beings as 'rational animals', that is, as similar to animals, only with reason added to them. For him men differ from animals all the way down. Nevertheless for Hegel 'soul' refers primarily to those aspects of human beings in which, though they differ from animals and a fortiori from plants, they are still closely connected to nature. Thus 'Anthropology', literally the 'study of man', but for Hegel the study of the soul, deals with such themes as the foetus, racial differences, the course of a human life, sleep and waking, and sexuality. *Geist*, by contrast, refers to the more intellectual or rational features of humanity. One important difference between *Seele* and *Geist* is this. *Geist*, the mind, differentiates itself more or less sharply both from other minds and from the external world of which it is conscious. A properly working mind knows that the objects of which it is conscious—trees, houses,

rivers—are distinct from itself. It knows that they exist even when it is not conscious of them. It knows that they have aspects which it does not currently, and perhaps never will, perceive. It distinguishes between the hot fire and the pain it receives from it, locating the heat in the external world and the pain in itself. It also knows that other people are similar to, yet distinct from, itself. They perceive roughly the same objects as it itself does, but perceive them from a different perspective. Other people, I come to realize, do not know everything I know. That is why I can lie to them. They know things that I do not know. That is why they can lie to me.

The soul, by contrast, does not draw a boundary between itself and other things or between itself and other people. This is especially true of the foetus, and to a lesser extent of the infant. It is the job of the mind, not the soul, to mark these boundaries. It begins to do this in the section that Hegel calls the ‘Phenomenology of Mind’.<sup>12</sup> ‘Phenomenology’ is literally the ‘study of appearance(s)’. Characteristically, Hegel probably has in play several different senses of the word ‘appearance’. Among other things, it means the ‘emergence’ of mind. The mind appears on the scene. It emerges from the self-enclosed, self-absorbed soul-state of infancy to make contact with a world distinct from itself and with people other than itself. It both differentiates itself from its ‘other’ and enters into relationship with it. When the mind has fully emerged, it retreats (Hegel implies) back into itself. In the section called ‘Psychology, the Mind’ Hegel gives an account of the powers and development of the mind that makes only occasional reference to the external world on which these powers are exercised. The relationship of ‘psychology’ to ‘phenomenology’ differs radically from the relationship of ‘anthropology’ to either. The soul constitutes, and anthropology describes, a stage or level of the human being distinct from and prior to the fully developed mind. A human being, a foetus for example, might be a soul without yet being a mind. Conversely, in a fully developed mind, the soul plays only a subsidiary and subdued role. But ‘phenomenology’ and ‘psychology’

<sup>12</sup> The relationship between this section of the *Encyclopaedia* and Hegel’s 1807 book of the same title is a vexed problem. The book was originally intended as an introduction to the ‘system of science’, which was to consist of logic, philosophy of nature, and philosophy of mind. But Hegel did not complete this plan. In a ‘Remark’ to the *Encyclopaedia* added to the 1827 edition (§25) he says that the book expanded beyond his original design and came to incorporate much of the material intended for inclusion in the philosophies of nature and mind. This explains why he abandoned the idea of making his book the introduction to his system. But why did he then include a truncated version of the book in his encyclopaedia? The answer is this. The book, roughly speaking, describes the ascent of mind from innocence to philosophy. This is clearly an appropriate introduction to philosophy: an account of how philosophy emerges is one way of leading Hegel’s pupils to philosophy from their relative innocence. But it is also an appropriate, perhaps indispensable, part of the story of mind. Mind does, after all, ascend from innocence to philosophy. So when the *Phenomenology* drops out as an introduction to philosophy, it naturally finds a place in the Philosophy of Mind. It might even occupy both positions, serving both as an introduction to philosophy as a whole and as a strand in the philosophy of mind. But since Hegel’s *Encyclopaedia* is circular, it implicitly occupies both positions anyway. Nevertheless, Hegel still remained attached to the book. He began to revise it for a second edition shortly before his death.

do not describe different stages or levels of the mind. They simply describe the mind from different points of view. No one could have the powers that Hegel includes under the heading of psychology without also being conscious of objects and other people, without being self-conscious. Conversely, no one could be conscious and self-conscious without having those powers.

