

Re-imagining Jakob Böhme: David Lindsay's *A Voyage to Arcturus*

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Abstract

In this article, I show how David Lindsay's *A Voyage to Arcturus* is modelled on imagery and ideas in the philosophy of seventeenth century Christian mystic, Jakob Böhme. Explaining how key tenets of Böhme's metaphysics are re-imagined by Lindsay, I go on to address the question of Lindsay's pessimism, drawing some distinctions around the influence of Schopenhauer's philosophy. I argue that Lindsay's notion of the Sublime is founded on a re-sacralisation of experience drawn on Böhme's account of God's self-realisation in Creation. The supposition that Lindsay advanced a dualistic Gnosticism then stands to be rejected, and his pessimism tempered by the prospect of a spiritual ascent through immersion in experience.

First published in 1920, David Lindsay's *A Voyage to Arcturus* is an unsettling work, mixing supernatural, science fiction and fantasy elements in a seeming allegory, but which defies an easy interpretation. The book's protagonist, named simply Maskull, is invited by a stranger he meets at a séance to travel to a planet, Tormance, orbiting the star Arcturus, to seek someone identified as Surtur. Leaving from the roof of a six-windowed tower in a crystal spaceship, accompanied by a mostly silent companion called Nightspore, and with the stranger, Krag, at the controls, Maskull finds himself alone on arrival. He then endures a succession of bizarre and mostly violent encounters with the planet's inhabitants as he travels north in search of Surtur. The difficulty for the reader lies in the book's relentlessly fantastic imagery, with Maskull's own understanding consistently baffled by the people he meets and whose actions are difficult to fathom. Maskull will die, and the final chapters can be profoundly affecting, with Krag granting Nightspore, in place of Maskull, a vision of the reality of the world, before admitting to being Surtur and known on Earth as pain.

With its concluding emphasis on pain, *Arcturus* confronts the reader with a kind of cosmic horror. Nightspore climbs a staircase onto the roof of another six-windowed tower and as he climbs, he sees through the windows successive stages of a cosmogony. A light stream, from the reality Lindsay marks as Muspel, is filtered through a shadow which, like a prism, splits the light into sparks of “living green fire” and “white whirls.” The green sparks try to return to Muspel but are opposed by the whirls which interact with each other in “killing, dancing and loving,” seeking pleasure but feeling pain. The shadow, feeding on the Muspel-stream, is identified as Crystalman, who also appears on occasions throughout the book as the horrifying grin revealed on the faces of some of the characters, on their death. Much of the critical commentary on *Arcturus* ties it to a broadly Gnostic position (Bloom 1982, 207; Kegler 1993, 32; Martin 2011, 162; Sellin 1981, 227), in which Crystalman is a kind of false God, a devil or demiurge, master of an experiential prison or a false “reality” from which we struggle to escape.

I propose a “test of strength” is at stake here, in the way that Nietzsche approached the question of Schopenhauer’s pessimism in terms of a strength of character in affirming rather than retreating from life. In *Schopenhauer as Educator*, Nietzsche finds a duality in Schopenhauer’s character, in that he was half settled in his pessimism but half “tumultuous yearning” for a holiness which would be a “realm of peace and negated will ...” (Nietzsche 1995, 191). Nietzsche says Schopenhauer resisted a renunciation of life. Later, in *The Gay Science* (1974, 327), Nietzsche changed his mind, deciding he had made a mistake and projected his own resilience onto Schopenhauer. In *A Voyage to Arcturus*, the reader faces a similar challenge, in sympathy with Nightspore at the point when, seeing Maskull’s corpse, he asks Krag, “Why was all this necessary?” Krag says it is a struggle against Crystalman (361-362. All citations are from the 2021 Penguin edition). And Nightspore must choose to return to the world. But while the critical literature generally endorses a supposition of Lindsay’s pessimism, usually in the context of Schopenhauer’s philosophy, I shall offer a fresh approach to answering Nightspore’s question.

In all his stories, Lindsay admits talk of making visible the invisible, a reality that is in some sense hidden or obscured in our familiar world of egoistic concerns, and which informs his notion of the Sublime. I shall argue Lindsay’s metaphysics is drawn on the philosophy of seventeenth century Christian mystic, Jakob Böhme, a shoemaker from Görlitz in Germany, and that *A Voyage to Arcturus* is founded on imagery and ideas in Böhme’s first book, *Aurora*. This was published in 1612, with an English translation by John Sparrow in 1656, who anglicised the author’s name as Jacob Behme. Behmen is another variant, and the current English spelling is Boehme. A literal translation of the book’s title may be given as “Morning Glow, Ascending” (Weeks 1991, 61). The fundamental feature of Böhme’s philosophy is that God is known to Himself only through the Creation, or Nature, through the activity of seven qualities. These are perceptible characteristics of seven sources in God, marked by Böhme as *Quellgeister*. Böhme was living in a time of religious upheaval, and in opposing the conventional idea of God’s perfect knowledge and goodness, remote from His Creation, his book attracted the attention of the local ministers and magistrates. He was ordered not to write again, but with encouragement from supporters, Böhme published his second book, *Concerning the Three Principles of Divine Essence*, in

1619. More writings followed, but he retained a lifelong enemy in one of the chief pastors, Gregor Richter, who preached against his work and denounced him as the “Shoemaker Antichrist” (Weeks 2, 211).

With *A Voyage to Arcturus* resisting interpretation, commentators have sometimes looked to the oddly contrived names Lindsay gives the inhabitants of Tormance, their deities and its geographical features, as providing clues to his meaning. Their contributions are collated in a glossary by Michael Everson, appended in a recent reprint of *Arcturus* (2020, 334-351). But the names are obscure. They are not constructed on a common pattern, and much already depends upon the wider context. For example, I suggest that focusing on the sound of the constituent letters, the name of the character Catice, who engages in a discussion about favouring different viewpoints, indicates “see it as I see.” The context decides this, as Catice strikes out one of a pair of sensory organs on Maskull’s face with a stone and says, “when you have but one you will see with me.” (182). Everson has only the conjunction of “cat” and “ice” with no relevant meaning. “Backhouse,” the name of the spiritualist in chapter one, is plausibly a conjunction, but Everson only cites a suggestion by Gary Wolfe (1982), that it indicates Lindsay’s contempt for spiritualists. More likely, it plays on Lindsay’s frequent use of house as a symbol in his stories, with “back” tied to Backhouse’s profession, looking behind the world. But it is a challenging exercise here, with no guarantee that a name means anything at all. Everson has also noted Harold Bloom’s suggestion that Lindsay’s regard for the writings of Thomas Carlyle encouraged his choice of the name Krag, on the basis that Carlyle’s cottage in Scotland was named Craigenputtoch (Bloom 1982, 208). But this distracts from it simply reworking the Scottish word *creag*, meaning a rocky outcrop or cliff. Carlyle’s cottage is by a hill, but Krag’s name is significant in relation to the use Lindsay makes of Böhme’s text. In the séance scene, Krag’s seriousness is likened to sunlight leaving a landscape, “leaving it hard and rocky” (17). It will be seen below how, with reference to Böhme’s philosophy, this associates him with the first of the “qualities” in God. But in the absence of a wider context, the names are not much help.