#### OBJECTIVE MIND

Nevertheless, Hegel regards 'psychology' as a distinct stage of mind, a stage in which the mind withdraws into itself, in order to examine itself without regard to the external world. This withdrawal of the mind is the culmination of what Hegel calls the 'subjective mind', which is (roughly speaking) the individual mind. The soul, consciousness (the subject matter of 'Phenomenology') and the 'free' mind (the subject matter of 'Psychology') all fall under the general heading 'Subjective Mind'. It is within the sphere of 'subjective mind' that the soul is distinguished from the mind proper. Now we come to *objective* mind. In a typically Hegelian transition the withdrawal of the mind into itself is succeeded by the mind's return to the external world. The mind has already ventured into the external world, in the form of 'consciousness'. But now it is the external world with a difference. The world of which the mind was 'conscious' was initially a strange and alien world, a world of natural entities and of uncivilized, hostile people. Even when the mind came to understand this world it remained the natural rather than the social world. Its relations with other people were relations of dominance and subjection. Such understanding, dominance and subjection are essential steps on the way to objective mind. But they are not the same as objective mind. When mind is objective it has completed its task of taming and permeating the world. The world is no longer a world of merely natural entities and antagonistic people. Such natural entities as figure in it are the raw materials from which we produce goods for consumption and exchange. They are transformed in the houses we dwell in, the parks in which we stroll, and the buildings in which we conduct our public affairs. The people we primarily encounter are not our enemies, but the members of family: our parents, spouse, and children. They are, again, in 'civil society', our employers or employees, our business partners or rivals, our fellow guild-members, and so on. And finally we encounter or are at any rate affected by the various officials who manage the affairs of state. All this is the work of objective mind.

Objective mind is closely related to the *Volksgeist*, the 'mind of a people' or 'national mind'. The social and political order that Hegel describes under the heading 'Objective Mind' does not embrace the whole of humanity. Human beings are divided into 'peoples', the Germans, the French, the Italians, the English, and so on, each of them united by their shared customs, sentiments, language, and history. Some of these peoples are organized into societies of roughly the type that Hegel describes. (What Hegel actually describes is probably

no existing society, but an idealized version of the Prussian constitution.<sup>13</sup>) A people's society—its family arrangements, its laws, and so on—is informed and permeated by the 'mind' or 'spirit' of that people, by its general way of looking at things and doing things. It is, in Hegel's view, neither desirable nor possible for the whole of humanity to unite in a single society governed by a single world-state. If humanity were to retain their present diversity of cultures, religions, languages, etc., the bonds between them would be too loose for them to form a single cohesive society. If humanity were to adopt a single language, culture, and perhaps religion, then the bonds between them would also be loosened, since there would be no significant conflicts to weld them together. In either case, Hegel might argue, this all-embracing world-state would share the fate of the Roman Empire, disintegrating into a collection of self-engrossed individuals. The unity of the state, he believes, depends on its being one among several such states, whose occasional bouts of warfare wrest their citizens from absorption in their private affairs out into the public realm. There are, then, a diversity of 'national minds' and Hegel sees no prospect of their homogenisation into a single mind with the same degree of coherence and unity as a national mind.

There is, however, a single mind at work in all this. Hegel calls it the *Weltgeist*, the 'world-mind'. It embraces not so much the variety of national minds in existence at any given time, but the national minds that have emerged over the course of history. A national mind does not, in Hegel's view, last for ever. It arises, flourishes, and declines, summoned for judgement before the court of the world. At any given period of world-history, one national mind is dominant, representing the cutting edge of the advance of humanity. First it was China, then India, then Persia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, and finally the 'Germanic peoples', the Christian civilization of Western Europe. One might object that these supposedly successive civilizations are for the most part too disparate, too disconnected, to constitute the work of a single mind or spirit in the way in which a single civilization could be regarded, with some plausibility, as the work of a single national mind. This objection may be intensified into the doubt whether there has been, until quite recently, such a thing as 'world-history'. Until some way into the nineteenth century, events in, say, China had little if any effect on events in, say, England. Events in China could not become known in England until several months after their occurrence, if they ever became known at all. So, we might say, there was Chinese history, Indian history, English history, perhaps even European history, but hardly any world-history. And without world-history it makes little sense to speak of a 'world-mind'. A mind must have more coherence than we can plausibly attribute to most of humanity's history. But Hegel has