The steps in this essay will be:

(1) Outlining the key features of Böhme’s system, primarily with reference to the eighth chapter of *Aurora*, in which Böhme sets out the different roles and character of the seven qualities.

(2) Identifying points of comparison between the *Aurora* and Lindsay’s *A Voyage to Arcturus*. A plot summary indicates the structure of the book, and I go on to address in detail how Lindsay takes up Böhme’s ideas in the Wombflash Forest chapter, and in relation to the characters Earthrid and Sullenbode. It is a further question how far Lindsay offers his own interpretation of primary themes from Böhme. I allow the correlation is such that *Arcturus* is continuous with Böhme’s thinking.

(3) I then examine the relation between *Arcturus* and Lindsay’s *Sketch Notes for a New System of Philosophy* (c1920), an unpublished collection of brief and largely opaque remarks that he calls *apercus*, contemporary with writing *Arcturus*, and which is held in the

Lindsay archive in the National Library of Scotland. Some of these Notes are made use of in the book, where the different context informs an interpretation. Again, I identify connections with Böhme's thought.

(4) The *Sketch Notes* are important in arriving at a judgement on Lindsay's reception of ideas in Schopenhauer. It is commonly held in the secondary literature that Lindsay follows Schopenhauer in expressing a profound pessimism. I address the character of Lindsay's metaphysical position in relation to *Sketch Note* 545, in which a reference to Schopenhauer is often noted by commentators, and explain how acknowledging Lindsay's adherence to Böhme admits a fresh approach on these points.

(5) Then, having established an account of the reality Lindsay identifies as Muspel, or the Sublime world, I turn to how this is communicated in *Arcturus*. Lindsay held it is a novelist's primary aim to communicate the Sublime (Lindsay c1920, 19), and I examine how this depends upon a role for symbolic imagery distinguished from allegory. Lindsay himself signalled this in a later work, in a discussion among his characters. At stake is a "higher" experience, grounded in a metaphysics and its mediation in a symbolic imagery indebted to the philosophy of Jakob Böhme.

1) Jakob Böhme's *Aurora*

As a Christian mystic, Böhme deals in notions such as the Holy Trinity and draws on imagery in the Bible. And while he is an original and unorthodox thinker, his work is also positioned in the wider context of alchemical, Kabbalistic and Neoplatonist writings. In 1600, he had a visionary experience, which he said lasted no more than fifteen minutes, but conveyed what seemed to be a spiritual insight into the world of nature. The stimulus had been a sudden flash of sunlight, reflected on a metal dish. He began writing twelve years later, to expound this vision, and he frequently reminds his readers of the difficulty in finding a suitable means of expression. Kristine Hannak (2014) explains the inspiration that the German Romanticists found in Böhme's work, in what they regarded as his poetic spirit. She cites Friedrich Schlegel on the poet's task, to make the numinous visible in the world. For Novalis, the numinous was not something outside the world, but deeper in it, and Hannak points to XIX, 13, in *Aurora*, where Böhme refers to his own experience of a spiritual world within reality:

In this light my spirit suddenly saw through all, and *in and by* all the Creatures even in Herbs and Grass it knew God, Who he is, and How he is, and What his will is ...
(Böhme 1656, 427)

Though the contents of David Lindsay's personal library are not known, there is biographical evidence of his interest in the German Romanticist authors, Novalis and Ludwig Tieck. He also read Hegel, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche (Sellin 52). Hegel gives his own summary of Böhme's philosophy in Volume III of his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (188 ff). Lindsay acknowledged George MacDonald as a primary influence on his work (Wolfe 1974, 131), and MacDonald was himself immersed in the German tradition, translating Novalis and deploying tropes and themes from his work in his own writings. In MacDonald's *David Elginbrod*, the eponymous character has a copy of Böhme's *Aurora*,

handed down from a forebear given it by Böhme himself. Lindsay also refers to Böhme in a letter to E. H. Visiak (Lindsay 1971, 43). And Lindsay would likely have been familiar with H. L. Martensen's *Jacob Boehme: His Life and Teaching*, first published in 1885, which ranges widely over Böhme's writings.

Part of the strangeness of Lindsay's *Arcturus* lies with Maskull's journey being so exaggeratedly sensory. For example, Maskull experiences two new primary colours on Tormance, which are "as vivid as blue, red or yellow, but quite different" (60). Maskull also grows new sensory organs as his journey proceeds, which alter his emotions and affect his judgment. In the relentlessly fantastic imagery, the reader, too, is immersed in this sensory journey. In his discussion of Böhme's own sources, Martensen finds that Böhme's emphasis on the perceptible characteristics of the seven qualities in God accords with an idea of the universe as a living, organic whole, in which the same principles inform processes at the cosmic level as at the level of individual things in nature, including mankind (39). At the outset, a primal will is incomprehensible to itself until directed on an object, in the activity of will and imagination in Nature. God then comes to recognise Himself in this image-shaping activity. In his later writings, Böhme marks this as the mirror of Nature, and, as Martensen explains (58-60), the mirror fashions itself in mirroring. In *Arcturus*, the God sought by Maskull is known to some of the inhabitants as "Shaping"; this sense of self-realisation counts against the supposition that Nature is remote from God, or the product of an evil demiurge.

In *Aurora*, Böhme treats the qualities as inhering in the pure form of what he calls the divine Salitter, which has its corrupted form in Nature. Böhme's model here is gunpowder, and, as Weeks explains (66-67), the way that gunpowder was made in Böhme's time, in a process of purifying earthy components, admits its suitability in symbolising how the world is "enlivened" by the divine. The earth collected from animal stables, mixed with urine and refined into pure white crystals, was its main ingredient, and the gunpowder flash and its discharging sound symbolises a revelation of the divine in the world, in the activity of the Holy Spirit. The interactions of the qualities identified by Böhme are then a kind of alchemy, in the way that ingredients in making gunpowder go through various transformations. This accounts for the oddity of Böhme's list of seven qualities and their characteristics. The list of seven is maintained in subsequent writings, though the order and emphasis are variably reconstrued by Böhme. As perceptible characteristics of seven source-spirits in God, they present the divine in something we can see, feel and taste (Weeks, 64). Similarly, Martensen explains that in Böhme's emphasis on their sensory character, God is not conceived as pure thought, but as an all-seeing, all-hearing, all-tasting, all-feeling, all-smelling God (Martensen 1885, 76). Böhme goes through the qualities and their elemental characteristics in *Aurora*. The eighth chapter (1656, 123-158) is a summary, having likely been an earlier text incorporated into the book (Stoudt 1957, 79). The seven qualities are dealt with there in turn by Böhme, in brief numbered paragraphs. In what follows, I have sought to quote directly as much as possible, to be faithful to Böhme's text, but also to provide a basis for correlations in *Arcturus*. The references are to Böhme's numbered paragraphs. There are reliable modern reprints, and the 1656 English edition of *Aurora* is available to view on Archive.org.

astringent (sour)

The astringent is a “sharp compaction or penetration in the Salitter, very sharp and harsh or astringent, which *generates* hardness and also coldness” (22). It is a “source of wrath in the divine Salitter” (23).

sweet

This mollifies the astringent and is a source of mercy. Böhme gives an example of an apple which is sharp to eat, until the sweet quality operates to make it pleasant. By themselves, the astringent is darkness, and the sweet “a moving, boiling, warming and rising light” (39). They are also the “two qualities out of which the Heart or Son of God is generated” (38).

bitter

The bitter is the source of “*laughing*, elevating joy” (46), and is responsible for “all manner of forms or figures and smells” (47). The bitter gives a creature its impulse to move (58).

heat

This is the “true *beginning* of life, and also the true *spirit* of life” (59). The first three qualities dried together make a “stock or pith” or “kernel,” which is the body. All the qualities exert themselves while affecting the others (65), but the heat kindles all of them, out of which, he says in (69):

the light riseth up and expandeth itself aloft in *all* the qualities, so that they see one another: For when the *heat* works in the sweet moisture, then it generateth the light in all the qualities, so that one quality seeth the others

This will explain the formation of various kinds of things in Nature, and Böhme goes on to give an example of something like a stalk of grass (82-100), ending with the fruit falling from it when the “sweet quality or sweet water is dried up.”

Having declared in (108) that wood gives light when burnt, because the sweet water is predominant in it, Böhme also goes on in (109) to explain how this is so:

Thou canst *not* kindle light in a *stone*, because the astringent or *harsh* quality is chief or predominant therein: neither canst thou kindle light in *earth*, unless the other qualities be first vanquished and *boiled out of it*, which is seen in *gunpowder*

Böhme does consider an objection here, that we cannot burn water to give light (110), and his answer is that it involves an oiliness in the sweet water, offering an example of fermenting and distilling alcohol out of barley, in which the sweet is predominant (115).

love

Böhme treats this as making the bitter and astringent qualities “*living* or lively, cheerful and friendly” (159). In (160) he writes:

And when the sweet, light, lovepower cometh to them, so that they *taste* thereof and get its life, O, there is a friendly meeting, *saluting* and triumphing, a friendly welcoming and great love, a most friendly and *gracious*, amiable and blessed kissing, and well-relishing taste.

There the bridegroom kisses his bride, and Böhme compares it to resurrection from the dead (163). He goes on to complain how mankind’s wickedness turns the angelical garment he brings into the world into a “devil’s mask or *vizor*” (13). Böhme then pleads for “love and clear bright light” to stay with us (179), personified in the character of a “sorrowful *woman*” (178). Asleep, she must wake up, her Bridegroom is on his way and requiring fruit from her hands. I shall address below the close parallel here with Lindsay’s narrative in *Arcturus*, in the character of Sullenbode.

sound (tone, tune or noise)

Böhme addresses this in detail in chapter ten of *Aurora*. It accommodates speech as well as music, and while its origin is in the hard astringent, he says that stones banged together can only make a knocking noise. Tone must be generated in the flash:

... the tone of voice riseth up in the middle centre, in the flash or *lightning*, where the light is generated out of the *heat*, where the flash or lightning of life riseth up. (X, 11)

It is of a part with what Weeks (74) identifies as the prototype of Böhme’s seven qualities in the Bible, in the Book of Revelation:

And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. (4:5)

Böhme goes on to explain how syllables in speech are expressed through the combining qualities.

corporeality.

This is the full manifestation of all the powers together in Creation. But it is important to understand that this is not a separation from God in the sense of being a separate world. Böhme is clear, for example in X, 64:

... *every* spirit in the seven spirits of God is impregnated with *all* the seven spirits, and they all are one in another as *one* spirit, not one of them is without the others.

Böhme symbolises this in an image of seven wheels so joined as to be moving always inside each other, which is loosely based on the chariot in Ezekiel's vision, in the Old Testament. Böhme also says how he is obliged to explain his meaning linearly, in what he calls "creaturely fashion," because language is fitted to our familiar world. But each of the qualities is meant as eternally operating on the others, even if they must be discussed in turn.

The first three of the qualities are said to "rub" together and generate the fourth, heat, which then brings about the "flash." In this transitionary moment, they are for the first time enlivened. It was seen above how Böhme appeals to the chemistry of gunpowder, and the "flash" presumably recalls his own vision, prompted by the gleam of sunlight on the pewter plate. This is the sense of enlivening, as figuring a spiritual self-realisation. Sound and love, along with the seventh quality, make up a second group of three, integral to the full manifestation of all the qualities together in Creation. With Böhme's emphasis on movement from dark to light, Martensen marks these groups of three as dark and bright ternaries, with the three qualities in the first group transfigured in the bright ternary, whereby life takes shape (72). This enlivening is an activity of the Holy Spirit, generating the Son out of the Father. It remains that God is known to Himself only through this process of self-realisation, and is nothing outside it, so Böhme's account also allows a sense in which the Son gives birth to the Father.