<sup>13</sup> Allan W. Wood argues, in his *Hegel's Ethical Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 13, that the state that Hegel describes in his *Philosophy of Right* 'bears a striking resemblance' not to the actual Prussian state, but to the plan for a new constitution drafted by Wilhelm von Humboldt and K. A. von Hardenberg in 1819, but never put into practice.



given an answer to this. It is the dominant culture of each epoch that is the main focus of the world-mind's spotlight. Other civilizations, even if they have been dominant in the past, recede into the background. It does not matter if Western Europe, in the period of its dominance, knows little of what is happening in China. Nothing of great significance is happening in China, and China has descended into what we might call the subconscious of world-mind. What matters, therefore, is not primarily the coherence of cultures contemporary with each other, but the coherence of the historical sequence of dominant cultures: China, India, Persia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, Western Europe.

#### ABSOLUTE MIND

Hegel associates this world-mind with 'divine providence'. Sure enough God makes his final appearance shortly afterwards in 'Absolute Mind'. Absolute mind comprises art, religion, and philosophy, though religion, Hegel says, is the dominant term of the triad. (In Hegel's view, art, especially pre-Christian art, has a more or less close connection with religion.) Why is this mind 'absolute'? It is the final term of a triad: subjective mind—objective mind—absolute mind. So we might expect, from our acquaintance with Hegel's other triads, that absolute mind will be a combination of subjective and objective minds or, what may amount to the same thing, a restoration of subjective mind on a higher level. One obvious difference between subjective and objective mind is this. Subjective mind is the same for everyone. Every normal human being, whether in China, India, Persia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, or modern Europe has more or less the characteristics outlined under the heading 'Subjective Mind'. What Hegel describes may in fact be a peculiarly European mind, and a nineteenth-century mind at that. But that is surely not his intention. His intention is to describe the individual mind as such. With objective mind it is otherwise. More or less every individual mind, at least in the period of recorded history, belongs to a community that is an objectification of mind. But individuals do not all belong to the same community nor do they all occupy the same role in their community. Human beings are divided up into groups—'peoples'—with distinctive cultures. They are divided up into historical epochs. Within their society individuals are divided up into nobles and commoners, traders and farmers, and so on. Worst of all, in some societies, in fact in practically all pre-Christian societies and in some Christian ones too, people are divided up into slave and free. Now the aim of mind, Hegel insists, is to know itself, to know mind as such. This is what Hegel claims to have done in his *Philosophy of Mind*. But how can we know mind as such if mind is divided in this way? Surely all that we can know is some particular type of mind, the Roman mind, the mind of the free man, the mind of the worker, the mind of the nobleman, and so on. We have already seen that Hegel despairs of uniting everyone in a single society. Nor would this help much unless everyone had the same role. Even then,

if mind was to know itself, everyone would have to reflect on themselves, reflect, that is, on mind as such.

At this point absolute mind resolves our dilemma. Here the mind attempts to rise above its historical and social setting to consider mind as such. At first it is not very successful in this. It cannot easily extricate mind from its entanglement in nature, let alone its social context. The Greeks achieved a rounded, realistic portrayal of human beings, but they presented their surface appearance, not their inner depths. The man they presented was Greek man, Greek mind, not mind as such. But Christianity is different. Christianity reveals the inner depth of man. It also reveals the breadth of mind. It appeals to all men, Greek and Jew, male and female, slave and free. It presents, or at least begins to present, mind as such, mind purified of nature and of local peculiarities. Philosophy, the highest term of the triad, completes this process. A philosopher inevitably belongs to a nation. Philosophers are Chinese, Indian, Greek, Roman, German, or French. But the philosophy they produce does not appeal essentially only to members of their own nation. Greek religion is specifically Greek. It makes little sense for a Jew or a Persian, embedded in Jewish or Persian culture, to worship the gods of Greece. But Greek philosophy, Platonism for example, is not specifically Greek. It is presented as true for everyone. Anyone, whether Jew or Greek, male or female, slave or free, can become a Platonist. If someone converts from Platonism to, say, Cartesianism, they do not need to change their nationality from Greek to French. A philosophy may of course consider the differences and affinities between Greek minds, Chinese minds, and German minds. It may also argue, as Hegel does, that its capacity to do this adequately and its capacity to consider mind as such, stem from the objective mind of Western Europe and its Christian religion. But in doing so, philosophy is not identifying itself with, or appealing to, any particular type of mind, not even Western European mind. It presents its findings as true for anyone and everyone, true for mind as such.