In Böhme's second book, *Concerning the Three Principles of Divine Essence*, there is more emphasis on the threefold structure, but it remains that God's activity in Creation reproduces a macrocosmic cosmogony at the microcosmic scale of individuals in Creation. For Böhme, this structure informs everything while allowing that the three "principles," or worlds, are themselves not distinct realities but are, as it were, simultaneously together in each other. This structure is evident in *Arcturus*, drawing together Nightspore's vision at the end of the book and the revelations of the Muspel light and its accompanying music at points in Maskull's journey. Inevitably, though, the journey and its exposition are linear, with the succession of encounters as discreet episodes. Some of these address concerns Lindsay has in relation, for example, to conventional religion—the episodes with Spadevil and Corpang are satirical in this way. And points from Lindsay's reading, for example, of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche are discernible. But overall, the structure and larger theme is drawn on Böhme's account of the interpenetration of the seven qualities in God.

2) Böhme and Lindsay

Before turning to specific points of comparison, I begin with a plot summary and indicate a structure in the narrative, grouping chapters in *Arcturus* thematically. I propose the following division:

Chapters I-V

The first five chapters narrate events on Earth. Maskull and Nightspore attend a séance, then travel north to an abandoned observatory in Scotland, where they are met again by Krag and depart in his spaceship from the roof of a six-windowed tower.

Chapters VI-VII

Waking on the planet, with no sign of the ship or his companions, Maskull encounters Joiwind and Panawe. They occupy a paradisaical region of Tormance and talk of love, kindness and beauty. There are correlations here with *Aurora*, chapters IV-VII, where Böhme discusses the nature of an Angelic realm as part of Creation. Weeks (79) explains how this accommodates joy and wonder in an individualised, reflective consciousness, in contrast to the simple variety of things generated out of the interpenetration of the qualities. In *Arcturus*, Joiwind and Panawe are still surrounded by a variety of fluidly changing forms, and the parallel with Böhme lies in their love for these things and in Joiwind's remarks about their own proximity to Shaping.

Chapters VIII-XII

Maskull sets out from The Lusion Plain and first encounters Oceaxe, with whom he rides a dragon-like creature on the way to meet her partner Crimtyphon, who will be killed by Maskull. Oceaxe is animalistic and loveless in her relations with others. When Crimtyphon's other wife Tydomin arrives, she kills Oceaxe. Journeying on together, Maskull and Tydomin meet Digrung, who Maskull also kills. There is then a baffling episode in which Tydomin wants to inhabit Maskull's body, and he is momentarily returned to the scene of the séance at the beginning of the book, as the materialising spirit conjured by the medium. He thereby sees himself in the room, before Krag intervened. Still on Tormance, Maskull and Tydomin next encounter Spadevil. He is the inheritor of a creed that he wants to replace with a notion of duty, under his own "new law." Journeying all together, they then come across Catice, who is standing on one leg in a pool of water and holding a three-pronged fork, symbol of the original creed handed down to Spadevil. The outcome of this meeting is that Maskull, when he comes to see things as Catice does, kills both Spadevil and Tydomin. At this point he is directed by Catice to the Wombflash Forest.

In these chapters Maskull has a succession of new sensory organs, beginning on arrival with a tentacle out of his chest, a "magn," which enables more love for things (62), a plum-sized organ called a "breve" on his forehead, which allows him to receive others' thoughts (52), and two bumps on his neck, "poigns," which enable empathy with other creatures (61). These sustain Joiwind's injunction not to be cruel. But on setting out on his journey, and first meeting Oceaxe, the way of interacting with others turns to "absorbing" them, which is a kind of dominating will enabled by a third eye, a "sorb," which determines its possessor to see things entirely in terms of how important they are to his or her own interests (101). This replaces Maskull's breve. Oceaxe's magn is more like a third arm, having a hand at the end. And Tydomin's sorb is described as "black and sad." By contrast, Spadevil has two "probes" above his eyes which are described as two membranes, and no sorb. He converts Tydomin's sorb into two probes, which results in her having feelings of remorse for her crimes. Catice has only one probe and Spadevil offers to double it. But Catice instead offers to remove one of Maskull's probes, for him to see things as Catice does. It is Maskull's acceptance of this that leads him to kill Spadevil and Tydomin. I suggest that Lindsay's notion of "absorbing" captures the sense in which Böhme says his first three qualities "rub" together to generate the flash, and that these chapters correspond to their operation in the structure of Böhme's cosmogony.

Chapter XIII

The Wombflash Forest is a pivotal chapter, in which Maskull meets Dreamsinter and has a visionary experience in the forest. It is positioned in the very middle of the narrative (190-196), and signals a transformational moment in Maskull's journey. Böhme's *Aurora* is signalled in the description of the forest as like the time of night "when the grey dawn is about to break," and it will be seen below how the "flash," so central to Böhme's philosophy, is re-imagined in Maskull's experience in the forest.

Chapters XIV-XIX

These range over another set of encounters, with Maskull leaving the forest and meeting Polecrab and his wife Gleameil. He travels with her to Swaylone's Island, where Earthrid plays a musical instrument, and causes Gleameil's death. Maskull takes a turn at playing it, which then kills Earthrid. He then has several more encounters, until, in the company of Haute and Corpang, he meets Sullenbode, who will also die. With Böhme's seven qualities in God forming two groups of three, as dark and light ternaries around an enlivening "flash," this structure is repeated in *Arcturus* in the narrative at either side of the Wombflash Forest chapter.

Chapters XX-XXI

The starting point here is Krag's reappearance, and this part of the journey, with further encounters, will end in Maskull's death and with Nightspore's visionary experience on the roof of the tower. The concluding emphasis on pain may seem despairing. But if Krag (as I propose) represents the first of Böhme's seven qualities, the harsh astringent quality in God, it remains that with each quality being in each of the others, this harshness is mitigated by the role of the sweet water in generating the enlivening flash and enabling love.

The Wombflash Forest

The Wombflash Forest chapter is centred at the middle of Lindsay's narrative, and is drawn as the transformational moment between the two triads in Böhme's seven qualities. In the story, the forest trees are gigantically tall. There are clouds of mist between them, the forest floor is wet, and the trees drip water on Maskull. He meets Dreamsinter, who tells him it is Nightspore who is meant to be seeking Surtur and that Maskull is like Prometheus for expecting to benefit mankind with the understanding he seeks. This is the first time he is reminded of Nightspore. He is also given a nut to eat, broken open for him by Dreamsinter, but finds the pulpy insides too unpleasant. They then see another Maskull running through the trees, pursued by Krag and with Nightspore following. They try to catch up with them, and Maskull sees Krag murder this second Maskull, plunging a knife twice into his back. Krag disappears and Nightspore carries on towards the breaking dawn light. These events are accompanied by a surging orchestral music which builds violently as Maskull's own emotion is heightened, until the whole forest is "roaring with sound." At this point, the noise is "so grandly passionate," that Maskull feels his soul "loosening from its bodily envelope," and just as his chest is "bursting," the light flashes higher, the music is like waves of a "wild, magic ocean," and Maskull falls into a swoon resembling death.

Forward from this chapter it is evident that some process is involved in Maskull's journey, in what had up to then seemed an unconnected series of bizarre episodes. The flash and breaking dawn of Böhme's *Aurora* are both clearly signalled. Lindsay also references the first three qualities in the composition of the forest, accounting for the generation of the flash in just the way Böhme allows. The tall trees with water dripping from them onto Maskull are the compacting and moistening aspects of the first three qualities. Maskull was described at the beginning of the book as a kind of giant with features modelled like a wooden carving (12) and the light in the forest arises in the way Böhme says the first three qualities are enlivened by the fourth, heat, which works in the moisture and generates the light.

The nut kernel given to Maskull is significant in recalling the role Böhme accords the heart. All the qualities dried together in the body make up its kernel, or heart, indicated at the end of the book in Krag beating on Maskull's heart. In the Wombflash Forest, his distaste for the nut kernel suggests his enlivening, yet depends upon the qualities that make up the second group of three. Strictly, it is Nightspore's re-generation at stake here. Maskull's name indicates his earthly "mask." And the murder scene in the forest anticipates Nightspore's reappearance on the death of Maskull at the end of the book, exiting onto the roof of the six-windowed Muspel Tower in readiness again to manifest the seven qualities in God. But the forest chapter reveals the centrality of the enlivening "flash" in Lindsay's narrative.

Earthrid

The "musical instrument" in chapter XV is a small circular lake, about half a mile across, on which the musician, Earthrid, causes the waters to make shapes. He explains his music as being founded on painful tones, which Maskull takes as resembling life. When Maskull plays it, he directs his will on imagining the shape of Surtur, with the lake giving shape to his thoughts. The result is that a spout of water rises and the surrounding hills crack and break, a radiant light is followed by darkness, then a vast explosion occurs beneath the lake-bed, as the descending water meets fire. Maskull is thrown into the air, and when he regains consciousness there is lightning and thunder, and Earthrid is dead (229-240). The complexity of Lindsay's description here is referencing, again, Böhme's account of the generation of the flash, in the first three qualities, and its discharge in sound.

Sullenbode

The process of generation in God requires that Maskull travel north. Böhme says in *Aurora* XI, 78-79, that this is the direction in which the light is brightest, and where the Bridegroom that he talks of in chapter VIII will crown his bride. The "friendly meeting" and "blessed kissing" Böhme describes is not like worldly love, which he says is a dark valley by comparison. This shortcoming is picked up in chapters XVIII and XIX of *Arcturus* in relation to a female character, Sullenbode, but the role of love as the fifth quality is evident. Maskull is warned against kissing Sullenbode by two more unreliable characters, the distinctly unfriendly Haunte and the priestly Corpang; while the former goes on to kiss her and dies, the latter resists. But Maskull kisses her twice, and on the second time Sullenbode makes a declaration of love while telling him he must complete his journey (330). There is much talk of pain and anguish, and Maskull wonders if love is too strong a drink for human

beings (335). But they travel together across some boggy terrain until Maskull is seized by a vision of the Muspel light, forgetting Sullenbode and making no response to her embrace. Maskull's vision does not last, and in the meantime Sullenbode has died.

Again, Lindsay references the other qualities. Haunte is wholly astringent, signalled in all the talk of rocks and stones that Lindsay adds in here, with him living in the mountains and manoeuvring his flying-boat using "male-stones" (which devour female particles rising from the earth, preventing them from attracting the male parts of his boat, apart from in the bow, so it travels forward). It was seen above how Böhme explains in chapter eight of *Aurora* that the compacting astringent must be softened by the sweet water to enable love. Haunte is rejected on attempting to kiss Sullenbode. She turns more human but a scowl replaces her smile, and Haunte falls back dead, "as though he had come in contact with an electric wire" (315). As Maskull goes on to kiss Sullenbode, his own body seems "full of rocks, all grinding against one another" (317), but Sullenbode is transformed into a living soul, and tells Maskull he succeeded, where others failed, in drawing her into the world "for all time, for good or evil" (318). In all of this, as in the Wombflash Forest, Lindsay is re-imagining Böhme's account of the operation of love in the seven interpenetrating qualities in God. There are close references to Böhme's talk of the Bridegroom approaching, requiring fruit, and the injunction to awake. Sullenbode is asleep when Maskull and his companions approach, and is holding a half-eaten fruit. And when transformed in the kissing, Maskull says she looks the *kingliest* of women, thereby crowning his bride.

The question then is whether this sustains a pessimistic view of life. In human form, Sullenbode's life is fleeting, and her face reveals the Crystalman grin on death. But Lindsay's regard for reality, which he identifies with the Sublime, admits a transcendence gained through immersion in life, not in seeking to escape or avoid it. The episode with Sullenbode takes place in *Lichstorm*, German for lightning storm, and as Maskull experiences the Muspel-light again, he wants to "spring up and become incorporated with the sublime universe which was beginning to unveil itself ..." (338). But the point remains that this does not imply Lindsay's philosophy is the dualistic Gnosticism assumed in much of the critical commentary. Martensen is clear that Böhme rejects the deist's idea of a God who exists before the world, creating it by fiat. And the sense of immersion in life, in the activity of the seven spirits in God, is carried in *Arcturus* in its overwhelmingly sensory imagery.