There is therefore a peculiar affinity between Christianity and philosophy. Both are concerned with mind as such and are presented to mind as such, to everyone. But there is a difference. Christianity tells a story about God, who is himself a mind distinct from any human mind. He then generates a son, who is again a mind. And when, after his death and resurrection, the son has returned to God, another mind descends on humanity, the holy 'spirit'. Philosophy is grateful for this story, but does not take it literally. It interprets God the father as the 'logical Idea', which underlies 'nature'—the philosophical counterpart of God the son<sup>14</sup>—and then the development of the human mind (the Holy Spirit, as it were), whose highest phase is philosophy, which comprehends the logical Idea, nature, and mind itself.

<sup>14</sup> For Hegel, Christ or the 'son' represents both nature and man. See Enc. III, §381.

## HEGEL'S MYTH?

Hegel, we might protest, has reworked the Christian story into another story, which though less pictorial is no less fanciful. It is a story of mind's endeavour to disentangle itself from the natural world and from the local peculiarities of the social world in order to know itself in its purity, to achieve, as Hegel puts it, its 'freedom' and 'truth'. Why should we accept this story? Does it have any objective status? Or is it just Hegel's way of arranging the multifarious facts about humanity into a satisfying narrative? Even as a narrative, it has conspicuous defects. In the first place, it does not follow a single time-sequence. It begins with the soul, and this (apart from its anomalous resurgence in deranged adults) precedes in time the 'appearance' of mind, described in the 'Phenomenology'. Then the powers of the mind are considered in 'Psychology', but these do not, very obviously, temporally follow the 'appearance' of mind. Objective mind comes next. Within objective mind there is a temporal sequence driven by the world-spirit, one culture giving way to the next. But objective mind as such does not follow subjective mind in time. There was no time that Hegel knew of when human beings with the powers considered by 'Psychology' did not form social groups. (Objective mind may temporally follow the state of nature described in the early part of the 'Phenomenology', but Hegel does not regard that as serious history.). Next comes absolute mind: art, religion, and philosophy. Art does not emerge later than objective mind, let alone the specific institutions that Hegel describes under the heading 'Objective Mind'. Art has been around as long as anything Hegel could recognize as humanity. The same is true of religion. But Hegel avoids this difficulty by speaking here primarily of 'revealed religion', that is Christianity, and by merging earlier religions into his account of art. Finally we come to philosophy. This emerged later than art and religion. Its beginnings in Europe are generally located in Greece in the sixth century BC. But it pre-dates revealed religion by at least 500 years. Even the first indisputably great philosopher, Plato, was born 427 years before the supposed birth of Christ. Perhaps Plato did not get to the bottom of mind as such. But Hegel had a high esteem for the philosophy of mind of his pupil, Aristotle.

Hegel's Philosophy of Mind does not follow a single temporal sequence. Suppose we accept, nevertheless, that Hegel presents a single narrative of a journey from the natural soul to mind's full self-knowledge. Is there a single subject of this narrative? What is that subject? It is *Geist*, Hegel says. But '*Geist*', as Hegel uses it, seems to be applied too liberally to denote a single subject. Subjective mind, objective mind, national mind, world-mind, absolute mind, the holy spirit: what links these together to form a single developing mind? Perhaps they bear a family-resemblance to each other, But that is surely not enough for them to constitute a single subject. In any case, it is easy to doubt whether there is such a thing as objective mind, national mind, or world-mind, let alone the holy