3) Lindsay's Sketch Notes for a New System of Philosophy

Among Lindsay's papers in the Library of Scotland is a manuscript titled *Sketch Notes for a New System of Philosophy*. This is a collection of brief aphorisms, typed and numbered. It is evidently an early composition and contemporary with Lindsay writing *A Voyage to Arcturus*, because some of them are identifiable in the story. The different context in the novel sometimes clarifies the note, and in other cases the note is helpful in revealing Lindsay's intentions in *Arcturus*. He calls the notes "appercus" [sic]. It is a typewritten script but Lindsay is consistent in his mis-spelling. In Note 488 he proposes their meaning will be clearer with what he recommends as "brooding" on them. Repeated reading does

reveal a system of sorts, with some key ideas, and they are broadly philosophical. But Lindsay does not engage in critical evaluation of his own ideas or refer much to other thinkers. The notes are brief, repetitious and often cryptic. Nevertheless, the *Sketch Notes* provides insight into how Lindsay approached certain philosophical issues, as in his talk of the Sublime, and helps to identify some ideas that make their way into *Arcturus*, which can be traced to his engagement with Böhme.

For example, in Note 246, Lindsay sets out two distinguishing features of his own metaphysics. The second is:

the origin of life is not to be sought in Unity (God), but in Variety. Variety is richness, and it would be wrong to imagine that the primary is not far richer in nature than the secondary which is derived from it. (Lindsay c1920, 25)

The “secondary” here is the misplaced confidence we have in unifying concepts, such as classificatory notions of species, and which we might mistakenly suppose originate in the mind of God. In *Arcturus*, the creatures and vegetation on Tormance emerge in a kind of creative flux, as they spontaneously change shape. This has a basis in Böhme, where he writes in chapter 12 of *Aurora*, in paragraphs 170-171:

[creaturely shapes arise in a] *heavenly* form or manner ... but as they rise, so they go away again ... for these figures are so formed in the birth of the rising qualities in the spirit of nature or nature-spirit. (1656, 267)

That is, they are formed in the interpenetration of the qualities, as these try to manifest their characteristics.

In the *Sketch Notes*, in Note 484, Lindsay also says that genius, as a state of mind, is

... identical with life itself, showing itself in different forms throughout creation; eg variety, “sporting,” departure from family type, etc. (49)

This sense of “sporting” as a biological mutation in plants also has a correlate in Böhme’s emphasis on variety, where he continues in XII, 172-173:

If a figure be imaged in a spirit, so that it *subsisteth*; and if another spirit wrestleth with this, and gets the *better*, then it comes to be divided, and indeed changed or altered, all according to the *kind* of the qualities; *and this is in God as a holy sport, play or scene*. Therefore also the creatures, as beasts, fowls or birds, fishes and worms in this world, are not created to an eternal being, but to a *transitory* one, as the figures in heaven also *pass away*. (1656, 267)

Again, in the *Sketch Notes*, Lindsay declares that attempts to impose kinds of unity on this variety are misdirected. For example, in Note 510 he says:

Three-dimensional space is the result of the attempt on the part of the Individual to reduce variety to unity. In this attempt, it succeeds only in reducing to three unidentifiable perceptions. Length is the relation of the object to Nothingness. Breadth is the relation of one object to another, as seen by the subject. Depth is the relation of the object to the subject.

For other examples of the Individual's inability to reduce variety to unity:- the three primary colours, and the Christian "Holy Trinity." (51)

He goes on to say in Note 515 how this striving for unity brings the mind to confront three "obstacles," which he treats in terms of what he has said about three-dimensionality. The first obstacle, in relation to length, is why does the world exist. The second, out of the relations of objects among themselves, is what are the origins of the world. The third obstacle, as depth, is the subject's relation to the "outer world." Presumably, the outer world is our everyday world, to which we stand as experiencers. Lindsay declares these obstacles are responsible for religious and philosophical questioning, and the point he makes about them sustaining an account of the Holy Trinity is made in *Arcturus* when Corpang constructs a religion on the very terms that Lindsay sets out in the *Sketch Notes*, of length, breadth and depth (275). Before this episode, the musician Earthrid applies the same perceptions to patterns in music, which he seeks to oppose with his own murderously un-harmonic music.

Importantly, these constructed unities are applied in the world of individual experience, in our establishing a sense of reality and our relation to it. In a frequently quoted Note, number 534, Lindsay writes:

One must not regard the world merely as a home of illusions; but as being rotten with illusion from top to bottom; not a sound piece anywhere, but all springs glasses and traps throughout. The most sacred and holy things ought not to be taken for granted; for if examined attentively, they will be found as hollow and empty as the rest. What is this vast sham? Will, Unity, and Individuality, leading to the conceptions God, Art, Science, Eternal Rhythm, Virtue, Nobility, Beauty, Music, and Love. Behind this sham world lies the real, tremendous, and awful Muspel-World, which knows neither Will, nor Unity, nor Individuals:- that is to say, an inconceivable world. (54)

The sham world, in contrast to Muspel, is constructed out of the unities we try to impose on experience. It can then be a "sham" in the word's usual sense of one thing appearing differently, rather than suggesting one of two different things. In this usual sense of the word, the note does not determine that the real should stand to this world in the way that God might stand outside Creation. Nor does it exclude a unity of the divine with Creation. Lindsay's focus is on what should sustain a transcendent vision, away from the limitations of our egoistic self and its efforts in imposing order and unity on the world, and he follows Böhme in advocating the created world of experience is the means through which God comes to know Himself.

4) The influence of Schopenhauer and Lindsay's response to pessimism

In the final aphorism of the *Sketch Notes*, Note 545, Lindsay refers directly to Schopenhauer:

Schopenhauer's "Nothing," which is the least understood part of his system, is identical with my Muspel; that is, the real world. (57)

This note is often quoted in the critical literature as indicating Lindsay regarded the world as wholly illusory. Schopenhauer held that our individual consciousness is an obstacle to recognising the nature of our existence, commenting we might recognise this more clearly in the moment of dying, when the illusory confinement to our own person and experience gives way, in the loss of egoistic concerns, to a sense of "omnipresence." He then likens individual consciousness to the *Maya* of Brahminism. Although our knowledge of the real being of things is obstructed, Schopenhauer proposes this reality, as thing-in-itself, is a fundamental will-to-live (*The World as Will and Representation, Volume II*, 601). The will-to-live is indestructible but located in a world which is that reality's image or representation, in which the familiar laws that govern generation and destruction suggest to consciousness that we came from nothing and will be annihilated. This difference between the phenomenal world and the thing-in-itself determines that the mode of being in one "signifies nothing ... in the other" (II, 496-497). Accordingly, our non-existence as individuals, on death, will seem to us to be nothing. We can only see it as extinction, Schopenhauer says, and notes that the Buddhist faith calls this Nirvana (II, 508).

It is important here that Schopenhauer is talking about the limitation on what we can understand from the perspective of our own self-consciousness. This sustains what he means when declaring few will understand what he is saying, and that others will find his claims unpleasant and offensive (II, 497). In *Sketch Note* 545, Lindsay is echoing Schopenhauer's own remarks, saying Muspel cannot be understood from the perspective of the individual consciousness. When Maskull dies, Nightspore is freed, and this, too, recalls Schopenhauer:

[An individual] must cease to be what he is, in order to be able to arise out of the germ of his true nature as a new and different being. ... Dying is the moment of that liberation from the one-sidedness of an individuality which does not constitute the innermost kernel of our true being, but is rather to be thought of as a kind of aberration thereof. The true original freedom again enters at this moment which in the sense stated can be regarded as a [restoration to the former state]. (II, 508)

At stake here is the fundamental will to live. But Böhme admits an initiating wrath in the self-realisation of God in Creation, and Lindsay's Muspel may then be taken in this sense, of an originating desire in Being to represent itself in the world of individual consciousness. Again, this does not mean a separation of the divine from the world.

Lindsay's emphasis on suffering, in Krag's declaration, for example, that he is known on Earth as pain, is also taken in the critical literature as admitting a Schopenhauerian view of life as an ultimately futile experience of pain and frustrated desire. With the phenomenal world of individual striving being a veil that masks the reality of the primal undivided Will, Schopenhauer likens the individual, the *principium individuationis*, to a boatman at sea, driven and buffeted by the waves (1969, 352). Individuals are opposed and frustrated by the will of others who are pursuing their own interests, and in this miserable condition, the subject typically seeks escape on the same terms, in the same egoistic striving against others. With Schopenhauer allowing that individuals are, at the level of consciousness, unable to recognise themselves as expressions of a single, driving Will, the fact of pain and suffering in the actual world encourages the question whether it is better not to exist. Lindsay's position is distinguishable here. Adhering to Böhme, his own pessimism is mitigated by his metaphysics sustaining the possibility of a spiritual ascent through immersion in experience. This still allows the influence of Schopenhauer is a test of strength, in resisting a renunciation of life. After all, Krag does declare he is the stronger and the mightier, even if "nothing will be done without the bloodiest blows" (375).

This test of strength is raised early in the book, in chapter VII, when Panawe tells Maskull of an encounter he once had in his youth with a so-called sorcerer named Slofork (83-86). Panawe relates how he was crossing a high and narrow causeway and fell to the ground feeling giddy, before standing again and seeing Slofork approach. In the ensuing discussion between them, Slofork begins by asking him what is greater than pleasure. Panawe answers pain, as driving out pleasure, and is asked then what is greater than pain. His answer is love. To what is greater than love he replies Nothing. At this point Slofork declares the familiar world of pleasure, pain and reward is unknown in another world. We call it Nothing, he says, "...but it is not Nothing, but Something." He is known as "sorcerer" for his facility in growing new limbs and organs, but he tells Panawe he is bored with the prospect of new sensory organs and wants "to hear different stories." Panawe then makes what was (he says to Maskull) an ill-considered, juvenile remark: he equates wisdom with unhappiness. Slofork's reply is that the world will always wear "a noble, awful face" for Panawe, who will never rise above mysticism. Telling all this to Maskull, Panawe concludes by saying he resolved never again to speak his mind if his remarks should cause harm, as they seemed to do in Slofork's case because he went on to throw himself from the causeway (85-86).

With Slofork making a show of disillusionment with life, while accusing Panawe of escape into mysticism, Lindsay tests the reader. Some details in the episode recall a chapter in Book IV of Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, titled *Der Zauberer*, in which it is a magician, or sorcerer, who has "hurled himself to earth flat on his belly," wailing in distress at life as Zarathustra approaches (1961, 264). When accused by Zarathustra of putting on a show, he says he did it only to test Zarathustra's sympathy. Zarathustra treats this as another deceit and judges that the magician suffers only his own disenchantment with himself. Unlike Zarathustra, Panawe takes Slofork at his word and blames himself. That the world might wear a "noble, awful face" for Panawe is repeated in his name, and Lindsay has already shown that he and Joiwind have chosen, in the end, to avoid life, preferring never to leave Poolingdred. In the critical literature on *Zarathustra*, the magician in Book IV is taken

as standing for Wagner, with Schopenhauer being targeted in the soothsayer chapter in Book II, where Zarathustra recovers from losing his appetite. At stake here is the reader's own reaction to this kind of despair at life, as Lindsay tests our sympathies throughout *Arcturus*. But his own position is discernible, in his acknowledging a Böhmean metaphysics. Böhme admits a sense of spiritual ascent through the Creation. With this informing Lindsay's notion of the Sublime, he cannot then be taken as rejecting the world. Much depends upon the role accorded to love, but Lindsay's pessimism is tempered by the recognition, drawing on Böhme, that opposing tendencies are joined in a spiritual ascent, allowing an affirmation of life over renunciation.

5) The Sublime: symbol and allegory

Lindsay addresses the Sublime in several of the Sketch Notes. In (204) he writes:

The sublime world must not be conceived as more vague, formless, and undefined than the physical, three-dimensional world, but on the contrary, as far more real, vivid, and substantial. To keep this in mind is a key to the understanding of world-life. (c1920, 20)

This suggests the notion of a restored spirit, learning to live, in a sensory embrace of Nature, and is recalled in *Arcturus* when, on leaving the Wombflash Forest, Maskull is told by Polecrab of some wisdom he received from Broodviol, a wise man who lived in the Forest. Polecrab reports him as saying we must re-unite ourselves "to the whole of Crystalman's world," but is unsure what he meant. Maskull suggests that if Crystalman's world is false, he must have meant we are living in a private world of "distorted perceptions" and so "lose nothing in truth and reality" by embracing that world, presumably because already false (212-213). But Maskull has only assumed a starting point in falsity. If Lindsay's imagery in *Arcturus* is drawn as the sensory expression of processes in Nature, it does not follow that the sensory world is false, and like a prison. In line with Böhme, it is implicit in Broodviol's injunction to embrace the world of experience, that reality is gained through immersion in that world.