spirit. This doubt operates at two levels. First, one might question the ontological status of societies, nations, world-history, even of philosophy. Do they amount to anything more than arrangements of individuals—citizens, historical agents, philosophers, and their audience? Secondly, one might resist the suggestion that such entities, whatever their ontological status, are ‘minds’ in a sense sufficiently close to that of an individual ‘mind’ to constitute a prolongation of the individual mind. Yet this is what Hegel requires. It is mind, a single mind, that makes the journey from nature to self-knowledge. It begins as soul, and here it is more or less continuous throughout humanity, in fact (Hegel suggests) throughout nature as a whole. There are no clear boundaries between one soul and another soul, or between the soul and its natural environment. With the ‘appearance’ of mind (in contrast to ‘soul’) boundaries are established, between one mind and another mind, and between a mind and the world. Mind ‘as such’, considered in ‘Psychology’, withdraws into itself as a distinct, individual mind. Then, as objective mind, it re-establishes its connections with other individual minds and with the surrounding world. But now the individual mind retains its individuality. It is not lost in other minds and in the world. Its relations with other minds are intelligibly structured, and the world it inhabits is permeated and ordered by mind. But this objective mind is localized in space and time. It is not mind as such, not even the objectification of mind as such. The closest that we come to mind as such in this sphere is the temporal sequence of dominant national minds presented by the world-mind. However, the peoples whose minds are thus objectified are not content to remain within the confines of their secular social and political life. They try to make sense of the cosmos and of their own place in it. They express their attempt and its outcome in their religion and their art, which in its early stages is closely intertwined with religion. They worship gods who represent their conception of mind as such. But their religion is not entirely separate from their secular life. It informs and sustains their political and social institutions. Religion is a sort of bridge between localized objective mind and mind as such. Pre-Christian religions, as we have seen, tend to project their localized objective mind onto the divine plane. But Christianity purports to avoid this. It presents mind as such for all human beings. Philosophy does this too, only purged of the pictorial elements of Christianity. Mind has returned to the unity from which it began, but now on a higher level. Mind now knows itself inside and out. It can compose a philosophy of mind, something of which it is not capable at any lower stage of itself. Mind has thus become ‘true’ mind. It has become its own object.

#### IN DEFENCE OF HEGEL

In the hope of avoiding these criticisms of Hegel’s procedure, we might consider the stages of mind not as temporally successive stages but as aspects of an individual person. The person begins life as a soul. Here he is not clearly

differentiated from other persons and their souls or from the external world. A person's soul-life persists into adult life. But then, except in cases of derangement, the soul is subordinate to the person's objective consciousness. The emergence of objective consciousness is described in the 'Phenomenology of Mind'. Here a person becomes aware of himself as one person among other persons distinct from, though similar to, himself, inhabiting an orderly world to which they are cognitively and practically related. Such objective consciousness depends on the mental powers considered in 'Psychology'. Hegel presents this section as a sort of withdrawal of mind into itself. But there is, at this stage, really no such withdrawal. The person we are considering does not yet describe his own mental powers and activities. He can only do this properly when he becomes a philosopher.

So far we have focused more or less on the single individual, albeit an individual whose self-consciousness requires an awareness of other individuals. Now we turn to 'Objective Mind' and consider the person as a property owner, as a family member, a participant in civil society, and a citizen of a state. All this does not leave the individual unchanged. The social and political structure permeates the individual mind. Even non-Hegelians acknowledge this:

The whole process of choosing has itself an influence on one's identifications, therefore on the self, and therefore on the goals one seeks to maximize. On the whole, the process of making market choices tends to narrow one's identifications to the individual or, at the most, to the family. The process of voting, on the other hand, with all that it presupposes in the way of discussion and techniques of reciprocity, tends to broaden one's identifications beyond the individual and the family.<sup>15</sup>

We need not insist, then, that a social order is itself a 'mind' larger than the minds of the individuals composing it. We need only refer to the enlargement of the individual mind stemming from its relationships to other individual minds. We can, if need be, individualize the 'world-mind' in a similar way. An individual in a society, say a German individual in nineteenth-century Prussia, not only absorbs the culture of his own society. He also contains within him, more or less implicitly, the cultures or mentalities of the societies that preceded it. The German mentality has developed out of the Greek mentality, in such a way that although it is more complex than the Greek mentality it is intelligibly related to it and retains the Greek mentality as a subordinate part or element of itself. And similarly with other historic cultures. Scratch a modern German and you will find a Roman, a Greek, and even an Egyptian buried within him. This is why he can understand them. At this stage the individual is of course only dimly aware of the history that lies behind him and which, in a way, lies buried within him. It takes a historian to unearth and clarify the details. But he is likely to be aware that his

<sup>15</sup> Robert A. Dahl and Charles E. Lindblom, *Politics, Economics and Welfare* (New York: Transaction Books, 1953), 422, quoted from Brian Barry, *Political Argument* (London: Routledge, 1965), 299.

social order has not been around from eternity and also that it will not endure everlastingly.

## RELIGION

Germans of the early nineteenth century were religious. Humans throughout history have for the most part been religious. They believed in a supernatural, supersocial realm inhabited by one or more gods and they engaged in rituals directed towards these gods. Such beliefs and conduct seem to come as naturally to human beings as does their association with their own kind. Human beings are religious almost as inevitably as they are gregarious. (Not everyone is religious, of course. But nor is everyone gregarious.<sup>16</sup>) Why this should be so is far from clear. No religious beliefs are obviously true, and religious conduct does not provide any obvious benefits comparable to those we derive from cooperation with others. The crucial factor, Hegel believes, is man himself. Man is a finite creature. He lives at a particular time in a particular place. He has a particular position in a society, a society that is, moreover, only one of the very many societies that there are and have been. For the most part man views the world from the particular position he occupies in it, from what we might call the 'worm's-eye view'. But man is also 'infinite'. He can, in thought and imagination, survey the world from a perspective independent of his particular location in the world, adopting the bird's-eye view or, as we might call it, the 'God's-eye view'. That humans are able to adopt such a perspective is one of their main differences from other animals. Non-human animals, we might plausibly suppose, are aware only of their immediate surroundings in the more or less immediate present. They do not reflect on the past or the future. They do not consider how things look from the viewpoint of their prey or their predator. Humans are different. They range in imagination over remote times and places. They enter sympathetically into the viewpoints of others, of other people, other tribes, even other species, and even the gods. Naturally their attempts to do this are only sporadic and generally imperfect. When they ascribe such a viewpoint to a god or gods, the gods they concoct are too similar to themselves to be properly godlike. Their gods are too Egyptian, too Greek, or even too human. (The mythical transformations of gods into animals are, in part, an attempt to overcome such limitations.) But at least they tried. They were attempting, Hegel would say, to rise to the standpoint of 'mind as such', mind unhampered by local peculiarities and limitations. And this attempt, he would add, is not simply an agreeable addition to their everyday worm's-eye view of things. Their worm's-eye view could not be what it is if it were not for their ability to adopt the God's-eye view. Even in their everyday, unreflective life, men do not see things and conduct themselves in the way that other animals do. And this

<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless: 'As a gregarious animal, man is excited both by the absence and by the presence of his kind' (William James, *The Principles of Psychology* (New York: Dover, 1950), ii. 430.)

is because of their ability to rise above their everyday, unreflective life. We can, for example, critically assess our everyday desires and also our everyday beliefs. What I, as a worm, desire may not be worthy, and what I believe may not be true, when surveyed from a higher standpoint. In doing this, we need not, of course, ascend, or even purport to ascend, all the way up to the God's-eye view—as, say, Descartes claimed to do. We can go some way up the ladder, without going right to the top. But Hegel would say that our ability and readiness to advance up the ladder at all presupposes that we have some conception, however vague or fanciful, of what can be seen from the top of the ladder.