In literary terms, this re-sacralisation of experience lies with a poet's inspiration. Lindsay was likely familiar with the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, who himself knew Böhme's work. The sense in which things in nature are taken symbolically by the poet is evident in Emerson's own poetic imagery of a transparent eye, as a self-less contemplation of nature:

Standing on the bare ground, - my head bathed by the blithe air and uplifted into infinite space, - all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or parcel of God. (Emerson 1982, 39)

Lindsay at one point describes Maskull's feelings in similar terms to this image of selflessness in Emerson, when at the start of his journey, arrived on the Lusion Plain,

Maskull has a vision of Surtur, who instructs him to be his “servant and helper.” Lindsay writes:

He felt himself alone with Nature. A sacred stillness came over his heart. Past and future were forgotten. The forest, the sun, the day did not exist for him. He was unconscious of himself – he had no thoughts and no feelings. Yet never had Life had such an altitude for him. (94)

The re-sacralising, higher emotion is given symbolically here, in the figurative language of uplift into space. Maskull is setting out on the journey which will end in Nightspore’s return to the world, but, in a linear narrative, and with Maskull having arrived on Tormance by means of “back rays,” Nightspore in company with Krag at the end of the book is also the journey’s “beginning.”

It is important here that Lindsay’s re-imagining of Böhme’s philosophy is not simply allegorical, but *symbolic*. For example, Hegel, in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1977, 697) uses the figure of the Egyptian Sphinx as symbolising the emergence of a reflective self-consciousness out of animal nature, where this figure’s composition as a human head on an animal body allows its form and meaning coincide. Hegel is making a point about his own philosophy anticipated in pre-rational expressions in art and religion. But this notion of a symbol as an identity of sign and signified has a history in the tradition of German authors and philosophers, and is the sense in which Böhme is taken by Hegel as anticipating his own philosophy of Spirit, though in symbolic terms. The difference from allegory is that allegory says something in some other terms than its own. Lindsay is aware of this. In a later work, *Devil’s Tor*, it is applied in a discussion of paintings of the Madonna, where the question being raised is how an artist can succeed in expressing “the invisible by the visible” (Lindsay 2018, 165). Allegorical painting is faulted for dealing only in conventional associations of ideas.

The distinction was integral to Friedrich Creuzer’s work of comparative religion, *Symbolik und Mythologie der Alten Völker* (1819), and is explained with reference to Creuzer by Gadamer, in *Truth and Method* (1993):

a symbol is not related by its meaning to another meaning, but its own sensory existence has “meaning.” As something shown, it enables one to recognise something else ... (72)

In this way a symbol marks a “coincidence” between an otherwise “invisible” experience and its expression, as an image. In section 30 of the first volume of *Symbolik und Mythologie*, Creuzer employs the metaphor of the Sun’s light fractured into a rainbow spectrum by obscuring clouds (Creuzer 1819, 58-59). I propose this is the sense in which Lindsay, throughout his stories, and following Böhme, repeatedly talks of making visible the invisible. The key point is that an image should carry its own meaning, and not depend upon an association of ideas. This is evident in the way that Böhme characterises the qualities in sensory terms as expressing the seven source-spirits in God, through which He realises Himself in Nature. The imagery in *Arcturus* then follows this example in Böhme.

The fantastic setting of Tormance and the nature of Maskull's encounters are unsettling, and resist the reader's efforts at constructing an interpretation. But interpretations are likely anyway to draw on attitudes which already express the concerns and interests of a rational, egoistic subject. In its seeming refusal to make sense, *A Voyage to Arcturus* makes room to communicate the Sublime, which Lindsay insisted was his primary concern. It is the challenge faced by Böhme in trying to articulate his visionary experience in what he called "creaturely fashion." But the difficulty is after all continuous with the way in which Böhme's philosophy is founded on the divine concealed in our visible, familiar world. The characters in *Arcturus* voice their own ideas about reality, the divine, and so on, but there is an underlying process which informs the episodes in Maskull's journey and his dealings in the passionate world of pleasure-seeking "whirls of living will." It allows "two" worlds are joined in humankind as symbol of the divine, in a transcendence of the natural world through immersion in it.

Conclusion

I have argued that in *A Voyage to Arcturus*, Lindsay adheres to imagery and ideas in Jakob Böhme's *Aurora* in seeking to articulate his primary concern with a re-sacralisation of life. Böhme's notion of seven qualities in God admits that good and bad are mixed in God's own self-realisation in Creation, beginning out of nothing in an initiating wrath. While Tormance is a life of suffering and frustration, I have emphasised Böhme's metaphysics over the influence of Schopenhauer's pessimism. It is characteristic of Lindsay that his own approach to a re-sacralization of life is drawn on pain. In his *Sketch Note* 203 he writes:

Painless pleasure is colourless, feeble, and insipid; but add pain as fuel to this anaemic flame, and a noble, vivid, deep-burning fire results. (c1920, 20)

But this is life-affirming in the sense that a spiritual ascent is enabled through experience in the world. Lindsay's primary target is the self-interested egoism exhibited by the séance characters in the opening chapter. But Maskull's journey symbolises the activity of Böhme's seven qualities, with his encounters on the planet characterising their operation in generating the enlivening "flash." This is indicated in Lindsay's transitional chapter, in the Wombflash Forest. But it is important that the narrative, away from its linear exposition, is drawn on Böhme's account of a process in which all the qualities are active simultaneously in relation to each other.

Lindsay's re-deployment of imagery and ideas from Böhme's *Aurora* is no less sincere than his philosophical reflections in the *Sketch Notes*, where his reading clearly prompted his own speculation. In the broadest terms, his theme is separation from the divine, and while this allows a sense of separation and return, I have sought to show how Lindsay follows Böhme in allowing it is realised through individuals, in Creation. Lindsay ties this to the loss of an original connection with the world in experience, with a re-sacralisation of Nature mediated in a poetic use of language, in imagery of unity and separation, of descent and rising-up. Whatever criticism may be levelled at his speculative

metaphysics, there remains this tension in our seeking to detach ourselves from everyday concerns, to reconcile what seems to be “two” realms: the visible and invisible, human and divine. Lindsay’s debt to Böhme is evident in *Arcturus*, in its narrative structure and in its imagery. In his own ambition, Lindsay stands in a dynamic relation with his readers, challenging expectations and seeking to enable a transformative experience. With these intentions, he re-imagines Böhme’s *Aurora* in seeking to articulate and engage his readers in a profound pathos.



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