But why, it might be asked, should we ascribe the bird's-eye view to gods? And even if we do, why should we worship them? Some scientists and philosophers seem eminently capable of adopting the 'infinite' viewpoint, without assigning it to any god except perhaps metaphorically. The infinite viewpoint seems a distinct matter from God. One can adopt the viewpoint without the god, though one cannot, conversely, adopt the god without something of the viewpoint. Hegel's response is this. Religious believers often regard a god as a mind, and a mind quite distinct from any human mind. The Christian God, for example, is regarded as an infinite mind, very different and quite distinct from the finite human mind. But this is a mistake, albeit an entirely intelligible mistake. Gods may be minds, but they are not distinct from the human mind. This is because the human mind is not exclusively finite. It is *both* finite *and* infinite. So in a way man is not exclusively *man*. He is *both* man *and* God. This becomes more or less explicit in Christianity. Christ is both man and God. And Christ represents, in Hegel's view, man in general. In pre-Christian religions man's divinity is only implicit, obscured, for example, by the representation of gods in animal forms. In fact, for most of human history man's essential divinity is only implicit. Divinity is not, for Hegel, an all or nothing matter. Man *ascends* to God over the course of history. And this means not simply that man becomes aware of God or of his own divinity, but that he gradually becomes God.

This might be taken as atheism in disguise. If God or gods are simply an aspect of man, then God and gods do not really exist. They are on a par with other human fictions such as Sherlock Holmes, flying saucers, and pink rats. But Hegel would deny this. Sherlock Holmes, flying saucers, and pink rats are not essential creations of the human mind. It may be essential to us that we create fictions, but not these particular fictions. Our ability to adopt the 'infinite' viewpoint is, by contrast, essential to us. We would not be recognizably human if we lacked it altogether. It is then natural enough to ascribe this viewpoint to a superhuman mind or minds, conceived in accordance with the level of our culture. To deny flatly the existence of gods or God is to underrate the reach and depth of the human mind. The human mind is expansive and effervescent. It does not remain lodged within our skulls. It ranges out to coalesce with the minds of other human beings, and it ascends to the infinity of mind as such. So Hegel does not deny the existence of these gods. He regards belief in them as a 'representation',

a pictorial version of the truths attained by the pure thinking of the philosopher, especially the Hegelian philosopher, who is perhaps more godlike than the rest of humanity.

### CHRISTIANITY

What is so special about Christianity? One of its merits is that Christianity establishes what Hegel regards as a proper relationship between the finite and the infinite, between the secular world and the world beyond. There are two main ways in which we can go wrong about this. First, we may view them as separated by an unbridgeable gulf. Then we might respond to this in various ways. We might focus exclusively on the secular world, more or less ignoring the world beyond as unknowable and/or irrelevant. We might focus primarily on the world beyond, regarding this secular world as valueless or evil, to be redeemed, if at all, only if it is thoroughly subordinated to the world beyond. (In the 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel had called this attitude the ‘unhappy consciousness’.) Or we might oscillate between these two worlds, without discerning or establishing any significant relation between them. The second way in which we may go wrong about the relation between the finite and the infinite is by failing to distinguish them sufficiently from each other, by making their relationship too close. Then we shall not regard the secular world as a properly independent world. We shall see the hand of gods or God everywhere, and neglect the scientific exploration of the natural world and the secular development of the world of mind. In contrast to each of these errors, Christianity—especially, in Hegel’s view, Lutheran Christianity—distinguishes the two realms, but establishes an intelligible rational relationship between them. It inspires us to explore the world of nature for its own sake, guided by our religious beliefs but not overwhelmed by them. It encourages us to establish secular, constitutional regimes, keeping the church (and religious spirituality) in its proper place and giving adherents of other religions, or of none, a share in public life.

That non-Christians as well as Christians are granted a share in public life and, more generally, that Christianity does not ultimately tolerate the exclusion of any human being from the community is a crucial step on the way to the discovery of mind as such.<sup>17</sup> But what is a human being? Non-Christians or ‘humanists’ tend to take human beings for granted, as a sheer biological fact. Whatever fundamental equality is ascribed to them is to be established by empirical inquiry. Even when such equality is denied it is generally assumed at least that no human being

<sup>17</sup> In Hegel’s Germany women did not have civic or citizen rights, though they had human rights and were not seen as slaves. However, the exclusion of women from the affairs of state and, more or less, from civil society is not an essential feature of Christianity. Genesis 2: 27 seems to imply that women are as godlike as men: ‘So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them’. (I owe this reference to the Revd Canon Trevor Williams.)



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